

A VALUABLE SERVICE FROM  
BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to announce that BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, BCBSSC, ably led by President Ed Sellers, is now offering a valuable service in doctors' offices throughout our State.

Recently, The Wall Street Journal reported that BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina has begun to offer physician offices a swipe-card reader that will immediately inform members "how much the insurer will pay and what the patient owes."

Physicians can lease the swipe-card readers from Companion Technologies, a subsidiary of BCBSSC; the health insurer plans to send members a card that they can swipe through the readers, which will connect to the BCBSSC system through a broadband Internet line. The swipe-card readers will have the ability to process debit and credit card payments and provide information about eligibility and claims information.

Companion officials said they hope other health insurers will integrate the swipecard readers into their systems. Companion President Harvey Galloway said, "Many doctors lose significant dollars because patients don't treat doctor's office payments like they do their Visa bills." He added, "The advantage to the doctor's office is knowing, while they have the patient in front of them, how much the patient liability is, and not having to go after them after they leave the office."

I am hopeful that this new benefit will prove to be helpful to patients and physicians throughout South Carolina.

**THE MAUELLE SHIREK POST  
OFFICE BUILDING**

SPEECH OF

**HON. BOB ETHERIDGE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 27, 2005*

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments about H.R. 438.

In the House we routinely name Federal post offices after notable Americans. In fact, last year I responded to a request from numerous constituents to name the post office in Dunn, NC after the late General William C. Lee.

The bill on the floor today, H.R. 438, would rename the post office at 2000 Allston Way in Berkeley, California after Ms. Maudelle Shirek. I am concerned about the lack of committee review over this bill, as H.R. 438 was not heard or marked up by the Government Reform Committee. It is the responsibility of the committee of jurisdiction to review the qualifications of the individual being honored and to determine if he or she should be a candidate for Federal recognition.

Despite my reservations about the review process for H.R. 438, I will vote for this legis-

lation as a matter of routine congressional courtesy and respect for the bill's sponsor Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and her constituents.

**SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE  
INSURANCE ENHANCEMENT ACT  
OF 2005**

SPEECH OF

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 28, 2005*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for the bill that is before us, H.R. 3200, the "Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Enhancement Act" of 2005, a bill that I have cosponsored.

This bill will increase federally subsidized life insurance for military personnel to \$400,000, and that increase will be permanent.

If one of our Nation's finest men and women is killed in the line of duty, it is our Nation's obligation to provide an insurance policy that can assist the family in meeting expenses. These changes make the insurance more in line with today's economy, and I support the passage of H.R. 3200.

There are a few other insurance changes, beyond H.R. 3200, that I believe are also the right steps to take. These changes would, first of all, affect the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance, SDVI.

When this insurance began in 1951, the premiums were based on the 1940 mortality rate. Current standard life insurance policies have premiums based on the 2001 mortality rate—except for the SDVI, which still charges premiums based on a table that is 60 years out of date. This results in higher premiums, premiums that can be as much as 3 times what veterans should be paying.

The Independent Budget, prepared and endorsed by many Veterans' Service Organizations, has recommended that the mortality table be updated. I have introduced a bill, H.R. 2747, the "Disabled Veterans Life Insurance Enhancement Act", that would make this important change and decrease this premium payment for disabled veterans.

A second part of H.R. 2747 affects the mortgage life insurance for severely service-disabled veterans (VMLI). Currently, this insurance covers only about 55 percent of the outstanding mortgage balance. We know how the cost of houses has skyrocketed in many areas of our country. In May, 2001, an evaluation by the Department of Veterans Affairs recommended increased coverage. H.R. 2747 implements those recommendations by increasing the maximum which would be expected to cover 94 percent of mortgage balances.

Let us begin to update and fix the insurance for our service members and our veterans by passing H.R. 3200. And I also encourage my colleagues to cosponsor my insurance bill, H.R. 2747, which expands what we are doing here today to additional insurance provisions and programs.

**INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION  
TO PROVIDE EQUITY FOR GRAND  
CANYON SUBCONTRACTORS**

**HON. RICK RENZI**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, with Congressman PASTOR and Congressman HAYWORTH, to authorize the National Park Service to pay for services performed by subcontractors under a contract issued for work completed at the Grand Canyon National Park.

