

Mr. Addison is an educator and administrator at the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA), which is a State-run facility for emotionally handicapped youngsters. In addition, he has facilitated anger management groups at the House of Ruth (a shelter for victims of domestic violence) or men who have a history of domestic violence.

Ms. Addison was a former truant officer for the public school system and has been active in supporting other adoptive families by developing an adoption support group for families that have adopted through the Baltimore City Department of Social Services. Although the support group is no longer active, she continues to support approved prospective adoptive families who are currently waiting to be matched with a child who needs a home.

PROTECTING MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEDICARE PART D DRUG PROGRAM

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY (D-IL) to introduce the Medicare Informed Choice Act. This bill provides needed extra protections for beneficiaries during the first year of implementation of the new Medicare prescription drug program.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that participation rates by private drug plans and new Medicare Advantage plans in the new Part D drug program will be much higher than originally predicted. There will be an average of 40–50 plans per region in the country. Babette S. Edgar, finance and operations division director in CMS's Medicare Drug Benefit Group, was recently quoted saying, "There's going to be a lot of choice out there . . . It's going to be very, very confusing for [beneficiaries]."

We agree with Ms. Edgar. That's why we're introducing the Medicare Informed Choice Act. It is a simple bill with three important protections:

(1) Delays late enrollment penalties: Beneficiaries need adequate time to make an informed choice. The bill expands the existing six-month open enrollment period to the entire year of 2006. This will give people added time to do the research and make the best decisions for themselves. Six months is not adequate time to reach and counsel 42 million beneficiaries on this complex new program.

(2) Protections against bad choices: This provision gives every Medicare beneficiary the opportunity to make a one-time change in plan enrollment at any point in 2006. Marketing is sure to be very aggressive and people may make a bad choice. Given the importance of the decision they make, it is appropriate to give beneficiaries a one-time chance to correct an initial mistake made during the first year of implementation.

(3) Protections for employer-provided retiree benefits: Some retirees might not understand that purchasing Part D coverage could cost them their retiree health benefits. This provision would protect retirees from being dropped by their former employer's plan during the first

year of implementation, so that beneficiaries have time to correct enrollment mistakes.

Medicare beneficiaries are going to soon begin getting bombarded by information on the new drug benefit. Some information will come directly from the government in the form of the 2006 Medicare & You Handbook, a government insert in an upcoming edition of Parade Magazine, government-prepared television advertisements, and mailings from Health and Human Services and the Social Security Administration, communications from their Members of Congress and Senators, and more. On top of all of these messages, they'll be recipients of direct marketing from untold numbers of private plans urging them to join their drug plan. They'll also likely hear from advocacy organizations like the Medicare Rx Access Network, State Health Insurance Programs around the country, and senior organizations. If they currently have retiree health benefits, they'll hear from their former employers as well.

Medicare beneficiaries are being told that there will be counselors available to assist them at 1–800–Medicare and at local State Health Insurance Programs around the country. We know from experience that these phone lines and support services will be overburdened. Beneficiaries should not pay the price for a support system that may not operate effectively. To avert that, we must inject some flexibility into the implementation period.

The Administration's own actuaries are concerned that participation rates will be far lower than they'd initially anticipated—they've announced figures as low as 9 million out of Medicare's more than 40 million beneficiaries. Again, CMS is right to be concerned. We appreciate their recognition of the pending chaos for seniors and people with disabilities.

By delaying late enrollment penalties, giving every beneficiary a chance to change plans during the first year, and protecting those with employer-provided retiree health benefits, we can make sure our constituents are not forced into making quick—and wrong—decisions during the first year of this new program. By providing this flexibility, it is our hope that people will feel more confident in their ability to make an informed choice.

We are pleased that Representatives DINGELL, RANGEL, MILLER, WAXMAN, BROWN, and PALLONE—Congressional leaders on health care policy—have all joined us in introducing this legislation today. The bill has also been endorsed by leading senior citizen advocacy groups including: the Alliance for Retired Americans, the American Federation of Teachers, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, Consumers Union, Families USA, the Medicare Rights Center, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

We urge CMS Administrator McClellan, HHS Secretary Leavitt, President Bush and Republicans in Congress to join with us to help mitigate the weight of the difficult choices that beneficiaries will have to make by endorsing the Medicare Informed Choice Act and working for its swift passage.

