

glad to see that he has backed up that vision with a substantial request for U.S. assistance.

SUPPORT OF THE ASSURED FUNDING FOR VETERANS HEALTH CARE ACT

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Congressman EVANS' legislation, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act, and am proud to be an original cosponsor. This legislation will guarantee that veterans receive the health care they have earned and deserve.

With an increase in the number of veterans seeking care, a dramatic rise in medical costs, and years of inadequate VA health care funding, there is a clear and growing mismatch between the demand for VA services and available funds to support these services. The number of patients entering the VA health care system has increased by 134 percent since 1996, but funding for medical care has increased just 44 percent. This has resulted in unprecedented waiting times for routine and specialized medical care nationwide. In my home state of Michigan, some veterans are waiting more than 6 months for an initial doctor's appointment. This situation is untenable.

The reason for this problem is evident and so is the solution. Every year, veterans have to fight with a myriad of non-veterans' programs to receive the money necessary for their health care treatment. To end this annual budget battle, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act would require Congress to meet our veterans' medical care needs by providing funding for VA health care based on the number of enrollees in the system and medical inflation.

This is legislation that Members on both sides of the aisle should support. In fact, a commission established by the White House, the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans, issued a report in March 2003 noting the mismatch between veterans' needs and VA services, and recommending guaranteed funding to fix this problem. To date, the Administration has refused to endorse, or even to acknowledge, the Task Force's recommendation.

The current system is not serving our veterans well. The VA must have a sufficient budget to effectively manage its health care programs, to hire the appropriate number of staff, and to adequately plan for the coming year well in advance. Guaranteed veterans' health care funding would end the year-to-year uncertainty the VA and our veterans face, and would fulfill the obligation this country has to the men and women who served in uniform.

HONORING SISTER ANN MCGUINN,
HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sister Ann McGuinn, of

Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, for her lifetime of service attending to the spiritual and health care needs of others.

Sister Ann is retiring from a long and distinguished career as a health care administrator with the St. Joseph Hospitals System of California. She served as Vice-President of sponsorship for St. Joseph's Hospital of Humboldt County from 1992 to 2005. She formerly served as the administrator for St. Joseph Hospital, in Orange from 1961 to 1972; and CEO of Queen of the Valley Hospital in Napa from 1971 to 1992. Under her leadership, the Children's Hospital of Orange County was established. During her tenure at Queen of the Valley she established a dental clinic for the poor, now called Sister Anne Dental Clinic, developed specialized cancer programs and created the system's first home health care.

Throughout her long career, Sister Ann has been a tireless champion for the poor and an advocate for the vulnerable. She has been generous with her time and energy and is highly regarded by those who have had an opportunity to work with her. She has played a large role in improving the lives of thousands of people.

In Humboldt County, Sister Ann's force of compassion brought together a myriad of resources to fund homeless programs, winter shelters and improved dental health for poor children. She has been unflinchingly supportive of efforts to expand rural healthcare services, particularly for battered women and underprivileged children.

In 1992, I had the privilege of naming Sister Ann "Woman of the Year" for the 2nd Senate District of the California State Senate. She is the past recipient of the "Value in Action Award for Justice" presented by the St. Joseph Health System.

Sister Ann entered the order of St. Joseph of Orange in 1944; she received her RN from Mary's Help Hospital, now called Cedar Sinai Medical Center, in San Francisco. She was trained as an obstetrics nurse. She is the daughter of John and Mary McGuinn of San Francisco.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize Sister Ann McGuinn for her compassion, leadership and commitment to families and the less fortunate and for her extraordinary record of public service to the people of the State of California.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE REVEREND WARREN E. DARNELL

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 100th birthday of The Reverend Warren E. Darnell and to honor his 75 years of service to his community.

Eager to begin his work in this world, Rev. Darnell was born before the doctor arrived at his parents' home on February 4, 1905. From nearly that day forward, Rev. Darnell has dedicated his life to helping others. He graduated from Hanover College in 1928, and went on to study at the Union Theological Seminary, receiving his Master of Divinity Studies in 1931.