In fiscal years 2002 and 2003, the Grand Canyon National Park issued approximately 43 task orders to Pacific General, Inc. (PGI), under an Indefinite Deliver/Indefinite Quantity contract. The value of these task orders was more than \$17 million for several construction projects throughout the Park.

According to invoices sent to the Park, PGI certified that payments were being sent to subcontractors and suppliers. However, in January 2004, complaints were received by numerous subcontractors that they had not received payment from PGI. The National Park Service paid more than \$10 million to PGI. Of this amount, PGI did not pay \$1.3 million to subcontractors who performed the work.

The Washington Contracting and Procurement Office of the National Park Service performed an acquisition management review. In this review, the National Park Service it was discovered that the Park had failed to ensure that PGI obtained the necessary payment and performance bonds required by the National Park Service and required under the Miller Act (40 D.S.C. 270a).

On February 6, 2004, the National Park Service suspended further payment to PGI and issued a suspension notice to cease activity by the contractor. PGI has ceased business and it is unlikely that the Federal Government will recover the \$1.3 million issued to PGI.

The subcontractors who were not paid by PGI fall into two categories. The first category consists of those subcontractors that performed work on various projects where the National Park Service had already paid PGI for the work. The second category of subcontractor is composed of subcontractors who performed work on various projects where the National Park Service had not paid PGI for the work. The National Park Service has withheld \$906,335 in payment for this work that will be paid to the second category of subcontractors that performed work.

The National Park Service has been unable to pay the first category of subcontractors who performed work in the Grand Canyon National Park because contract law prohibits payment directly to subcontractors due to the lack of a direct, contractual relationship between the parties.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation authorizes the National Park Service to pay the \$1.3 million to subcontractors who have performed work at Grand Canyon National Park and were not paid by PGI. This legislation only addresses this situation in the Grand Canyon National Park and the \$1.3 million that the Park paid to PGI for work performed by the subcontractors.

Many small businesses in Arizona, Utah and Washington, have been affected by this unfortunate contract mismanagement. This legislation will fix a grave inequity for many of our

small businesses and ensure that these companies are paid for work already performed in the Grand Canyon National Park.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS  
OF BLANCA ALVARADO

**HON. ZOE LOFGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the achievements of Santa Clara County Supervisor Blanca Alvarado. She continues to be a leader in local government and a national leader in the area of juvenile detention reform.

Blanca served 14 years as a San José City Councilmember representing San José's East Side before being appointed to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in 1995, filling the position I vacated when I was elected to Congress. I heartily recommended her appointment and have supported her in her good works ever since.

The daughter of a miner, Blanca has always been involved in public life, whether it was helping her parents in union and political activities, hosting a women's radio show called "Merienda musical," working for the Department of Social Services or acting as the local president of MAPA, the Mexican American Political Association.

I first met Blanca in the mid-1970's when we served together on the Housing Service Center board of directors before either of us had stood for public office. I found her then to be a caring person committed to her community and especially to the needs of the poor. Those qualities have continued throughout her life—both in her public and private efforts.

As a City Councilmember and Vice-Mayor, Blanca actively worked to build neighborhood organizations and developed community plans and partnerships to renovate impoverished neighborhoods.

Blanca's devotion to children is illustrated through projects such as the The East Initiative. The Initiative recognizes the importance of securing early access to parent support, health care, and social services for all children and their families. Blanca, as a member of the First Five Commission, lobbied for a school readiness program in the local school district. When the school district was not in a position to join with First Five in creating a school readiness program, the Commission partnered with the community and focused on the neighborhoods surrounding Cesar Chavez, San Antonio, and Arbuckle elementary schools. First Five allocated \$750,000 in the first year of the East Initiative alone.

Blanca also leads the county-wide effort to eliminate inappropriate and unnecessary incarceration of youth, especially youth of color who are over-represented in the juvenile justice system. Because of her efforts, the county has become a national model in juvenile detention reform. Since the movement began in July 2002, law enforcement, the Probation Department, the Juvenile Court, community partners, and many other participants have committed to shifting their efforts from incarceration to community-based approaches for

treating troubled youth, to allow troubled young people to turn their lives around and to have productive, hopeful futures.

