

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4175, VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2004

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce H.R. 4175, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2004. Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member Lane Evans, as well as the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Benefits Subcommittee, HENRY BROWN and MICHAEL MICHAUD, respectively, join me as original cosponsors of the bill. H.R. 4175 would provide a cost-of-living adjustment to veterans' benefits, effective December 1, 2004.

The VA Committee periodically reviews the service-connected disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) programs to ensure that the benefits provide reasonable and adequate compensation for disabled veterans and their families. Based on this review, Congress acts annually to provide a cost-of-living adjustment in compensation and DIC benefits.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has provided increases in these rates for every fiscal year since 1976. The Administration's fiscal year 2005 budget submission includes funding for a projected 1.3 percent increase.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
MERCED POLICE OFFICER
STEPHAN GRAY

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Merced Police Officer Stephan Gray, who was killed on April 14 in the line of duty. He was the first officer killed in the Merced Police Department's 115-year history.

During his 7 years of distinguished service in Merced, Officer Gray represented the very best in law enforcement. In the course of his work in the department's Gang Violence Suppression Unit and the Special Operations Unit, he consistently went above and beyond the call of duty and was known for his extensive involvement in the community.

Officer Gray received numerous thank you letters from citizens for his work and commendations for assisting in the capture of a dangerous criminal street gang member and saving the life of an 11-month-old infant.

He made a special effort to fully understand his beat, even visiting streetside basketball courts and baseball fields. Residents of south Merced appreciated Officer Gray's presence, and his influence was immeasurable.

In short, Officer Gray was the role model that communities like Merced so desperately need. The city will miss his special dedication and selfless service. I hope that this tragedy will shed light on his important work and inspire others to the same calling.

Officer Gray is survived by his wife, Michelle, and three children, Landess, Isaiah,

and Cameron. I offer the entire Gray family my condolences.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
PRIMARY IMMUNE DEFICIENCY
DISEASES AWARENESS WEEK

HON. SHERROD BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in recognizing the week of April 19 as National Primary Immune Deficiency Diseases Awareness Week. Primary immune deficiency diseases (PIDD) are genetic disorders in which part of the body's immune system is missing or does not function properly. The World Health Organization recognizes more than 150 primary immune diseases, which affect as many as 50,000 people in the United States. Fortunately, 70 percent of PIDD patients are able to maintain their health through regular infusions of a plasma product known as intravenous immunoglobulin. IGIV helps bolster the immune system and provides critical protection against infection and disease.

I am familiar with primary immune deficiencies because a family in my district, the Gargaszs, have a son Dylan who has a primary immune deficiency disease. Dylan was born looking healthy, but by his first month checkup he had a raging ear infection, followed by chronic infections throughout his first year of life. Additionally, Dylan was failing to thrive and grow like a normal child. Dylan spent at least one day a week in the doctor's office, and was hospitalized with pneumonia five times by 18 months old. Finally, at 18 months, Dylan's mother took him to Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital, where an immunologist finally diagnosed him with a primary immune deficiency disease. Dylan started his IGIV therapy once a week, and now at 6 years old, is doing relatively well. His younger brother and mother are now being tested to see if they have a primary immune deficiency disease.

Dylan is not unique with the difficulty and delay in diagnosis of his primary immune deficiency disease. Despite the recent progress in PIDD research, the average length of time between the onset of symptoms in a patient and a definitive diagnosis of PIDD is over 9 years. In the interim, those afflicted may suffer repeated and serious infections and possibly irreversible damage to internal organs. That is why it is critical that we raise awareness about these illnesses in the general public and the health care community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Immune Deficiency Foundation for its leadership in this area and I am pleased to join them in recognizing the week of April 19 as National Primary Immune Deficiency Diseases Awareness Week. I encourage my colleagues to work with us to help improve the quality of life for PIDD patients and their families.

