

IMMIGRATION POLICY

HON. STEVE KING

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I wholly support an immigration policy designed to enhance the economic, social and cultural well-being of the United States of America. I am looking forward to working on immigration policy as a member of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims. I intend to carry out the responsibility for crafting the immigration and naturalization policy that was delegated to Congress by our Constitution.

Immigrants have made, and will continue to make, a valuable contribution to our Nation. I will work to develop an immigration policy that aids in the assimilation of newcomers by ensuring that the United States does not admit more immigrants than it can reasonably accommodate. Assimilation is valuable to immigrants who benefit from our shared American culture of personal responsibility, freedom and patriotism. The values shared by our civilization, founded on a heritage of western civilization, religious freedom and free enterprise capitalism, serve immigrants and native born alike. I am concerned that the recent rise in immigration levels in this country will make it difficult for newcomers to assimilate and find jobs. We must ensure cultural continuity for our great Nation.

As Americans, we should promote a naturalization process that promotes American values, the responsibilities of citizenship and our constitutional principles. We must be careful to admit only as many newcomers as we can accommodate with jobs so that our society will not be burdened by unemployed immigrants.

Candidates for naturalization should be proficient in the English language. Not only will English proficiency help newcomers attain better paying jobs, it also provides a means of communication with all Americans. For this reason, I have recently introduced the English Language Unity Act of 2003, H.R. 997 to declare English the official language of the United States.

Finally, as a sovereign nation, we must control our borders. We must ensure that terrorists do not infiltrate the United States. We must tighten and strengthen border control efforts so that illegal aliens do not enter our country. I support elimination of the visa lottery which gives randomly selected individuals visas, when many law abiding would-be immigrants are waiting to have their applications approved. I am also concerned about the enforcement of immigration laws within our borders.

I hope that this Congress will be vigilant in our oversight of the enforcement of existing immigration laws and make necessary changes to existing laws.

RECOGNIZING KATE A. SCANNELL, MD FOR HER ARTICLE "DELIRIOUSLY DUMBFOUNDING DRUG DISCOUNT CARDS"

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kate A. Scannell, MD for bringing to light many of the shortcomings of the Medicare drug discount card program. Dr. Scannell is not only a respected geriatrician in the Bay Area, she is also a noted medical ethicist and author. With years of experience delivering services to Medicare beneficiaries, there is no one more qualified to pass judgment on the Medicare drug card program than Dr. Scannell. I appreciate her honesty, and willingness to stand up and inform people in my district about the confusing and wasteful drug card policy.

It is with pleasure that I submit the attached article, "Deliriously Dumbfounding Drug Discount Cards," for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The article originally appeared in the May 16, 2004 edition of *The Argus* (Fremont, CA).

DELIRIOUSLY DUMBFOUNDING DRUG DISCOUNT CARDS

(By Kate Scannell)

Medicare officials call it the "drug discount card"—a code phrase referring to a small piece of paper that has the capacity to blow up your mind and destroy your sanity. These "drug discount cards" or "DDCs"—also known as "deliriously dumbfounding cards"—are supposed to offer pharmaceutical discounts between 10 to 25 percent to Medicare enrollees who have no prescription drug coverage. However:

The DDCs were launched last week when the federal government initiated its new "discount drug program" or "DDP"—otherwise known as "Doing a Darn Pittance" about outlandishly high drug costs. While the official stated mission of the DDP is to make drugs more affordable for elderly and disabled Medicare recipients, in practice the system is cumbersome, confusing and inefficient.

The new program also smells like a political ploy during an election year. By giving Medicare enrollees a card to make it appear as though they had some control over out-of-control drug costs, the DDP functions to distract everyone from the root causes of excessively high drug prices: profit-driven pharmaceutical companies that wildly overcharge for medications, and a federal government that can't (or won't) help to control drug prices.

Here's how the new card system and drug program operate. The DDP requires that elderly or disabled Medicare enrollees first try to obtain "the card." Here we encounter our first daunting hurdle, in that there exists not one but many cards from which to choose. Medicare enrollees must select a single card from among at least 40 companies and organizations that have been approved by the Department of Health and Human Services to distribute them.

Fortunately, all our elderly and disabled Medicare patients are tech-savvy, and they own personal computers equipped with Internet services which they can navigate freely for the necessary comparison shopping.

Those Medicare patients will also want to print out Excel spreadsheets to help them sort out the fine details, because each card

provides different savings on different medications. And it would be wise to keep a copy of the spreadsheet in a readily accessible location, because the companies can change the prices of those drugs at any time.