One of the projects Blanca is most remembered for is her leadership in the conception—and development of the Mexican Heritage Plaza, opened in 1999 and now one of the largest Latino cultural centers in the Nation. Twelve years in the making, and built over a site once picketed by San José native son Cesar Chavez, the Plaza is a 55,000 square-foot cultural center with state of the art theatrical venues, a Smithsonian-affiliate gallery space and luscious thematic gardens that serve as a regional resource for cultural programming and education.

In addition to her years of friendship, I wish to thank Blanca Alvarado for a lifetime of public service and her determined efforts to achieve social change. "¡Si se puede!"

HONORING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF CITIZENS BANK IN  
HARTSVILLE

**HON. BART GORDON**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 100th year of existence of the Citizens Bank located in Hartsville, Tennessee. The bank will celebrate its anniversary on October 1, 2005.

Citizens Bank was established in 1905 with \$10,000 in capital. The bank's loan officers had a maximum loan authority of \$300, enough to buy a small farm 100 years ago. They started keeping daily statements in 1923.

Citizens Bank never succumbed to the Great Depression; however, the bank did close twice during its century of history—once during the flood of 1927 and again during a storm in 1929 that left 18 inches of snow on the ground.

Originally, the bank rented space in downtown Hartsville, before building its own space by the Trousdale County Courthouse. In 1984, the bank built its current facility on Highway 25.

I wish President Wilson Taylor, Vice President Betty Sue Hibdon, Customer Representative and Public Relations Coordinator Gloria Dalton and all the employees who represent the heart of Citizens Bank much success with their celebration and the start of another century of service.

HONORING SERGEANT PAUL  
KARPOWICH OF FREELAND,  
PENNSYLVANIA, WHO WAS  
KILLED IN IRAQ IN DECEMBER  
2004

**HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the life of Sergeant Paul Karpowich, of Freeland, Pennsylvania, who was killed in action in Iraq in December 2004.

Sgt. Karpowich was 30 years old when he suffered the loss of his life while trying to liberate the Iraqi people and afford them the same opportunities we enjoy in a land ruled by democracy.

The victim of a suicide bomber whose treachery claimed the lives of 20 people, Sgt. Karpowich was one of 15 military personnel who were killed. The remaining five victims were civilian employees of Department of Defense contractors.

Sgt. Karpowich was remembered by many as a "soldier's soldier." He joined the U.S. Army immediately after graduating from Bishop Hafey High School. He completed basic training at Fort Benning, GA and then went on to Fort Bragg, NC, where he graduated from paratrooper school, after which he joined the 82nd Airborne Division.

Sgt. Karpowich served as a drill instructor with the 98th Division's 1st Battalion, 417th Regiment, 1st Brigade.

He had recently been notified that he was about to be promoted to Master Sergeant, the second highest enlisted rank in the Army, when the bomb blast ripped through a mess tent in a forward operating base at Mosul, Iraq, where Sgt. Karpowich and hundreds of others were gathered.

The first Hazleton area resident to give his life in the Iraq War, Sgt. Karpowich's awards and decorations included the Army Commendation Medal, the Expert Infantryman's Badge, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Global War on Terror Medal.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to the life of a true American patriot whose courage and bravery transcended human frailty and shone like a beacon to inspire others.

Sgt. Karpowich well understood the importance of those objectives and willingly put his life in harm's way to help others enjoy the same liberties as we do. The world is a better place today because of the sacrifices made by Sgt. Karpowich and others like him.

ACKNOWLEDGING SANTA CLARA  
COUNTY ON ITS CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF  
EFFORTS

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge those in Santa Clara County, California who have offered assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Their efforts stand as a testament to the American spirit of generosity.

The local governments of Santa Clara County have responded with munificent offerings to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The San José City Council and Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors each authorized \$500,000 for the Santa Clara Valley American Red Cross to provide services to hurricane victims who arrive in the area. The San José Fire Department deployed firefighters to assist in the region devastated by Hurricane Katrina and stand ready as needed.

Local universities opened their academies and housing to those displaced by the hurricane. In fact, Santa Clara University admitted 75 students from New Orleans-based institutions Loyola University and Tulane University