

No nation alters its borders per technological developments.

HELP SENIORS RECOGNIZE THE BENEFITS OF THE DRUG DISCOUNT CARD

HON. MIKE FERGUSON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, today we are here to discuss the immediate savings that our nation's seniors realize due to the prescription drug discount cards provided by the Medicare Law that Congress wrote last year. After years of promises, this law fulfills our commitment to our nation's seniors by providing the first ever universal prescription drug benefit under Medicare.

One would think that these new benefits for seniors, coupled with the prescription drug discount card would be a cause for celebration. Rather than educate seniors on the benefits of the discount cards, the other side of aisle has continued to play politics with this issue and resorted to scare tactic towards our nation's seniors and in some cases suggest that seniors are too dumb to make decisions for themselves. There are even those who are discouraging seniors from signing up for the discount card. Perhaps because if seniors sign up, the program will be a success; that is not just wrong, it is unconscionable and shameful, and anyone who engages in that sort of behavior should be ashamed of themselves.

In my home state of New Jersey we have a very generous state pharmaceutical assistance program called PAAD. After working with our Governor and CMS, New Jersey has the opportunity to directly enroll seniors into the discount card program. Out of the 81,000 seniors and persons with disabilities who were eligible for the transition assistance provided by the discount card, only 350 opted out of the program. As a result of the discount card and our delegation's work to get this card to New Jersey's seniors, my state will save \$90 million on the cost of prescription drugs. These savings can be put back into the PAAD program to provide expanded coverage for additional seniors. New Jersey is one example that I encourage more states to follow. By putting partisan politics aside, our delegation worked with CMS to provide a simple process which benefits our state and our state's seniors.

Defying logic, today and in the future, you will hear members on the other side of the aisle argue that the cost of prescription drugs will increase as a result of the discount card. For those members I would like to point to a May 14th study by CMS which shows that in the past week more cards have offered increase discounts for our nation's seniors compared to prices offered the previous week. Sponsors are now comparing their discounts to their competitors, more cards are offering favorable prices, and CMS is working with card sponsors to make sure that the best discounts are published for Medicare beneficiaries. This is what happens when competition is injected into the marketplace. That's how markets work. Some on the other side of the aisle would prefer a government run, command and control system where bureaucrats or politicians tell people what medicines they

can have, how much they can have and when and where they can have it. That sounds more like the former Soviet Union to me.

Today you will also hear members who will criticize the pharmaceutical industry for charging too much for prescription drugs. Yet they will not mention the miracle drugs or treatments these companies create. Representing the scientists and researchers who live in my district of New Jersey, I would like to highlight the good work that two of the pharmaceutical companies are doing to help seniors. Once a low-income beneficiary has exhausted his or her annual \$600 transitional assistance allowance, Merck and Johnson and Johnson will provide its medicines free to that beneficiary's participating discount card plan or directly to the beneficiary, through the pharmacy. Neither company will receive any fees from these programs.

In closing, I encourage all members to put aside partisan politics and help seniors recognize the benefits of the drug discount card. This can be accomplished by working with CMS to clarify any questions our seniors may have and allowing seniors to realize the discounts that are available to all seniors through the discount card.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this is National Small Business Week; a time to celebrate and recognize America's small business entrepreneurs.

I honor our nation's 23 million small businesses and recognize their vital contribution to our nation. I want to especially thank my good friend, Congresswoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ from New York and applaud my House colleagues for their hard work on behalf of small business. Additionally, I thank the many small business owners for their numerous contributions.

Small business is the backbone of our state and national economy. Unfortunately, many small businesses are suffering in these trying financial times. Government contracts and spending are a vital source of revenue, and have become even more so during this current economic slump. Small businesses lack high powered lobbyists, therefore it is imperative that all levels of government continue to pay diligent attention to small business in their purchasing and contracts. It is important that we ensure that businesses of all sizes have access to government contracts regardless of their ability to buy influence.

As Congress continues its work, I will dedicate myself to assuring that good news is on the way for small businesses. Both our federal and state government have an obligation to aid, assist and protect the interests of small businesses. The future of America depends on it. I will continue to strongly support federal programs that benefit small businesses.

