

family commitment. As his friend and neighbor, I will miss him. Yet, I am confident that Frank today is happy where he is, waiting for the eventual return of his loved ones.

RECOGNIZING CONTRIBUTIONS OF
PEOPLE OF INDIAN ORIGIN TO
UNITED STATES AND BENEFITS
OF WORKING TOGETHER WITH
INDIA

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support much of what H. Con. Res. 352 has to say about the valuable contributions people of Indian origin have made to the United States. As the resolution notes, people of Indian origin have made contributions in a wide variety of disciplines, including science, technology, the arts and public service.

However, I am concerned that H. Con. Res. 352 presents a uniformly positive view of U.S. trade relations with India that is unjustified. While the resolution mentions the export of U.S. goods to India, it fails to acknowledge the rampant export of American jobs to India.

U.S. trade policies, including our policies toward India, have failed American workers. The U.S. has lost millions of high-paying manufacturing jobs. Now, service sector jobs are increasingly shifting overseas. Around 400,000 service jobs, including 27,000 technology jobs, were siphoned off to India, China and other low-wage havens last year.

Morgan Stanley estimates the number of U.S. jobs exported to India will double to about 150,000 in the next three years. A University of California-Berkeley study found U.S. firms exported 30,000 service sector jobs to India while eliminating 226,000 jobs in the U.S.

It's not hard to see why: computer programming jobs in the U.S. that pay \$60,000–\$80,000 a year go for as little as \$8,952 in China, \$5,880 in India, or \$5,000 in Russia.

The U.S. economy will never be on sound footing, and workers will never enjoy job security, as long as Congress and the Administration perpetuate the discredited dogma of “free” trade. The Bush Administration argues in its latest Economic Report of the President that, “When a good or service is produced more cheaply abroad, it makes more sense to import it than make or provide it domestically.” I disagree with the Bush Administration’s argument that “it makes more sense” to flood the U.S. market with goods and services from low-wage havens like India just because it’s cheaper.

I am disappointed that H. Con. Res. 352 does not present a more balanced view of U.S. trade relations with India.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF
JOSHUA BOWMAN ON HIS AP-
POINTMENT TO ATTEND THE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
ACADEMY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding young man from Ohio’s Fifth Congressional District. I am happy to announce that Joshua Bowman of Crestline, Ohio, has been offered an appointment to attend the United States Air Force Academy.

Mr. Speaker, Joshua’s offer of appointment poises him to attend the United States Air Force Academy with the incoming cadet class of 2008. Attending one of our Nation’s military academies is an invaluable experience that offers a world-class education and demands the very best that these young men and women have to offer. Truly, it is one of the most challenging and rewarding undertakings of their lives.

Joshua brings a special mix of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming class of Air Force Academy cadets. While attending Crestline High School, Joshua has attained a grade point average of 4.0, which ranks first out of sixty-two students in his class. During his time at Crestline High School, Joshua has received several commendations for his superior scholastic efforts. During his first year, Joshua was named to the Honor Roll and received an Academic Team Award. His second year was again marked by his being named to the Honor Roll, receiving yet another Academic Team Award and also being named “Bulldog of the Month”. Joshua maintained this high level achievement throughout his tenure at Crestline High School.

Outside the classroom, Joshua has distinguished himself as an excellent student-athlete and dedicated citizen of Crestline, Ohio. On the fields of friendly strife, Joshua has participated in Varsity Cross Country, Varsity Basketball, and Varsity Baseball. He is a four-time Cross Country letter recipient. Joshua also received the “Middle of the Pack” award as well as the “2nd Man Coaches Award” during his participation in athletics at Crestline High School. In addition to his athletic accomplishments, Joshua is an active member in his community by participating in Key Club, National Honor Society, Teen Institute, Church youth group, and a local prayer group.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to stand and join me in paying special tribute to Joshua Bowman. Our service academies offer the finest education and military training available anywhere in the world. I am sure that Joshua will do very well during his career at Air Force and I wish him the very best in all of his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING ROCKWALL COUNTY
LIBRARY’S READING FOR
ADULTS PROGRAM

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to recognize the Rockwall County Library’s Reading for Adults program.