Let's work together to make sure that initial choices don't negatively impact Medicare beneficiaries who may have acted without all the information needed to make the best choice. Protecting Medicare beneficiaries should not be a partisan endeavor. We look forward to working with Members on both sides of the aisle to enact this important legislation.

RECOGNIZING CASEY M. DUPREE FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Casey M. Dupree, son of Keith and Carol Dupree of Saint Joseph, Missouri. Casey is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 31, and by earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout. Casey will receive his Eagle Award on October 2, 2005 at Saint Francis Xavier Parish Center.

Casey has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the six years Casey has been involved with Scouting, he has earned numerous merit badges, honors, and leadership positions. Casey has served his troop as Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, and Troop Guide. Casey holds the rank of Tom Tom Beater in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. During his years in the Scouts, Casey spent six years at Camp Geiger, and went on both the Canoe Trip and Katy Trail 50 Mile Bike Ride for three years.

For his Eagle Scout project, Casey stained flower boxes for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Casey M. Dupree for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD OF LEXMARK INTERNATIONAL

HON. BEN CHANDLER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shower praise on my constituents at Lexmark International, whose recent awards for environmental excellence show yet again the extremely impressive commitment of Lexmark to environmental protection.

As I am sure most of my colleagues know, Lexmark is one of the world's leading manufacturers of printers and developers of cutting-edge printing solutions for enterprises large and small. Lexmark is headquartered in Lexington, the heart of the Sixth Congressional District of Kentucky, and truly has become a global leader in the information technology sector.

Having toured Lexmark's headquarters and having viewed the range of highly-sophisticated equipment that Lexmark offers, and having met with one impressive engineer and manager after another during my visit with Lexmark, I congratulate Lexmark on being one of the true industrial gems of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

I am especially proud of Lexmark because when my grandfather served as Governor of Kentucky, he attracted Lexmark's predecessor, IBM, to the location Lexmark so

proudly occupies today. When I work with my friends at Lexmark, I will confess that I am mindful of my grandfather's role decades ago.

Lexmark does more than produce great products and systems for its customers. It upholds an environmental ethic that has been in place since the company's inception in 1991.

Most recently, Lexmark's headquarters was awarded with ISO (International Standardization Organization) 14001 certification, which is the gold standard for environmental compliance. Only the best of the best achieve it. ISO 14001 is the world's most recognized environmental system management framework, and to be certified—as Lexmark has been—takes an enormous amount of effort.

ISO 14001 certification in Lexington is only the most recent addition to a long line of environmental achievements by Lexmark. Almost immediately after the company's inception in 1991, Lexmark initiated a novel and still-creative program for recycling used printer cartridges. Over the past 14 years this program has redirected millions of pounds of cartridges away from landfills and to recycling facilities. And these are not just any recycling facilities, but workshops that employ physically challenged adults to disassemble the cartridges for recycling in a safe environment.

Lexmark is exporting not only great products, but also its environmental ethic. Lexmark's site at Orleans, France, became one of the first companies in Europe to receive ISO 14001 certification. Lexmark Philippines has received national recognition there, not just for the company's commitment to environmental responsibility in every aspect of product design, manufacture, distribution, and use, but for efforts to preserve vital ecosystems as well.

Even more recently, Lexmark sites in Rosyth, Scotland; Boulder, Colorado; Juarez, Mexico; Chihuahua, Mexico; and Cebu, Philippines have met all the requirements to achieve ISO 14001.

I am sure my colleagues would agree that for a company to combine world-class products with a superior commitment to the environment and worker health and safety represents exactly what we hope American industry will do around the world.

Lexmark's participation as a charter member in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's EnergyStar program, its receipt of the Kentucky Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for Industrial Environmental Leadership, and its leadership in everything from "The Reforest the Bluegrass Program" in Lexington to Lexmark's Rainforest Project, which protects the indigenous peoples, plants, and animals of the rainforest, all reflect the unsurpassed commitment to environmental protection that defines the company.

