

living below the poverty line, and considerably reduced the financial burden on seniors and their families. The program has increased life expectancy among Americans, giving minorities greater access to health care, and given individuals with disabilities access to health care that was never previously available. All the while, this program has operated efficiently with our tax dollars. Administrative costs average less than two percent of expenditures, a fraction of what private insurance companies spend on such costs.

Yet while we have seen remarkable success in the last 40 years, we must ensure that the mission of Medicare is carried on through this new century. So far, this Congress has fallen woefully short. The Republican majority pushed through the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 to provide prescription drug coverage to American seniors. A noble idea, but this law falls far short of the universal coverage and prohibits the government from using common sense negotiation strategies to keep drug costs low.

As future generations reflect on the legacy of this Congress, in many respects it will be shaped by the commitments—rather than the rhetoric—that we make to our seniors. Medicare is a program that offers stability and hope for millions. It is our responsibility to continue the strong history Medicare has built. Let's give America's seniors the drug and medical coverage that they deserve.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to celebrate August 6, 1965, the day President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the historic Voting Rights Act. It and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are two of the most significant civil rights statutes ever enacted. Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to protect the voting rights of all Americans and ended the techniques that had been used for decades to deny millions of minorities the right to vote.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, those in the civil rights movement worked to get basic civil rights and voting rights enacted into statute. The cost for those in the movement was high: church burnings, bombings, shootings, and beatings. It required the ultimate sacrifice of ordinary Americans: James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner who simply sought to register voters and Jimmie Lee Jackson whose death precipitated the famous march from Selma to Montgomery.

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted, those in the civil rights movement turned their attention to the importance of obtaining voting rights. The struggle for voting rights led nonviolent civil rights marchers to gather on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama on March 7, 1965—a day that would come to be known as “Bloody Sunday” when the bravery of the marchers was tested by a brutal response, with many marchers being beaten.

The Voting Rights Act provided extensive protections by prohibiting any voting practice

that serves as an impediment to the right to vote, such as: intimidation, voter harassment, poll taxes, literacy tests, language barriers, racial gerrymandering and other tools of disenfranchisement. It also provided for criminal and civil sanctions against persons interfering with the right to vote.

It is clear that the Voting Rights Act has been a great success. Consider the statistics. At the time the Act was adopted, only one-third of all African Americans of voting age were on the registration rolls in the specially covered states, while two-thirds of eligible whites were registered. In some states, fewer than five percent of African Americans were registered.

Today, African American voter registration rates are approaching parity with that of whites in many areas, and Hispanic voters in jurisdictions added to the list of those specially covered by the Act in 1975 are not far behind. Also, thanks to the Voting Rights Act, today there are 81 members of Congress of African American, Latino, Asian and Native American descent, and thousands of minorities in elected offices around the country. Despite the progress from 40 years of enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, voter inequities, disparities, and obstacles still remain for far too many minority voters.

It is important that we recognize this significant anniversary because The Voting Rights Act is an expression of important American values—equality, nondiscrimination, fairness, and ensuring the full participation in our society by everyone. Therefore, I celebrate this anniversary with pride and reflection knowing that although we have come a long way, we still have great distance to go in order to fulfill our nation's ideals of equality and equal opportunity.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-CENTRAL AMERICA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, DR-CAFTA is good for our country, and good for Kansas. The market access provisions of the agreement will remove remaining trade barriers in the region that raise the cost of Kansas exports, and will keep Kansas exporters competitive internationally. According to the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, exports of manufactured and non-manufactured products from Kansas to the Central American region totaled \$23 million in 2004. That figure will grow after the signatories to the agreement implement DR-CAFTA. For manufactured goods, duties on 80 percent of U.S. exports to the Central American region will be eliminated immediately, with the remaining duties phased out over a period of up to 10 years. Manufactured goods accounted for 89 percent of Kansas' exports in goods to the DR-CAFTA countries last year, and Kansas will continue to benefit under the market access provisions of DR-CAFTA.

Additionally, DR-CAFTA will open markets for American agricultural goods. For agricul-

tural products, duties on over 50 percent of U.S. exports would be eliminated immediately upon implementation of DR-CAFTA, with the rest phased out over a period of up to 20 years. Together, the DR-CAFTA countries are Kansas' 11th largest market for crop exports. This agreement will benefit Kansas farmers.