CONGRATULATING EDINBURG
NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

HON. RUBEN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Edinburg North High School for being selected for one of the 2004 College Board Inspiration Awards. Edinburg North is one of three exemplary high schools in the nation being honored for their steadfast commitment to fostering student success in some of America's most poverty-stricken communities. Each school receives a prize of \$25,000 to use in furthering its academic goals. The Inspiration Awards recognize outstanding work in improving the academic environment and helping economically disadvantaged students achieve the promise of higher education. I would like to congratulate the superintendent, Eugenio Gutierrez, the principal, Mario Salinas, the teachers, students, and entire school community for this prestigious award.

Edinburg North High School is truly an inspiration for all of us who value education and academic excellence for all students. For the Hispanic community, it reaffirms our core faith in our own potential. Over 95 percent of the students at Edinburg North are Hispanic, and eighty percent of them are bilingual.

Edinburg North High School has succeeded in the face of many challenges. More than half of its students participate in the free and reduced price lunch program. Many students are the children of migrant and seasonal farm workers, and many of these young people work in the fields themselves. As recently as the late 1990s, Edinburg North's poor academic performance led the state of Texas to notify all parents that they had the option of sending their children to another school.

The school community—students, parents, teachers, administrators, local officials, and community leaders—made a commitment to turn things. The school did not merely aim for proficiency, but rather it reached for excellence with stunning results.

The school community decided although its students come from the most economically disadvantaged part of the district, they were not going to be educationally disadvantaged. Edinburg North High School made access to challenging courses a number one priority. It instituted an "open-door" policy for advanced placement courses, and now enrolls more students in college-level courses than any other school in the city. Over the last five years, Edinburg North has doubled the number of students taking at least one advanced placement exam.

This focus on rigorous courses has opened the doors to higher education for students of Edinburg North, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Last year almost three-quarters of the students were accepted to college, including some of the most selective institutions in the nation, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dartmouth College, Columbia University, and Rice University.

This is what is possible when we invest in excellence in the Hispanic community. I urge my colleagues to join me in saluting Edinburg North High School for its achievement and applauding the college Board for sponsoring the

Inspiration Awards. May each year be more competitive than the last.

LEWISBURG RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION'S DOZEN DISTINCTIVE DESTINATIONS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, Lewisburg, one of West Virginia's proudest attractions known for its history, beauty and hospitality, offers a bit of everything for those seeking attractive destination spots to visit, and recently, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Lewisburg one of its Dozen Distinctive Destinations.

The City of Lewisburg is a cultural and artistic center in West Virginia. Downtown Lewisburg is designated as an historical district, with many of its buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the city has won acclaim as one of the best small-town arts centers in America. History buffs, theatre goers, music lovers, shoppers and fine diners alike can delight in Lewisburg. It is no wonder why West Virginia holds its annual State Fair on the outskirts of this splendid city.

Just down the road from Lewisburg is the world-famous Greenbrier Resort, a source of pride for every Southern West Virginian, and so important nationally that for years it was intended to be the American government's home away from home.

The recognition of Lewisburg by the National Trust for Historic Preservation is a great honor bestowed upon one of West Virginia's best kept treasures. West Virginians have always known the beauty, the history and the draw of Lewisburg. It was just a matter of time before the rest of the world took notice.

Lewisburg is a prime example of the best West Virginia has to offer. Our countryside is filled with historic treasures, grand vistas, wild whitewater, towering mountain ridges, and numerous trails that cater to horseback riders, ATV users, hikers and bikers. Travelers and tourists can find a cornucopia of activities and adventures across Southern West Virginia, as we offer attractions that appeal to a wide variety of interests and tastes.

Today, as more Americans than ever are looking for exciting, yet safe, places to vacation, and West Virginia, my home State, has become even more attractive as a destination to many adventurers and vacationers alike. Half the people in the whole country live within 250 miles of the Mountain State, making it an easy day's drive for all who wish to visit.

