

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE CONCERNED
CITIZENS OF BAYONNE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Concerned Citizens of Bayonne (CCB) for its remarkable work in the community and its endless service to local residents. This year, the organization is celebrating its 35th anniversary and will be receiving special honors from the mayor.

The CCB is a civic group that offers assistance to non-profit organizations in the area and provides a wide range of services to local residents. The city of Bayonne greatly benefits from endeavors sponsored by the CCB, such as the Marine Corps League's Toys for Tots drive, an after-school literacy program, and an annual scholarship award for high school seniors. Additionally, the CCB sponsors many local sports teams and assists veterans in hospitals throughout the state. With the help of dedicated CCB members, the organization has been successful in raising money for many worthy causes, among them the Police Athletic League (PAL), Bayonne's First Federated Church, and the battleship *New Jersey*.

To celebrate the CCB's outstanding work, Bayonne Mayor Joseph V. Doria, Jr., declared that April 23, 2005, was Concerned Citizens of Bayonne Day. Special recognition was also given to Frank and Jean Perrucci, who have diligently offered their time and energy to the CCB since its founding in 1970. As an additional sign of gratitude, the mayor renamed the corner of 29th Street and Avenue A "Concerned Citizens Way" on April 30, 2005.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Concerned Citizens of Bayonne for its extensive involvement in developing and sponsoring programs that benefit local residents. I applaud the CCB's dedication to serving its community over the past 35 years and have no doubt it will continue its admirable work in the city of Bayonne.

TRIBUTE TO MIHAN LEE

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute Mihan Lee, an 11th-grader who lives in my Congressional district and attends Georgetown Day School. Recently, she competed against nearly 5,400 middle and high school students nationwide in an essay contest titled "Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom." Her essay, "A New Country, A New Century, A New Freedom" earned her grand prize honors. The contest was held to commemorate the opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Spring-

field, Illinois. Mihan, a 17-year-old, second-generation Korean-American read her award-winning prose during the dedication ceremony.

Although Mihan's essay was not specifically about President Lincoln, she captured his message of freedom and courage in a story about her great-grandfather, who lived in Korea under Japanese colonization. Her great-grandfather, Jung In Seung, created the first Korean dictionary at a time when the language was banned under Japanese rule. He was arrested and interred in a prison camp until the liberation of Korea in 1945.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Mihan Lee and wish her continued success in the years ahead. I submit her essay for the RECORD.

Grand Prize Winner: Mihan Lee, 11th grade.
Potomac, MD

A NEW COUNTRY, A NEW CENTURY, A NEW
FREEDOM

My understanding of freedom is inextricably tied up with my understanding of language. My great-grandfather, in 1940s Korea, was arrested for putting together the first Korean dictionary, when the language had been banned by the Japanese government. My great-grandfather believed that words, the medium by which we formulate and share ideas, can bind and break the very ideas they express if the language is that of an oppressor. He fought for the freedom of his people to express ideas in their own words; in so doing, he defended their very right to have ideas.

As I prepare for all the freedoms and responsibilities of adulthood, I remember these definitions of freedom I have inherited, and strive to make ones of my own—not only as the first generation of my family born in a new country, but also as an American youth at the birth of a new century. Sitting in the hall between classes, my friends and I discuss the faults of our school's administration, the right to same-sex marriage, the justification for the Iraq War. We feel it is our right to know and evaluate our surroundings, to speak and have our ideas responded to.

I believe that freedom in the 21st century means the liberty of individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, or class, to express themselves in their own words, and to use those words to shape history. We celebrate it, and yet we never stop fighting for it. I am Korean-American, I am young, and I am free. I speak—not always articulate, not often right, but always in my own words. I speak, and I listen.

IN HONOR OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AICPA'S JOURNAL OF ACCOUNTANCY

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Journal of Accountancy, the Journal of record for the accounting profession, on its 100th anniversary this year.

The Journal of Accountancy, which is published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, is read by nearly 400,000 readers each month. Its contents include official releases of technical requirements for CPAs as well as news and information that enlighten readers about important relevant developments in and outside the profession and that enhance their professional competency.

