had only two and a half schools, 1,100 students, and negative finances. Today, as a result of his leadership, it boasts nine highly acclaimed schools, 4,250 students, and a sound financial condition, despite the difficult challenges facing state and local governments in California. Moreover, student achievement, as measured in test scores and parent satisfaction, is very high. I think it is also remarkable to note that, while heading such a successful district, Ron continued to teach school finance and law part-time at the University of LaVerne from 1988 through 2001.

Mr. Speaker, several prestigious honors have highlighted Dr. Feist's 38-year career as an educator. For example, he was the Napa County Teacher of the Year in 1974–75; in 1988, he was named the Placer County Distinguished School Administrator; in 1990–91, he was recognized as the Placer County Administrator of the Year; and in 2001–02, he was named Region 2 Superintendent of the Year. He also received the Napa Parent Teacher Association Distinguished Service Award in 1977 and the Oakmont Parents Club Outstanding Service Award in 1980.

Ron functions as the vice president of the Nevada/Placer County School Insurance Board and on the Placer/Nevada County Special Education Executive Committee. Additionally, he represented ten counties in Northern California for two years on the State Superintendency Committee of the Association of California School Administrators.

Mr. Speaker, beyond his role with the school district, Ron has been an invaluable member of the local community, having served on many boards and committees. He is the past president of the Granite Bay Chamber of Commerce, Roseville and Granite Bay Kiwanis Clubs, and Sierra Family Services, as well as past chairman of the Granite Bay Municipal Advisory Committee.

However, despite all the acclaim he has received professionally and civiclly, Ron's greatest success has occurred in the home. He and his wife of 42 years, Diane, raised three children Troy, Amy, and Heidi. In retirement, Ron looks forward to spending more time with his family, especially his nine grandchildren—Alexa, Hunter, Bryce, Jordan, Brennan, Hannah, Whitney, Devin, and Baron.

Ron will also have more time now to dedicate to his many interests, including golf, traveling, reading, cardio-training, and weight lifting. Nevertheless, it will be hard to keep him away from public education completely. He plans to do some consulting for school districts in the areas of finance and facilities.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the many people whom he has touched over the years, I thank Dr. Ron Feist for his service and wish him well in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JEFF FLAKE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, today I voted "no" on final passage of H.R. 4280, the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low Cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2004.

This is not the first time I have had to make this difficult vote. On March 13, 2003, I voted against H.R. 5, which contained nearly identical language to H.R. 2480. Both in 2003 and today, I have heard arguments as to why the Federal Government should act and why this proposed reform is badly needed. Hearing these arguments on many occasions has not made it any less difficult to vote against this bill, but I am not convinced that the Federal Government should preempt State law in this area.

Those supporting this bill have made some compelling arguments as to why Congress should step in and institute these reforms. They cite the national nature of insurance plans, whereby a doctor in Arizona might have to pay more for malpractice insurance due to an over-the-top jury award in Florida. They also note that, as doctors close up shop or stop providing high-risk care in specialties such as emergency medicine and obstetrics and gynecology, patients are forced to cross State lines in order to seek out treatment. We have all watched with dismay as hospitals have been forced to shut their doors and doctors have opted to treat patients without malpractice insurance due to the high costs of premiums. Certainly, the trial attorneys who line their pockets with egregious fees aren't suffering as a result of the mess they've made with unscrupulous lawsuits. These arguments only underscore an already evident need for the States to pursue medical malpractice reforms. However, as one who believes firmly in federalism, I am wary of supporting legislation that would, in effect, preempt other States' constitutions.

For example, California instituted real medical malpractice reform 25 years ago, which H.R. 4280 seeks to emulate. However, if the final version of H.R. 4280 differs from California's reform, then their system may ultimately be usurped by the new Federal authority created by this legislation. Punishing California's sensible reforms would be a terrible outcome.

The natural evolution of health care delivery suggest that a Federal solution such as H.R. 4280 may one day be necessary. But right now it's up to the States to begin that process, and I am already a part of those efforts in Arizona. The States should follow California's example, which has been an undeniable success over the past 25 years.