As a transportation hub, the Kansas City metro area, which is ideally situated on the banks of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers and home to hundreds of miles of commercial rail lines and highways, will play a critical role in moving Kansas exports to market.

Finally, trade liberalization benefits American consumers. Greater movements of goods and services between the United States and other nations increases competition and applies downward pressure on prices, which will help keep inflation at historically low levels. Though the importance of international trade on subduing inflation should not be overstated, neither should it be dismissed. Increased competition, together with a reduction in production costs, can reduce the prices for consumer goods and services in our country.

The global integration of markets for goods and services, referred to as “globalization,” is a fact of modern life. As we enter the twenty-first century, the pace of globalization is accelerating. The United States has been a global leader in international trade for decades. And our country is well positioned to shape the direction of globalization if we continue to engage with the rest of the world.

In theory, international trade can raise standards of living and efficiently allocate resources between nations. In reality, the potential benefits and drawbacks of trade are usually addressed within the language of trade agreements. Each trade agreement that the United States considers entering into with our trading partners needs to be examined carefully on the merits of the agreement. While I have concerns with DR-CAFTA, I believe the potential benefits of the agreement outweigh its potential deficiencies. For that reason, I plan to vote in favor of DR-CAFTA.

Mr. Speaker, twenty years ago several of the DR-CAFTA countries, each of which has its own unique history and culture, were mired in civil war and suffering from deplorable human rights abuses. The region has come a long way over the last two decades, but there is more work to be done. By passing DR-CAFTA, we have an opportunity to help the region in its progress toward greater freedom and economic prosperity. As former President Jimmy Carter wrote in expressing his strong support for DR-CAFTA: “For the first time ever, we have a chance to reinforce democracies in the region. This is the moment to move forward and to help those leaders that want to modernize and humanize their countries. Moreover, strong economies in the region are the best antidote to illegal immigration from the region.”

DR-CAFTA has the potential to create jobs in the region, raise standards of living for the citizens in the DR-CAFTA countries, and further stabilize what has been an unstable region. Defeat of this trade agreement will have devastating consequences for the region, which will likely lose textile and apparel jobs to countries with lower wages and weaker worker protections. Turning our backs on the DR-CAFTA countries is counterproductive, both for the Central American region and for America, while engagement holds the promise of future benefits in our hemisphere.

While DR-CAFTA will bring tangible benefits to both the United States and the Central American region, there are chapters in the agreement that could have been improved as this process unfolded. I am disappointed that there was not more consultation with Congress as the administration negotiated the agreement. Members of both parties have concerns regarding DR-CAFTA's labor provisions. Although the agreement subjects failure to enforce labor laws to binding dispute settlement, which could lead to fines or sanctions, greater protections of workers' rights should have been made subject to binding dispute settlement.

In addition, while Congress will provide \$20 million in funding for capacity building efforts in the DR-CAFTA countries to help those nations implement and enforce the provisions of the agreement, \$20 million is not enough. More funding will be needed in future years to help the DR-CAFTA countries enforce the laws that protect workers, including children, from potentially dangerous work conditions.

I am also disappointed that the agreement does not confront the reality of globalization's negative consequences here at home. Trade agreements need to do more to help workers transition from jobs in distressed industries to new jobs in areas that stand to benefit from our modern economy. I would like to see greater efforts to retrain displaced workers. I look forward to working with the administration to help American workers remain competitive and employed well into the twenty-first century.

Mr. Speaker, globalization is a fact of life in our country and the rest of the world in 2005. It is part of a broad, long trend toward global economic integration. The United States should embrace its historic role as a global leader in international trade and seek to shape the path of a trend that will continue to unfold ready or not. The United States has the strongest economy and the best workforce in the world. We are well positioned to succeed throughout the twenty-first century. DR-CAFTA is not a perfect trade agreement. But it is a step in the right direction for the future of our country.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SACRIFICE OF ARMY SGT MICHAEL SCHAFFER OF SPRING HILL, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and sacrifice of Army Staff Sergeant Michael Schaffer of Spring Hill, FL. Sgt. Schaffer was killed by enemy fire July 25, 2005 in Oruzgan, Afghanistan. He leaves behind his loving wife Danielle, parents Karen and Dan Barr, brother Tim, and grandparents Ron Forbes and Stan and Loretta Barr. In times when children and families need role models to look up to and emulate, Sgt. Schaffer was a true American hero.