As a CPA, I am keenly aware of the value of this publication. CPAs play a vital role in our economy, and since 1905 the Journal of Accountancy has helped keep them informed about key business trends.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that the JofA has made during its first century and to recognize its editors, authors and art and production staff for their hard work. I extend my best wishes to the JofA for its continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, due to other obligations, I unfortunately missed a recorded vote on the House floor on Thursday, April 28, 2005.

I ask that the RECORD reflect that had I been able to vote that day, I would have voted "yes" on Rollcall vote No. 150 (Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H. Res. 210—Supporting the goals of World Intellectual Property Day, and recognizing the importance of intellectual property in the United States and worldwide).

HONORING COLLINS L. TOCKE

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Collins L. Tocke who is retiring from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) after 32 years and 10 months of service. Mr. Tocke began his career with the FAA on June 12, 1972 and ended his service on April 2, 2005.

Mr. Tocke began his career with the FAA as an air traffic controller at the Chicago Center and was later transferred to the South Bend Flight Service Station. He has been a controller at the Kankakee Automated Flight Service Station since February 1, 1987.

Mr. Tocke was born in Hope, Arkansas but spent most of his formative years in Chicago, Illinois. After High School, he went to college in Champaign, Illinois until he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Mr. Tocke served his country from October 1966 to October 1970.

On February 15, 1975, Collins Tocke married the love of his life, Kathy and are the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

proud parents of one son, Christopher, who was born on June 17, 1982. Collins is an avid reader and is interested in the war in the Pacific, computers, and electronic music. Collins and Kathy plan on enjoying his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this body to identify and recognize other individuals in their own districts whose actions have so greatly benefited and strengthened America's families and communities.

CONGRATULATING THE MULVEE
FAMILY ON THE BIRTH OF
THEIR CHILD, JOHN RYAN

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to Patrick and Carrie Mulvee on the birth of their first child. John Ryan Mulvee was welcomed at 9:32 p.m. on May 2nd, 2005, weighing 7 pounds 1 ounce and measuring 21 inches long. John Ryan was named after his late paternal great-grandfather John J. Mulvee. I congratulate Patrick and Carrie on the new addition to their family and wish them years of continued health and happiness.

INTRODUCING THE MEDICARE
EARLY ACCESS ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today, during Cover the Uninsured Week, I am pleased to introduce a bill to help nearly four million people age 55–65 obtain access to affordable health insurance. I am joined by my colleague Rep. SHERROD BROWN and more than 90 additional Democratic cosponsors in introducing the "Medicare Early Access Act," one of three signature bills that offer attainable, common sense solutions for the uninsured.

We have 45 million Americans without health insurance—8 million of whom are children. Millions more are underinsured with policy policies that exclude necessary benefits or charge a king's ransom for co-pays and deductibles. Increasingly, access to coverage and quality care in this country is determined by an ability to pay rather than medical need.

There are many approaches to addressing the needs of the growing population without health coverage in this country. As most of my colleagues know, I am an advocate of a universal health care system in which each and every American would have health coverage. That is the most fair, affordable, and sustainable solution to our national health care needs.

However, that won't be accomplished overnight. In the meantime, there are steps that Congress can and should be taking to develop immediate, if smaller, steps to providing people affordable health insurance coverage options. That's why we've joined together to introduce three separate bills that each target a specific population that is seeing its uninsured rate climb.

The Medicare Early Access Act targets early retirees; the Family Care Act, being introduced by Rep. DINGELL, targets children and families; and the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act, being introduced by Rep. BARROW, targets small businesses and self-employed individuals.

The Medicare Early Access act would provide people age 55 to 65 with the option of buying into Medicare—a program with a proven track record that works.

Unfortunately, retiree health benefits have vanished or are quickly disappearing, leaving people with few or no affordable coverage options. Still, among the 55–65 population, it is more likely that someone who is retired will have health insurance than someone still in the workforce. Access to health insurance diminishes for individuals in low-wage jobs. Thirty-five percent of workers age 55–65 who earn less than 200 percent of poverty are uninsured compared with 17 percent uninsured nationwide.