OSTEOPOROSIS PREVENTION AND AWARENESS MONTH

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, May is Osteoporosis Prevention and Awareness Month. Osteoporosis and low bone density affects over 44 million Americans over the age of 50, many of whom were unaware of their risk for osteoporosis and were not able to take steps to prevent it. While both men and women are at-risk of developing osteoporosis, women comprise 80 percent of those who develop the disease. Even though the risk of a hip fracture for a woman is equal to her combined risk of breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer, most adult women are unaware of the risk factors for osteoporosis.

Like many Americans, I had no idea I was at risk for developing osteoporosis. I believed I simply had bad posture and was reluctant to be screened for osteoporosis. Yet, as I was running for Congress in 1998, I was diagnosed with this disease.

Fortunately, within 10 months of treatment I was able to stop my bone density loss and my bones actually began to strengthen again. Because of my personal experience with osteoporosis, I am committed to ensuring Americans are aware of the importance of strong bones, so they can reduce their chances of developing the disease.

I commend the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) for their efforts to educate the public during the month of May. This month, the NOF has reached out to healthcare providers and consumers with the message, "Osteoporosis. Chances are . . . it could be you." Throughout the year, the NOF is dedicated to promoting lifelong bone health in order to reduce the prevalence of osteoporosis and osteoporosis related fractures and they continue to work to find a cure for the disease through research, education, and advocacy. For all those who have this disease and those who may in the future, I will continue to work with and support NOF's efforts to raise awareness of the risk factors and ways to prevent osteoporosis.

HONORING THE CREW OF THE USS "PITTSBURGH" FOR THEIR HEROISM IN WORLD WAR II

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to announce the introduction of a concurrent resolution recognizing and honoring the crew of the USS *Pittsburgh* for their heroism in World War II.

On March 19, 1945, the USS *Franklin*, as part of Task Force 58, launched an attack against Japan. The Japanese responded with an air attack against Task Force 58, striking the USS *Franklin*, killing 724 crew members and injuring 265 other crew members, and setting the USS *Franklin* ablaze.

The USS *Pittsburgh* was dispatched to assist the USS *Franklin*. The crew of the USS

Pittsburgh performed outstanding feats of seamanship, including attaching a tow line to the flaming USS *Fry* and rescuing 34 of its crew members from turbulent waters. The USS *Pittsburgh* and the USS *Santa Fe* defended against two additional Japanese air attacks while towing and escorting the USS *Franklin* to safety.

As a result of their heroic actions in saving their ship, the crew of the USS *Franklin* was highly decorated, receiving awards of two Congressional Medals of Honor, five Gold Stars, 22 Silver Stars, and 250 Letters of Commendation, and becoming the most decorated crew in the history of the Navy. The crew of the USS *Santa Fe* received a Navy Unit Commendation.

However, the crew of the USS *Pittsburgh* has never been collectively honored or recognized for their heroism and bravery. Therefore, my legislation resolves that Congress recognizes and honors the crew of the USS *Pittsburgh* for their heroism on March 19, 1945, for rendering aid and assistance to the USS *Franklin* and its crew.

As we prepare to dedicate the new World War II Memorial, it is fitting that we recognize and honor the crew of the USS *Pittsburgh*. I am pleased to introduce this long overdue concurrent resolution.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REFORM ACT

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to introduce The No Child Left Behind Reform Act, which will make three basic changes to the No Child Left Behind Act. This bill was originally authored by my distinguished colleague from Connecticut, Senator CHRIS DODD was recently introduced in the Senate. The legislation I rise to introduce today is a House companion to this bill.

No Child Left Behind was passed in 2002 with bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate in an acknowledgement that the achievement gap among our nation's children must be closed. Since its passage, I have made very deliberate efforts to communicate with educators who will be responsible for implementation of the law. Like most of them, I remain committed to the goals and the general strategy of the policy.

Toward this effort, I have established an Education Roundtable with whom I have met numerous times to discuss this reform. Through this Roundtable, I have met with more than 100 educators over the course of the last two years and have discovered that there are several common concerns. As a result, I am introducing this legislation in an effort to make the No Child Left Behind Act and even stronger educational tool. The legislation will meet the challenges brought to my attention by educators, administrators and parents who deal with these issues every day at the local level.

First, the No Child Left Behind Reform Act will allow schools to consider measures other than test scores when determining achievement. Currently, the law holds schools accountable for student achievement measured

solely by scores on two tests administered on one day. It gives schools no credit for progress on other academic indicators, such as dropout rates, the number of students who participate in advanced placement courses, and measures of individual student improvement over time. This legislation will allow schools to be recognized for succeeding in these areas.