A volunteer for the army in 1999, Sgt. Schaffer performed his basic training at Fort Benning, GA and Airborne training in Fort Bragg, NC. After he completed his training,

Sgt. Schaffer served in both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, as well as Kosovo. A proud member of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Sgt. Schaffer was one of the first paratroopers to jump into Kirkuk, Iraq during the March, 2003 invasion. Sgt. Schaffer served nine months in Iraq before being transferred to Afghanistan, and had expressed interest in going back to Iraq to be where the action was.

In addition to serving honorably in the United States Army, Sgt. Schaffer was a true and dedicated family man. Married to his wife Danielle within a week of shipping out to Kosovo, the couple was in constant contact throughout his tours of duty. At the time of his death, Sgt. Schaffer and his wife were looking to adopt a baby.

As a sign of the love for his family, Sgt. Schaffer wrote a poem to his mother before he left for basic training.

Mother, there comes a time in every boy's life when he leaves the warmth of the nest. Perhaps to look for all your qualities in his future wife; or join the working class like the rest. I am standing here before you this very day. To let you know when I leave not to fear, because I will never be that far away. And you will always be near and dear to my heart, it is where I will keep your love. I know that the bond that we have between us cannot be torn apart, and when I think of you so beautiful like a white dove, I want you to know that as I leave for the Army, if you are feeling scared, do not be afraid to show it. Your love for me won't let any one harm me. I will be back home before you know it.

Mr. Speaker, as a mother and a grandmother, I know the pain that comes when a child leaves home for the first time. What Sgt. Schaffer's family must cope with today, however, is the knowledge that their child will not be returning home. I can offer them this pledge, however; that this Congress will never forget the sacrifice Sgt. Schaffer made serving his country.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE BENEFITS AND IMPORTANCE OF FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS AND THE MEDICAID PROSPECTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR SUCH CENTERS

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation today calling attention to the essential work of America's community health centers in providing quality affordable health care to people served by the Medicaid program and the nation's uninsured. I am pleased to be joined today by my colleague, the gentleman from New York, Mr. TOWNS, and a number of my House colleagues in supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, community health centers will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year as will the Medicaid and Medicare programs. Among these programs, Medicaid and community health centers enjoy a special relationship, as twin pillars of a broad effort to improve health care for poor, minority, and un-

der-served Americans. The two programs in fact are specifically designed to work in tandem with one another to make access to quality health care a reality for the nation's most vulnerable populations.

Recognizing the importance of this unique relationship, the Congress in 1989 made health center services a guaranteed benefit under Medicaid. In 2000, I joined with a bipartisan majority of colleagues in the Congress to once again reaffirm the importance of this relationship by supporting legislation that created the health center Medicaid Prospective Payment System. As the Congress intended, this payment system has allowed health centers to provide and expand primary care and preventive services to more people in need, while promoting efficient operation of and ensuring adequate Medicaid reimbursement for these centers.

Today, because of Congress's wise actions, community health centers help to form the backbone of America's health care safety net, providing quality health care to 15 million underserved individuals nationwide, nearly 6 million of whom are enrolled in Medicaid.

In my own State of Mississippi, health centers are the family doctor and medical home for more than 300,000 individuals, more than a third of whom are covered by Medicaid.

However, health centers are doing more than just providing affordable quality health care to and improving the health status of the Nation's vulnerable populations, they are also delivering cost savings to taxpayers and to all payers of health center services. To be sure, health centers' costs rank among the lowest, and health centers are effectively reducing the need for more expensive hospital in-patient and specialty care. In addition, dozens of studies over the past three decades have found that health centers save the Medicaid program 30 percent or more in total annual spending per beneficiary, compared to other providers. Studies have also shown that the cost of treating Medicaid patients through health centers is 26 to 40 percent lower for prescription drugs costs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe health centers are a top priority of President Bush and this Congress because they undoubtedly are providing cost-effective, high-quality health care to the Nation's poor and medically underserved and because they are a vital safety net in the Nation's health delivery system. I urge my colleagues to show their support for America's community health centers by supporting this important legislation.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-CENTRAL AMERICAN-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Central American Free Trade Agreement and encourage my colleagues to join me in opposing its ratification. Trade agreements of this magnitude must not be entered into lightly, and their impact must be investigated thoroughly.