Age rating and other underwriting techniques resulting in excessive premiums make coverage unaffordable. Those who are offered coverage are often required to pay astronomical deductibles and co-pays, or are severely limited by pre-existing condition exclusions, leaving them grossly underinsured.

In 1965, Medicare was specifically designed to provide coverage for those the market would not insure. Today we have the opportunity to expand on the original purpose of Medicare by providing access to people the market does not adequately cover. The Medicare Early Access Act would reduce the number of uninsured, provide better coverage for the underinsured, and improve the health status of this vulnerable population without harming Medicare or other insurance markets.

That's why the Medicare Early Access Act makes so much sense. It would allow people in this cohort to buy-into Medicare and enjoy the exact same benefits available to all other Medicare beneficiaries. Premiums for these new participants would be based on actuarial calculations of the cost of providing services to the population. There would be no effect on the Medicare trust fund because premiums will cover the entire cost of services provided.

To ensure premiums are affordable, the bill provides a 75 percent advanceable, refundable tax credit. Thus, participants would pay a monthly premium equal to 25 percent of the cost of the program—an amount similar to what employed individuals pay for their health benefits.

I am pleased to report that advocacy organizations representing consumers and seniors agree with us. The Medicare Early Access Act has been endorsed by the AFL–CIO, the Alliance for Retired Americans, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, Consumers Union, Families USA, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, SEIU, and the UAW.

This bill would provide affordable, comprehensive coverage to the most vulnerable uninsured who have few, if any, health insurance options in the current marketplace. The system necessary to implement this bill is already in place; all we have to do is agree the uninsured deserve viable coverage options. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to enact the Medicare Early Access Act this year.

Following is a summary of the bill.

THE MEDICARE EARLY ACCESS ACT

The Medicare Early Access Act gives early retirees and others between ages 55 and 65 the option of purchasing Medicare coverage. Millions of near elderly who are uninsured can benefit from a Medicare buy-in. This bill provides affordable health insurance to a vulnerable population, while protecting the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund.

ELIGIBILITY

Starting January 2006, individuals age 55–65 who do not have access to coverage under another public or group health plan are eligible to purchase Medicare. Enrollees will receive the full range of Medicare benefits. Participants are not required to exhaust employer-based COBRA coverage before choosing the Medicare buy-in option. At age 65, buy-in participants move into regular Medicare.

In addition, because employers are dropping retiree health benefits at an alarming rate, early retirees who have access to retiree health coverage may also participate, and their employers can wrap around the Medicare benefit.

PREMIUMS

Enrollees must pay a premium to receive Medicare coverage. The premium will be set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at the actuarial level necessary to cover the full cost of services provided to the buy-in population. The premium will be adjusted annually to ensure its accuracy. Premiums will also differ slightly by region to reflect geographic differences in healthcare costs.

TAX CREDIT

Program enrollees receive a 75 percent refundable, advanceable tax credit to offset premium costs. Thus, participants in the Medicare buy-in are only personally responsible for 25 percent of their monthly premiums. The tax credit is modeled on the payment mechanism created by the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) health care tax credit for displaced workers, which was enacted in 2002.

FINANCING

Premiums are deposited in a new Medicare Early Access Trust Fund. Participant premiums and tax credits are transferred to the Early Access Trust Fund to pay for Medicare services, ensuring this new program does not financially affect Medicare.

METRO WASTEWATER RECLAMATION
DISTRICT LOGS 10 PERFECT
YEARS

HON. BOB BEAUPREZ

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important accomplishment in Colorado. The Metro Wastewater Reclamation District earned its second consecutive Platinum Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA, formerly the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies) for its second consecutive five-year period without a single numerical violation of its discharge permit.

The award was presented May 1, 2005 at NACWA's 35th Anniversary Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

According to NACWA, earning two back-to-back Platinum Awards has been achieved by only five other wastewater treatment agencies