

Honor Society and the Treasurer for her graduating class. Lyndsey has run cross country and track for four years. She is also very active with her church.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to join with her many admirers in extending our highest praise and congratulations to Lyndsey Lea Teller for her accomplishments and selection as winner of a LeGrand Smith Scholarship. This honor not only recognizes her efforts, but it is also a testament to the parents, teachers, and other individuals whose personal interest, strong support and active participation contributed to her success. To this remarkable young woman, I extend my most heartfelt good wishes for all her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE ALTAMED HEALTH SERVICES CORPORATION

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the AltaMed Health Services Corporation (AltaMed). For 35 years, AltaMed has exemplified exceptional leadership in America by providing increased access and award-winning quality health care to the medically underserved multi-ethnic communities of Los Angeles County.

Established in 1969 at a modest storefront in East Los Angeles, AltaMed has never strayed from its commitment to serve medically underserved and uninsured individuals. First known as El Barrio Free Clinic and later as La Clínica Familiar Del Barrio, the AltaMed organization was first managed by doctors, nurses, and social workers, who generously volunteered their non-working hours to treat individuals and their families with the best-available medical care. Spurred by a federal government measure known as the Urban Health Initiative and a federal grant in 1977, La Clínica Familiar Del Barrio managed to increase its services and the organization officially changed its name to the AltaMed Health Services Corporation.

Thirty-five years after its inception, AltaMed continues to provide quality medical service to over 46,000 patients at 19 service outlets, six stand-alone health care clinics, two mobile health care units, and 11 social service sites throughout Los Angeles County. Proudly serving predominantly low-income and underrepresented communities, AltaMed continues to be at the forefront of quality health care service. Its extensive services provide individuals of all ages with state-of-the-art medical and dental clinics, geriatric care, home safety, HIV/AIDS prevention, youth support groups, and substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.

With an annual operating budget of \$55 million, AltaMed is the largest nonprofit health care agency in the greater East Los Angeles area—serving 46 Zip codes in Los Angeles County. With support from various grants, AltaMed works to enroll uninsured individuals into low cost or no cost insurance programs such as Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, California Kids and Healthy Kids. In addition, AltaMed continues to promote economic and community development and is the second largest

employer in the greater East Los Angeles area, with over 900 racially diverse and multi-lingual staff members.

I want to commend the work of AltaMed's President and CEO Cástulo de la Rocha, the Board of Directors, its nine senior management professionals, and its generous supporters for their tireless and excellent leadership efforts. Their hard work made AltaMed's 35th Anniversary Gala a reality.

May this historic event be an opportunity for everyone to commemorate the vision, compassion, and commitment that the original AltaMed founders had for their community 35 years ago. And may today's AltaMed leadership and medical team carry their mission forward into the future.

THE PASSING OF ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR VINCE DEMUZIO

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Illinois State Senator Vince Demuzio who passed away on April 27. Senator Demuzio, or Vince as most people knew him, lived a life dedicated to public service. While committing himself to the public good, Vince still found time for his family—his wife, Deanna, their two children and their four grandchildren.

In central Illinois, Vince Demuzio is remembered as a champion for education, a fighter for good jobs and roadways, and a tireless advocate for the needs of his constituents.

Illinois Senate Minority Leader, Frank Watson, said of Vince, "If we all emulate the concerns that Vince Demuzio had for the people he represented and the people of this state . . . we would all be better off and be better people for it."

I couldn't agree more. Illinois has lost a great leader with the passing of State Senator Vince Demuzio.

2004 LEGRAND SMITH SCHOLARSHIP FINALISTS

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is with my sincerest pleasure that I rise to recognize the finalists of the 2004 LeGrand Smith Congressional Scholarship Program. This special honor is an appropriate tribute to these remarkable young adults for their academic accomplishments, demonstration of leadership and responsibility, and commitment to social and civic involvement. We all have reason to celebrate their success, because our future rests in their promising and capable hands.

The finalists are being honored for showing the same generosity of spirit, depth of intelligence, and capacity for human service that distinguished the late LeGrand Smith of Somerset, Michigan.

They are young men and women of character, ambition, and initiative, who have already learned well the value of hard work and commitment.