RECOGNIZATION OF THE YOUNG ONSET PARKINSON'S ASSOCIATION AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS. GINA REILLY

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I have the opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of Ms. Gina Reilly and the Young Onset Parkinson's Association (YOPA). The YOPA is dedicated to providing support as well as raising public awareness about Parkinson's disease. Ms. Reilly is one of many volunteers whose tireless efforts help to make the foundation a success.

Parkinson's disease is a debilitating disease that affects 4 in every 1,000 Americans, and while the disease is more prominent in older people, five to ten percent of all Parkinson's cases are early-onset. Parkinson's has no known origin or method of prevention; but with the assistance of organizations like the YOPA and the American Parkinson's Disease Association, treatments and a cure are coming closer to becoming a reality.

The YOPA's mission is to raise public awareness and to offer support for those living with early-onset Parkinson's disease. In addition, the association has coordinated with local, regional and national Parkinson's organizations in fundraising efforts for Parkinson's research. Ms. Gina Reilly is one of the most prominent volunteers who has helped make this mission a reality.

Prior to her diagnosis, Ms. Reilly was a renowned competitor in U.S. adult ice dancing competitions. In addition to being a champion ice dancer, she was also a ballroom dancer, nightclub singer, and owner of a successful graphic arts and computer embroidering business. After her diagnosis in 2003, Ms. Reilly refused to let her disease prevent her from further achievements. In addition to continuing her pursuits in athletics and business, Ms. Reilly has begun working with the YOPA. Her incredible courage and fortitude provide a role model of how one can live their life while afflicted with Parkinson's disease.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues recognize the outstanding work of the Young Onset Parkinson's Association, and I congratulate Ms. Reilly for her outstanding achievements and bravery.

CONFIRMATION OF PAUL ANDERSON FOR THE FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to appear before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on March 30, 2004 to introduce Paul Anderson of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at his confirmation

hearing for the post of Federal Maritime Commissioner. President George W. Bush nominated Paul for the position on Oct. 1, 2003.

In nominating Paul Anderson, President Bush has chosen someone who possesses a rare blend of work experience and background that makes him an asset to the commission. With a background in both government and the maritime industry, Mr. Anderson is positioned well as a knowledgeable and forceful advocate for a strong United States maritime industry.

I have known Paul for more than 20 years, working with him in the Senate with former Senator Paula Hawkins when I was chief of staff. He is well qualified with Senate experience, 8 years with Hvide Marine, a U.S.-flagged diversified marine transport company in Florida and 9 years with JM Family Enterprises, the nation's largest distributor of Toyota vehicles. Clearly his knowledge of business in addition to the maritime industry will be invaluable in his position. He balances knowledge of government responsibilities and the needs of private companies.

If it was my own son being considered, I couldn't be more proud of Paul Anderson. It was my honor to introduce him to the Senate committee.

I'm confident the administration has made a fine choice in nominating Paul Anderson for this important post and I urged the committee to act favorably on the nomination.

HONORING SERGEANT JONATHAN N. HARTMAN

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, as we pray for all those in our armed services who find themselves in harm's way, I rise to pay tribute to a soldier from my home state who gave his life to his country during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sergeant Jonathan N. Hartman, age 27, of Jacksonville, Florida, died April 17, 2004 in Dwanian, Iraq. Sergeant Hartman was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division, based in Friedberg, Germany.

Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Hartman is the epitome of a great American. He served his country with pride. He served his country without question. Sergeant Hartman served his country because he loved his country. For his service, his honor, his dedication, and his sacrifice, I know I speak for the entire Congress and for good Americans everywhere when I say, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, there are no words that can be said here today that will erase the sorrow and pain of this loss. What we can say, and what we can do, is continue to support this mission, the men and women who are fighting for this great country, and pray for his loved ones. It is the service and dedication of men and women like Sergeant Hartman's that make the United States safer, more secure, and a great nation.