Shortly after completing his education and being ordained by the Presbyterian Church,

Rev. Darnell joined The Community Church of Little Neck as a Pastor. During his 53-plus year tenure with the Church, Rev. Darnell oversaw tremendous growth in the congregation's membership and a considerable expansion of the church facilities. Upon his retirement, Rev. Darnell was named Pastor Emeritus of The Community Church of Little Neck, and he continued his faithful service to Little Neck and the surrounding communities by performing weddings, baptisms, funerals, and supplying pulpits until the age of 95.

In addition to his church service, Rev. Darnell has received numerous awards and accolades. He helped found the Great Neck Clergy Association to fight anti-Semitism and promote brotherhood, tolerance, and understanding among the different religious traditions represented in the community. Rev. Darnell also served as the Director and Trustee of the New York State Christian Endeavor Union Summer Assemblies, as a commissioner to the General Assembly of The United Presbyterian Church, and on various committees of the New York City Presbytery.

Local and family values have always been of the utmost importance to Rev. Darnell. He and his wife, Dorothy, celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary this past September, together with their three children, seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I commend The Reverend Warren E. Darnell for his 75 years of dedicated service to his community. As a pastor, community leader, husband, and father, Rev. Darnell has contributed much to the great many lives he has touched. In recognition of this, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in honoring The Reverend Warren E. Darnell as he celebrates his 100th birthday.

TRIBUTE TO ART STAMPER

HON. BEN CHANDLER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor I rise today to pay tribute to one of Kentucky's finest musicians, Art Stamper.

Nationally acclaimed in Bluegrass music, Art Stamper began playing the banjo and fiddle before age 10. His first fiddle had a self-made bow and Art taught himself how to play his first song. One of 4 sons and 3 daughters of the late Martha and Hiram Stamper, Art Stamper was born in 1933 in a log house in Knott County, Kentucky. Art Stamper got his love of music from his father. Hiram Stamper was an accomplished musician, and Art quickly followed suit, becoming a professional musician by age 16. Art Stamper helped define the music we now call Bluegrass. During his career and travels around the world, he worked with Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers, the Osborne Brothers, the Goins Brothers, Larry Sparks, Jim & Jesse, Bill Clifton and J.D. Crowe.

Art Stamper is not only known as a master fiddler but also for his mastery as a hairdresser. He won many awards as owner of Louisville's The Way of Art. Art never stopped playing the fiddle as other musicians would come for haircuts and play while waiting their turn.

Art Stamper is the father of two sons and one daughter and husband of Kay Kawaguchi Stamper. Mr. Speaker, Art Stamper passed away on Sunday, January 23, 2005, but will always be remembered for his endless contributions to society and especially that of Bluegrass music.

COMMENDING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FOR HOLDING FREE AND FAIR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Res. 56, "commending the Palestinian people for holding recent elections." This resolution is a reflection of our support for the Palestinian people and their determination to build a viable Palestinian State based on freedom and empowered democratic institutions.

I strongly support our President when he stated, "The United States stands ready to help the Palestinian people realize their aspirations." The election of President Mahmoud Abbas is an encouraging step in that direction.

The election of new Palestinian leadership and Labor's entry into the Israeli Government have changed the circumstances and expectations surrounding the Middle East peace process. The newly elected Palestinian leadership and Israel should take advantage of this opportunity and implement concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state.

The United States has a vital national security interest in a Middle East in which two states, Israel and Palestine, will live side by side in peace and security, based on the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. A stable and peaceful Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for.

The Palestinian elections represent a vital part in that process. Over 800 international observers monitored the recent elections. Among them were 80 observers led by former President Jimmy Carter, who stated that,

There is no doubt that the will of the Palestinians was adequately expressed, that Abu Mazen has the support and respect of his people, and that he is dedicated to the peaceful pursuit of a peace agreement. . . .

Palestinians from all walks of life participated in the Presidential elections, representing approximately 70 percent of eligible voters. Young and old, women and men, even those with serious physical disabilities, were determined to play their role in building a better future.

The Palestinian Central Election Commission should also be commended for its commitment to ensure free and fair elections and for facilitating a process whereby Palestinians could vote in a positive voting atmosphere. Commission representatives trained more than 16,000 electoral officials to staff the 2,800 polling sites throughout the West Bank and Gaza and conducted their operations in a professional way. Every election is a learning experience, and I support the Palestinian Central Election Commission in its request to apply

lessons learned from the recent presidential election to the parliamentary elections scheduled later this year.