These exceptional students have consistently displayed their dedication, intelligence and concern throughout their high school careers. They stand out among their peers not only because of their many achievements, but also the disciplined manner in which they meet all challenges. Although they have already accomplished a great deal, these young people possess unlimited potential.

On behalf of the United States Congress, we join the many admirers in extending our highest praise and congratulations to the finalists of the 2004 LeGrand Smith Congressional Scholarship program:

Tinsley Hunsdorfer of Albion, Michigan; Renee Gaudreau of Albion, Michigan; Benjamin Wilson of Battle Creek, Michigan; Heather Taylor of Homer, Michigan; Michael Schneider of Litchfield, Michigan; Lacey Ferro of Jonesville, Michigan; Joshua Robare of Hillsdale, Michigan; Amy Sanford of Reading, Michigan; Elysia Berry of Reading, Michigan; Kimberly Emens of Waldron, Michigan; Zachary Risk of Jonesville, Michigan; Ryan Cherry of Brooklyn, Michigan; Amanda Jones of Michigan Center, Michigan. Tiffany Lambert of Jerome, Michigan; Eric Palmer of Jerome, Michigan; Amy Nemeth of Jackson, Michigan; Kathryn Gillen of Jackson, Michigan; Zachary Kanaan, Jr. of Clark Lake, Michigan; Susan Hammond of Jackson, Michigan; Benjamin Stafford of Parma, Michigan; Rachel Osborne of Hudson, Michigan; Lyndsey Banks of Adrian, Michigan; Olivia Rawson of Onsted, Michigan; Leanna Pelham of Onsted, Michigan; Sara Worsham of Onsted, Michigan; Blythe Crane of Chelsea, Michigan; Ashleigh Doop of Dexter, Michigan; and Elizabeth Parker of Dexter, Michigan.

RECOGNIZING MR. SERGIO RASCÓN

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Sergio Rascón, a labor union leader who exemplifies the best in American leadership today.

Born in 1953 in Sonora, Mexico, Mr. Rascón grew up and graduated from high school in the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles. Possessing a strong passion for labor union politics, in 1979 he was named Labor Foreman of the Laborers' International Union of North America LIUNA Local 300, a powerful subdivision of the American Federation of Labor.

In 1984, he was named an official agent of the LIUNA Local 300, while becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen that same year. Demonstrating a natural ability to lead, motivate, and organize workers, he earned the highest honors by his peers and was promoted to the executive board of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement LCLAA in 1989 and later to Business Manager and President of the LIUNA Local 300 union throughout the 1990s.

Currently holding politically influential positions as First Vice President of the LCLAA State Chapter and as Los Angeles Commissioner on the Convention and Exhibition Center Bureau, Rascón is regarded as one of the most powerful and youngest political activists in the United States. Under his direction, the LIUNA Local 300 is involved in more political races than any other in its history.

In addition to being an effective political lobbyist for progressive politicians, Rascón's achievements extend from being a once active water board member to generous community provider. From 1997 to 2001, he served as a Board Director for the Metropolitan Water District MWD in southern California. During his position as a member of the board, he worked to ensure that everyone in Los Angeles County have safe drinking water. He served important roles in the MWD, such as being Vice Chairman of the Subcommittee on Organization and Personnel and an active member of the MWD's Budget and Finance and Legal and Claims committees.

As an active leader in his community, Mr. Rascón is involved in numerous charitable and educational activities in Los Angeles County. By collaborating with other prominent labor organizations, his LIUNA Local 300 has helped raise over \$120,000 in scholarship funding for the children of southern California union members.

Mr. Sergio Rascón is an advocate for every working American in the United States. I am honored to recognize his illustrious career of exceptional and tireless leadership during this year's Cinco de Mayo week in the Latino community. May his legacy continue to live forever.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2004

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague, SAM JOHNSON, in introducing the "Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2004."

I have long felt that the most pressing crisis we face in health care today is the number of uninsured Americans, which currently stands at more than 41 million. And the problem is not going away. With health care costs continuing to rise sharply across the country, more and more employers and workers are sharing the burden of increased premiums. Health care costs rose by 14 percent in 2003, and surveys project another increase of 13 percent this year. As costs escalate, the ranks of the uninsured will increase as well.

Today we introduce the "Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2004," which represents a bipartisan solution to this problem. The bill gives small businesses the opportunity to band together through bona fide trade associations and purchase quality health care for their workers at a lower cost.