Three years ago, the library began a literacy program to help community adults develop essential skills through reading. The Reading for Adults program is affiliated with the “Dallas Reads” initiative and “Literacy Pro,” a worldwide venture. What started with two students and five tutors has grown into a program that instructs 158 students and relies on the services of 75 volunteer tutors. Classes, which are held at the Rockwall County Library and in nearby Royse City, range from one-on-one instruction to small classes of 15–20 students.

The Reading for Adults program has already been a big success. Students have earned their GED and some have completed citizenship requirements. Students also report that they are able to function more effectively from day to day. For example, after working with tutors, parents can more clearly express their concerns to teachers and doctors. The program offers us a wonderful example of how innovative, caring, and committed people can help positively shape communities throughout America.

The Reading for Adults initiative relies on the generosity of the entire community. The Friends of the Library donate their time and money. The library also organizes an annual Rock and Read event to raise money to buy books and materials. Recently, IBM awarded the library four computers with sound recognition software to help students learn to speak and read. Without these valuable resources, programs like Reading for Adults simply wouldn’t exist.

On behalf of the students, tutors, organizers, and community of Rockwall, I want to take this opportunity in the House of Representatives to salute the Reading for Adults program.

INTRODUCING THE MEDICARE
EARLY ACCESS ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, in honor of “Cover the Uninsured Week,” I am pleased today to join with my colleague Rep. SHERROD BROWN and more than 80 additional cosponsors in introducing the “Medicare Early Access Act.” This important legislation would provide an affordable health insurance option for the fastest growing segment of the nearly 44 million uninsured Americans—those ages 55–64.

In 2002, 43.6 million Americans were uninsured. There are many approaches to how we should address this growing problem. As most of my colleagues know, I am an advocate of a universal health care system in which each and every American would have health coverage. That is the most fair, affordable, and

sustainable solution to our national health care needs.

However, that won't be accomplished overnight. In the meantime, there are steps that Congress can and should be taking to develop immediate, if smaller, steps to providing people affordable health insurance coverage options. One such step is to pass legislation that would provide certain groups of individuals the option of buying into Medicare—a program with a proven track record that works. That's exactly what the Medicare Early Access Act does for people age 55 through 64.

As we all know, the baby-boomers are quickly approaching retirement, and health insurance is a major concern. Unfortunately, retiree health benefits have vanished or are quickly disappearing, leaving people with few or no affordable coverage options. A recent employer survey suggests that only 38 percent of large employers offer any type of retiree health benefits. Other recent research shows that 10 percent of the largest employers terminated all subsidized health benefits for future retirees in 2003.

With shrinking retiree benefits and no affordable options available in the individual market, people age 55 through 64 are often uninsured or gravely underinsured. Besides the 3.5 million uninsured between ages 55–64, another 3 million are forced to buy inadequate, overpriced coverage in the individual market. Most near elderly cannot purchase individual coverage because age rating and other underwriting techniques result in excessive premiums. Those that are even offered coverage are often required to pay astronomical deductibles and co-pays, or are severely limited by pre-existing condition exclusions.

In 1965, Medicare was specifically designed to provide coverage for those the market would not insure. Today we have the opportunity to expand on the original purpose of Medicare by providing access to people the market does not adequately cover. The Medicare Early Access Act would reduce the number of uninsured, provide better coverage for the underinsured, and improve the health status of this vulnerable population without harming Medicare or other insurance markets.

That's why the Medicare Early Access Act makes so much sense. It would allow people in this cohort to buy into Medicare and enjoy the exact same benefits available to all other Medicare beneficiaries. Premiums for these new participants would be based on actuarial calculations of the cost of providing services to the population. There would be no effect on the Medicare trust fund because premiums will cover the entire cost of services provided.