I have heard nothing but disappointment, confusion, frustration and anxiety voiced by Medicare enrollees who are trying to make sense of the president's drug card program. Its inhospitable and labyrinthine structure defies the will and the capacity of people to negotiate it.

To make matters worse, the new Medicare Web site (www.medicare.gov) unveiled last month by the Bush administration contains substantial inaccuracies and errors. Proposing to offer helpful information about the DDP and drug price comparisons, the site was found to be riddled with erroneous information and incorrect prices. For example, a spokeswoman for Walgreen's reported that about half their drug prices were listed inaccurately. To rub more salt into the wound, the prices of drugs from Canada tended to run below those offered by the Medicare discount cards.

Finally, millions of Medicare patients will spend many precious hours trying to choose the best card and to decipher the DDP when the stunning fact remains that the entire program is scheduled to end in January 2006. At that point, we will be under the thumb of the disastrous Medicare Drug Bill—the subject of my first installment of "Weapons of Medicare Destruction." In that piece, I wrote about the sweetheart deals our government made with the politically powerful pharmaceutical companies. Most notable and mind-boggling was our government's forfeiting its right to bargain with drug companies for price reductions on the drugs it offered through the Medicare program.

Further illustrating the unhealthy collusion between our government and the pharmaceutical industry, last week the New York Times reported that employees at companies that the Bush administration certified to distribute the drug discount cards already contributed almost \$1.8 million to Republican candidates in this year's election. This included a \$275,000 contribution to Bush's reelection campaign.

The drug discount card system exacts a phenomenal waste of effort and time and money that would have been better spent in a more cost-efficient manner by creating direct subsidies to Medicare recipients—like automatic rebate cards.

Still, we must be wary of any surface deceit offering "discounts" because it only masks the real problem: unregulated pharmaceutical costs that are driving our seniors into poverty or to Canada.

The fact is that "discounts" are easily "discounted" by the drug companies.

They can bump up the price of any drug and wipe out the effect of any apparent discount.

I urge everyone to become "Armchair Activists" and to contact their legislators by phone or e-mail to voice concern about prescription drug costs and our government's conflicted relationship with the drug industry. This is not a time to be "discounted."

HONORING CORPORAL WILLIAM A. SYDNOR

HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the Corporal William A.

Sydnor Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3398, located in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, on its 55 years of community involvement and dedication.

Since its beginning in 1939, Post #3398 has represented the efforts of an entire community. The building itself has changed several times, but the underlying spirit has never wavered.

Post #3398 has a long history of helping the community. The Post's involvement includes sponsoring several annual community events such as the Children's Halloween Party, the Senior Citizens Dinner, the Easter Egg Hunt, and Memorial Day Services. In addition, each year Post #3398 presents the William C. Purcell Scholarship to students planning to attend college. The Post now has four registered service officers to take care of the needs of veterans, widows, and the families of veterans.

Today the Corporal William A. Sydnor Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #3398 has grown from 36 Charter Members to over 250 members, and approximately 75 Ladies Auxiliary members. I wish the members of Post #3398 continued success and commend them for 55 years of service.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF LANCE CORPORAL JEFFREY C. BURGESS, USMC

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Lance Corporal Jeffrey C. Burgess, USMC, who was killed on March 25 in an enemy attack near Fallujah, Iraq. He served his country with courage and dignity. There is no greater valor than sacrifice in the name of our freedom and national defense. LCPL Burgess and his family will always be in our prayers.

With deepest sympathies, Mr. Speaker, I submit to my colleagues this deeply moving letter written to LCPL Burgess by his mother, Michelle Shea, which was read at his funeral on April 5:

Dear Jeff,

I thought you might want to know what's happened since you left this world for a better place. As usual, life continues on, but oh SO DIFFERENTLY now. Just like you, I am wounded also. The mail still comes each day at the same time, but it now brings letters and cards full of comfort and love from many friends and family.

Jordan still comes up each morning and has his breakfast with me, delivering a big, dimpled smile and a big "HI" comes out of his voice, welcoming in another day with his Nana and Papa.

The other morning before he came upstairs, I was by myself wondering if I might get some kind of spiritual sign that you were okay and asking myself why I couldn't remember some simple things about you. Maybe that's the brain's way of protecting a grieving parent? I don't know.

The church asked me to think of saying some words at your service or maybe having a favorite hymn or song played. I tried, Jeff, but nothing would come to me. I tried ever so hard to concentrate in my quiet morning time alone, feeling so frustrated with myself—when I realized that my concentration

was being disrupted by all the birds that were chirping from the trees in the backyard. I went to the back door to investigate why they were so worked up, only to find just ONE BIRD. There was a bright red CARDINAL perched on the highest limb trying over and over to get his message out loud and clear—over and over he sang to me.