Second, the No Child Left Behind Reform Act will allow schools to target school choice and supplemental services to those students whose group fails to make AYP. Under implementation of the current law, if a school is in need of improvement it is expected to offer school choice and supplemental services to all students. This does not allow a school to target its resources to those who are most in need. By targeting those students in groups that fail to meet AYP, this legislation presents the most efficient way to maximize the effect of these resources.

Finally, the No Child Left Behind Reform Act provides flexibility to teachers looking to meet "highly qualified" standards. As it is, the law requires teachers to be "highly qualified" to teach every subject that they teach. This is certainly a necessary component to the law but some of the educators with whom I have met have expressed concerns. The problems arise for those teachers in the fields of math and science who are now required to become certified in various disciplines such as biology, earth science and chemistry. It also applies to teachers in rural middle schools who teach multiple subjects and are struggling to become certified in all of those subjects.

The legislation I am introducing today will allow middle grade level teachers who teach multiple subjects as well as math and science teachers to take one assessment test for all of the subjects they teach. Each state will determine what the test will consist of based on the needs of their state.

Mr. Speaker, these changes will provide significant assistance to schools in Connecticut and other states across the country currently struggling to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act. Clearly, we have encountered some unintended consequences of No Child Left Behind. If we are not able to restructure the law to address these issues we run the risk of losing the worthwhile goals that motivated the passage of this important legislation. I ask my colleagues to join me in support of the No Child Left Behind Reform Act.

TRIBUTE TO RONALD A. HELLBUSCH

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ronald A. Hellbusch, Director of Public Works and Utilities for the City of Westminster, Colorado. Ron is retiring after 32 years with the City. Combined with the 16 years as the City Manager of Brighton, Colorado, Ron has provided 48 years of dedicated service to these northern Denver communities.

Ron began his career at the City of Westminster as a seasonal laborer in the street, water, sewer and park divisions while finishing

high school and college. In 1960, he was appointed as the assistant city manager for the City of Westminster and was instrumental in developing the city's surface water supply system from its previous groundwater system when he was appointed water development coordinator by the City Council in 1963. Hellbusch left the City of Westminster in 1966 to serve as city manager for the City of Brighton, Colorado, where he served for 16 years.

He resumed his career with the City of Westminster in 1984 as the Director of Public Works and Utilities, directing the water distribution and wastewater collection systems, water and wastewater treatment, water supply acquisition, long range water supply planning and development, street operations and maintenance, street replacement and rehabilitation, and concrete replacement. The Department of Public Works and Utilities has 128 authorized employees, has an annual operating budget of more than \$24 million, and a capital improvement project budget of approximately \$7 million annually.

In 1996, Ron was selected as one of the American Public Works Association's 1996 Top Ten Public Works Leaders for his outstanding contributions to the public works profession. Ron also received the William E. Korbitz Award presented by the Colorado Chapter of the American Public Works Association at the 14th Annual Awards Luncheon in January 2000. He represented the city on various city and community groups including the Woman Creek Reservoir Authority Board, American Public Works Association Colorado Chapter and National Committees including the Leadership and Management Technical Committee, State Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) Roundtable Board Member, and the Colorado Water Congress serving as its president in 2003.

In the community, Ron has served the Westminster Presbyterian Church as a ruling elder and as the chairman of the Church's corporate affairs committee. Also, Ron chaired the stewardship committee over a four-year period and was a Sunday school teacher. In addition to the Westminster church activities, Ron was active during his years in Brighton, Colorado, both in the Presbyterian Church and community.

Ron's accomplishments with his Public Works and Utilities team include acquiring and developing a long-term, build-out water supply; the reclaimed water program; the completion of the Standley Lake dam renovation in collaboration with the cities of Northglenn and Thornton; employee driven quality service/competitive service program; the long-term street improvement strategy plan; utility planning and funding; developing a highly motivated and skilled employee team; encouraging innovation in membrane water treatment; use of technology in utility planning; a department-wide maintenance management program; numerous intergovernmental and regional cooperative agreements on water and public works programs; outsourcing programs such as street sweeping an annual trash pickup; and employee success in numerous national awards for programs and facilities, including recognition by the American Public Works Association, American Water Works Association, Water Environment Federation and the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Ron has also been involved in the cleanup and closure of the former Rocky Flats nuclear