The bipartisan bill would increase small businesses' bargaining power with health care providers, give them freedom from costly state-mandated benefit packages, and lower their overhead costs by as much as 30 percent—benefits that many large corporations like GM and UPS and many unions already enjoy because of their larger economies of scale.

President Bush addressed this point directly last year during a speech at the Women's Entrepreneurship Summit, where he said, "Small businesses will be able to pool together and spread their risk across a large employee

base. It makes no sense in America to isolate small businesses as little health care islands unto themselves. We must have association health plans." The President is right, and we should help level this playing field so that small businesses can offer quality coverage to their workers.

Importantly, the bill addresses both the access and cost issues at the heart of the health care reform debate, giving uninsured working families new hope for a solution that can give them access to quality health care. Small businesses in most states are stuck with disproportionately high costs because they have to choose from fewer than five providers, so AHPs offer them a new option for them to choose from. By pooling their resources and increasing their bargaining power, AHPs will help small businesses reduce their health insurance costs. Most importantly, AHPs will expand access to quality health care for the people for whom it is currently out of reach: uninsured working families.

I urge my colleagues to join Mr. JOHNSON, Mrs. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. DOOLEY, Mr. BURNS and I in this effort, and to cosponsor this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2004

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2004."

Today we introduce an important component of the Bush administration agenda—the "Small Business Health Fairness Act"—to allow the establishment of certified, federal, association health plans (AHPs).

AHPs will significantly expand access to health coverage for uninsured Americans by: (1) Increasing small businesses' bargaining power with health care providers, and (2) Giving employers freedom from costly state-mandated benefit packages. As such, AHPs will increase the number of insured Americans by up to 8 million people. According to figures released by the U.S. census bureau, one in seven Americans lacks health insurance.

You might ask, just who are these uninsured?

Well . . . they are working people who simply don't have access to insurance, can't afford it, or their employer can't afford to participate in a plan for them. Sixty percent—or 24 million—of uninsured Americans work in small businesses. Some of these people are offered insurance and turn it down because they can't pick up their part of the tab. According to the same census report, the increase in the number of uninsured comes solely from declining coverage in the small employer market. And there is no sign that the trend will reverse, or even slow. Health insurance costs are still rising and many small employers are forced to drop health coverage, while some cannot offer it in the first place.

The cost-saving benefits of AHPs would help the small employers of Main Street access coverage at a more affordable price. Let's face the facts. Costs are rising, busi-

nesses are dropping coverage and more people are left uninsured. Congress must address the uninsured problem and move forward with increasing the insured through Association Health Plans. It's the least Congress can do to ensure that the American people will receive better health care at a more reasonable price.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation.

COMMENDING FREMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. BOB BEAUPREZ

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Fremont Elementary, a school located back home in my Colorado district, for displaying the kind of academic excellence that is to be recognized at a national level.

Fremont recently received word that they are one of the top three finalists for the 21st Century School of Distinction Award. Over 1,200 schools nationwide applied for this distinction. To be a finalist is an amazing honor for them.

The award is open to all public, private, charter and parochial schools. There are ten different categories of merit. Fremont is in the "Technology Implementation" category. Schools in this category have shown sensible improvement in the implementation of technology in at least one school program or the curriculum itself.

The review board will soon be making a visit to the remaining three schools and will make their final decision pending that visit. The awards program will conclude with a national awards ceremony in June. Also, the winner will be highlighted in a future issue of "Scho-lastic Administrator".

Recently, I had the honor of being able to read to the students at Fremont during their Celebrity Read Week. It was a pleasure to be in the presence of such great and enthusiastic young minds.

I am continually impressed with this school's administration and their dedication to educating these young leaders of tomorrow. The school and its staff raise the bar of academic expectations and set an example for all elementary schools, in and out of my district, to follow. I am proud to live in the same district as a school that exemplifies such superior academic programs.

I would like to wish the best of luck to Fremont Elementary with this award and with all future endeavors. This educational institution has shown amazing academic excellence and I would like to congratulate them for the distinction this has earned them.

IN RECOGNITION OF BROWARD COUNTY, FL

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of two programs in Broward County, Florida, that were awarded Acts of Caring