The Palestinian Presidential elections of January 9, 2005, and the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled this July represent an historic opportunity for Palestinians to affirm their various political expressions and forge a government that can respond to their needs.

It is clear the Palestinians want institutions that are transparent and accountable. The United States, Israel, and the rest of the international community should do all they can to eradicate the sources of extremism that undermine moderate Palestinian leadership. Such actions will foster democratic development among the Palestinians and enable their elected institutions to produce constructive results for its people.

I am encouraged by Abbas' recent decision to ban the use of unregistered weapons by civilians. Such steps, matched by cooperation on the part of Israel, will assist President Abbas' determination to restore rule of law in the Occupied Territories.

I congratulate President Abbas and look forward to his success in achieving the national aspirations of the Palestinian people and his role in bringing peace to the Holy Land.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution and its passage.

HONORING SANDRA BATES, COMMISSIONER OF THE FEDERAL TECHNOLOGY SERVICE

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sandra Bates for over 36 years of dedicated service to the Federal Government.

Sandra Bates has finished off an illustrious career in the Federal Government. She started out in 1969 as intern with the General Services Administration. She worked her way up as an agency liaison for telecommunications and automatic data processing acquisitions on the original governmentwide long distance services program, FTS, before moving on to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1979. While at NASA, she served in various telecommunications positions until 1993 when she was named chief of communications with responsibility for all NASA operational, command, and control networks worldwide.

She returned to GSA in 1996 and assumed the positions of assistant commissioner for service and delivery and deputy commissioner in the Federal Technology Service before taking over the role of commissioner of the Federal Technology Service in April 2000. As commissioner, she has, among other things, successfully guided the Federal Technology Service through the most recent edition of the governmentwide telecommunications program, FTS 2001.

Throughout her career as a civil servant, Sandra Bates has been active in the federal technology community, serving in leadership roles with a number of government and industry councils and associations. She has received numerous awards, including NASA's

Exceptional Service Medal, the Presidential Rank Award of Meritorious Service, the Government Information Technology Award, the Fed 100 Award, 3 separate years, the Industry Advisory Council's Outstanding Individual Government Communicator Award, and the American Council for Technology's John J. Franke Award for Extraordinary Contributions to Long Term Federal Service. She leaves behind a long list of accomplishments in her distinguished career of service to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to extend my best wishes to Ms. Bates on her retirement as commissioner of the Federal Technology Service. While I know that she will be greatly missed, her retirement is well deserved. I call upon my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Bates and in wishing her the best of luck in all future endeavors.

WE NEED TELECOM REFORM

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 8, 2005

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the anniversary of one of the hardest fought legislative battles of the last decade and to discuss the need for improving it this year.

It was 9 years ago this week that Congress last passed comprehensive telecom reform. The biggest issues then were how best to provide competition in both local and long distance telephone service and to ensure that everyone, including those in rural areas, has access to phone service.

In the last 9 years we have seen advancements in communication technology that could not have been envisioned. Near universal access to the Internet, development and deployment of broadband technology, more wireless phones in service than wireline accounts, e-mail on the go and cable, phone, and satellite companies all vying to deliver an entire suite of video and communications services to a growing marketplace. New technologies and industries unfettered by the constraints of old rules have competed vigorously for consumers' business, transforming forever the way business and consumers get information and communicate with one another.

Unfortunately, our telecom laws have not kept pace with growing demand for choice and competition in the marketplace. Some industries continue to operate under arcane regulations that stifle ingenuity, hinder job creation, and bottle up needed economic investment. These same regulations also place the burden of meeting our shared national priorities of universal phone service and 911 emergency services squarely on the shoulders of a single industry—the local phone companies.

Our Nation's telecom laws are due for some badly needed, free-market reforms, changes that will build upon the successes of the last 9 years in terms of innovation and product delivery while also addressing the issues of social responsibility and competition. Unlike what we did in 1996, these new telecom laws must do more to anticipate advancements and create a mechanism where the playing field is level for every company that wishes to compete.

Specifically, we face some daunting challenges. The United States—despite being the