To ensure premiums are affordable, the bill provides a 75 percent advanceable, refundable tax credit. Thus, participants would pay a monthly premium equal to 25 percent of the cost of the program—an amount similar to what employed individuals pay for their health benefits.

I am pleased to report that advocacy organizations representing consumers and seniors agree with us. The Medicare Early Access Act has been endorsed by The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) which is a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making

arena. I would like to thank the 27 members of the LCAO who signed a letter in support of the Medicare Early Access Act. The full text of their letter appears at the end of my statement.

In our quest to reduce the number of uninsured Americans, the Medicare Early Access Act, is a great start. This bill would provide affordable, comprehensive coverage to the most vulnerable uninsured who have few, if any, health insurance options in the current marketplace. The system necessary to implement this bill is already in place; all we have to do is agree the uninsured deserve viable coverage options. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to enact this proposal.

THE MEDICARE EARLY ACCESS ACT BILL SUMMARY

ELIGIBILITY

Starting January 2005, individuals age 55–64 who do not have access to coverage under another public or group health plan are eligible to purchase Medicare. Enrollees will receive the full range of Medicare benefits. Participants are not required to exhaust employer-based COBRA coverage before choosing the Medicare buy-in option. At age 65, buy-in participants move into regular Medicare.

In addition, because employers are dropping retiree health benefits at an alarming rate, early retirees who have access to retiree health coverage may also participate, and their employers can wrap around the Medicare benefit.

PREMIUMS

Enrollees must pay a premium to receive Medicare coverage. The premium will be set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at the actuarial level necessary to cover the full cost of services provided to the buy-in population. The premium will be adjusted annually to ensure its accuracy.

TAX CREDIT

Program enrollees receive a 75 percent refundable, advanceable tax credit to offset premium costs. Thus, participants in the Medicare buy-in are only personally responsible for their 25 percent of the monthly premiums. The tax credit is modeled on the payment mechanism created by the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) health care tax credit for displaced workers, which was enacted in 2002.

FINANCING

Premiums are deposited in a new Medicare Early Access Trust Fund. Participant premiums and tax credits are transferred to the Early Access Trust Fund to pay for Medicare services, ensuring this new program does not financially affect Medicare.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF AGING ORGANIZATIONS, Washington, DC, May 5, 2004.

Hon. SHERROD BROWN,
Hon. PETE STARK,
Member of Congress,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES BROWN AND STARK: The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) strongly endorse the bill you proposed to help individuals age 55–64 years buy into the Medicare program at an affordable price.

Older Americans who are not yet eligible for Medicare have a difficult time finding affordable health care and in some cases may find that no insurer will cover them at a time in their life when they most need health insurance protection.

Your bill, which combines the efficiency of Medicare's mass market purchasing power with the affordability provided by refundable tax credits, effectively solves one of our nation's toughest uninsured problems.

We wish you success in this important legislative effort, and we will be happy to work with you and your co-sponsors in promoting its passage.

Sincerely,
AFSCME Retiree Program.
Alliance for Retired Americans.
American Association for International Aging.
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.
American Federation of Teachers Program on Retirement & Retirees.
American Foundation for the Blind.
American Public Health Association.
Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America.
B'nai B'rith International.
Catholic Health Association.
FamiliesUSA.
Gray Panthers.
International Union, UAW.
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging.
National Association for Hispanic Elderly.
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers.
National Association of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Directors.
National Association of Retired Federal Employees.
National Association of Senior Companion Project Directors.
National Association of Social Workers.
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged.
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.
National Indian Council on Aging.
National Senior Citizens Law Center.
OWL, the voice of midlife and older women.
Volunteers of America.

NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION

SPEECH OF

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I misspoke when on May 5, 2004, I identified perchlorate as the contaminant found at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The contaminants identified in the drinking water at Camp Lejeune were trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene.

THE PYRAMID OF REMEMBRANCE LIVING MEMORIAL

HON. STEVEN C. LATOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I was honored to visit Arlington National Cemetery this