The Lexmark Environmental Program has committed the company to three areas of concentration: the design of its products and services, its management of resources, and the commitment to being a responsible neighbor and employer. If the various awards Lexmark has received are any indication, the company certainly seems to be living up to its mission.

Mr. Speaker, you can see why I am so proud of my constituents at Lexmark. I ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to recognize the many outstanding accomplishments of Lexmark's employees recently and over the history of the company.

STATEMENT ON WAR IN IRAQ

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, this weekend thousands of Americans will congregate on the National Mall and in cities all across this country to protest the Bush Administration's elective war in Iraq. By raising their voices en masse, they hope to send a message to President Bush that he and his Administration, thus far, has been unwilling to hear: the American people don't support this war.

The war was always predicated on the false premise that Iraq was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. This Congress was negligent in not demanding more proof of the President and then refusing to hold him accountable for his exaggerated and unfounded claims.

His war strategy was equally flawed. He has failed to provide the resources our men and women in uniform need to be successful, and American lives have been lost as a result. In 2002 and 2003, Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki warned that not enough boots on the ground would lead to a power vacuum that our enemies would exploit. Tragically, his premonitions have been born out.

To date, approximately 1,900 brave Americans have been killed in Iraq, and there appears to be no immediate end to the quagmire in Iraq.

The American people are rightly asking whether we are any closer to a stable and democratic Iraq today than when the President declared "Mission Accomplished." If experience has taught us anything, it is that democracy cannot be forced upon a nation by gun point. Yet, military force seems to be Bush's preferable strategy.

A recent GAO report indicates that the Defense Department has no ability to account for billions of Federal dollars expended on the war in Iraq, and there are reports of widespread corruption within the Iraqi government. Iraq's own Finance Minister Ali Allawi admitted, "Huge amounts of money have disappeared. In return, we got nothing but scraps of metal."

Meanwhile, Congress continues to debate how the Federal Government will afford the recovery effort from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Some of my Republican colleagues have suggested that we cut spending on domestic programs for health care, education and transportation. The American people, by and large, reject this approach. A recent CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll revealed that a full 54 percent of the respondents felt that the relief effort should be financed by cutting funding for the war. Only 6 percent felt Congress should cut domestic spending.

In the debate over guns and butter, the American people have spoken clearly. Now all we need is a President that is willing to carry out the will of the people.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL DAVID HERRING FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Michael David Herring, son of Mary Kay and Leon Herring of Saint Joseph, Missouri. Michael is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 31, and by earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout. Michael will receive his Eagle Award on October 2, 2005 at Saint Francis Xavier Parish Center.

Michael has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the 11 years Michael has been involved with Scouting, he has earned numerous merit badges, honors, and leadership positions. Michael has served his troop as Assistant Patrol Leader, Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, Quartermaster, and Troop Guide. Michael holds the rank of Tom Tom Beater in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, and participated in Junior Leadership Training. In addition to these honors, Michael earned the Arrow of Light Award, Pope Pius XII Unit Award, and the Ad Altari Dei and Parvuli Dei religious awards. During his 11 years in the scouts, Brandon attended Camp Geiger for six summers.

For his Eagle Scout project, Michael planted five red sunset maple trees at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Once fully grown, the trees will separate the parking lot from the playground.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Michael David Herring for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

COMMEMORATING THE APPLING COUNTY GIRLS MIDGET ALL-STAR SOFTBALL TEAM

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commemorate the Appling County Girls Midget All-Star Softball Team on winning the Georgia State Championship.

July 24, 2005 was a day of victory for the Appling County Girls Midget All-Star Softball Team. They won the Georgia State Championship 6 to 3 over Jeff Davis County. These 11–12-year-old girls have worked tremendously hard to have an undefeated season and win the state championship. Each team member deserves to be commended on their team work and good sportsmanship.

The coaches of this Midget All-Star team have spent endless hours working with this talented group of young women. The members of the winning team are Laci Bass, Brianna Black, Hannah Brazzell, Rebecca Carter, Courtney Clements, Christian Collins, Taylor Dominey, Candyce Eason, Tori Hall,