Returning to my coffee and note pad, I realized that I had gotten the message. It was in the form of a familiar song, but I didn't know the title or artist. So, I sent Jen to the Mall in search of a song containing the words that I could think of, at the time. She returned with nothing, but on returning home she retrieved her mail, which contained some CD's she had previously ordered. Watching her open her package, I saw a confused look on her face, because she couldn't understand why TIME LIFE had sent her a 60's CD, when she'd ordered a 70's CD. All of a sudden there was a look of amazement on her face as she realized that the CD in her hand contained the very song we'd been looking for. Your song for us. We immediately played it, listening to the lyrics and realized that this was the message that you wanted to share with everyone. So, I'm carrying out your wishes, Jeff, and will make sure that it's heard by all.

Several more mornings have come and gone since you left and you still come to me each morning, in the form of a Cardinal perched high in the branches of our tree outside and singing your song. I feel better now, knowing you are still with me in the beautiful bird. I now know that you are okay.

In closing, I want you to know that you touched so many of us in so many ways, just in the short time you were here with us. And, although, I won't ever be the same person I was before, I'll go on thankful that you were once mine and that we'll be together again some day in heaven.

I'm gonna sign off now so everyone can hear that beautiful song that is the message from you. I'm sure they'll get what you are trying to say, but to be sure, I had it printed in the program for you.

I love you, Jeff; take care and be forever safe and at peace knowing your brother Marines will finish the job for you.

Love and Kisses,

Mom

GET TOGETHER (The Youngbloods)

Love is but a song to sing
Fear's the way we die
You can make the mountains ring
Or make the angels cry
Though the bird is on the wing
And you may not know why
Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another right now
Some may come and some may go
We shall surely pass
When the one that left us here
Returns for us at last
We are but a moment's sunlight
Fading in the grass

*Come on people now
Smile on your brother
Everybody get together
Try to love one another right now

*(Repeat)

*(Repeat)

If you hear the song I sing
You will understand (listen!)
You hold the key to love and fear
All in your trembling hand
Just one key unlocks them both
It's there at your command

*(Chorus)

*(Repeat)

*(Repeat)

HONORING TROOPER FIRST CLASS ANTHONY JONES

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 19, 2004

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, today, I pay special tribute to Maryland State Trooper Anthony Jones who was killed last week while on duty assisting another trooper. Trooper First Class (Tfc.) Jones every day exemplified the service and sacrifice that we honor in our law enforcement officers. As the recipient of awards for his valor and bravery, and as the anticipated recipient of the "Top Cop" award from the College Park Barracks this month, Trooper Jones demonstrated a commitment to public service and a sincere dedication to protecting and serving our community.

Tfc. Jones joined the state police after retiring from the U.S. Air Force in 1998. He spent his entire police career working as a road patrol trooper. He was on patrol when he stopped shortly after 2 a.m. to assist another trooper working at the scene of a single-vehicle crash in Prince George's County. Investigators said Jones crossed the four-lane highway on foot to remove a tire that was part of the accident debris and was making his way back across the road—using a flashlight to warn oncoming traffic—when he was struck and killed.

Every day, law enforcement officials like Trooper Jones risk their lives in dangerous situations on our highways and roads to protect the citizens who travel along our roadways. Last week we joined together in commemorating Trooper Jones and all of the law enforcement officers whose brave deeds led them to make the ultimate sacrifice, or left them disabled.

Trooper Jones is the 39th Maryland trooper to die in the line of duty, and we say a special prayer for his family, friends, and fellow officers of the Maryland State Police. The Joneses must know that a grateful nation mourns their loss and shares their pain.

We honor Tfc. Jones for his service to our country and to his community. I am confident that he will long be remembered with the utmost gratitude and respect. He willingly answered the call to duty, sacrificing his own safety for the safety and security of his community. We shall never forget that sacrifice and will bear witness to future generations the honor and courage Tfc. Jones exhibited as he served the State of Maryland.

Although we don't often thank them for it, officers like Trooper Jones help protect our most cherished rights as laid out by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence: the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We owe these fine and hard working people a great deal for their contribution to our freedom and security.

The words of John F. Kennedy strike a chord this week, "a nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers." As these valiant men and women died because they made it their duty to protect and serve, it is our duty to honor and remember them for their selfless contribution to our communities.