

**CHRISTENSEN URGES MANAGED
HEALTH CARE EXECUTIVES TO HELP
CLOSE DISPARITY GAP**

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD an article submitted by the Congressional Black Caucus entitled "Christensen Urges Managed Health Care Execs to Help Close Disparity Gap" which addresses the disparities in health care as experienced by minorities in this country.

On April 20, 2006, during the Capitol Summit: Politics in Healthcare event, Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN, in her role as the chairperson for the Congressional Black Caucus's Health Braintrust, addressed a group of managed health care executives to discuss the challenges facing health care organizations. Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN focused on the disparities in care for all ethnic minorities in this country.

As you will see as you read the submission, there are many challenges to overcome to ensure quality health care for all Americans. Ms. CHRISTENSEN's statements are not all inclusive; they actually touch on the tip of the iceberg. We need to engage in much more dialog to keep this issue in the forefront and to make sure these messages reach not only corporate executives but everyone, particularly those who can directly affect a more positive outcome.

To quote member CHRISTENSEN: "Lack of insurance and the resulting poor health undermines everyone else's health care". I strongly agree that progress can be made through reinforcement of prevention and comprehensive care initiatives. We must all do our part to ensure that "wellness is within the reach of everyone living in this country."

**CHRISTENSEN URGES MANAGED HEALTH CARE
EXECUTIVES TO HELP CLOSE DISPARITIES GAP**

(April 20, 2006—Washington, D.C.)—Joining the efforts to reduce disparities in health care should be the business of all businesses big and small, according to Congresswoman DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN, who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus's Health Braintrust. Christensen addressed a gathering of managed health care executives on Thursday afternoon at the Capitol Summit: Politics in Healthcare event where executives examined and discussed the challenges facing healthcare organizations today including persistent disparities in the care that ethnic minorities receive in this country. "Businesses can help to reduce their costs if they launch efforts to reduce and eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities," Christensen said. "When employees receive inadequate or lower quality health care, costs are assumed by companies and businesses in increased rates of absenteeism or being sick at work, which results in lower rates of productivity, as well as in increased health care costs."

Christensen applauded the group for including the issue of health disparities on their agenda. "I am hopeful that your interest and the pressures that you are under regarding the provision of health care and its increasing costs will be the impetus for the change we need not just to heal our minority populations but the entire country," she said. "Industry is coming to realize ahead of policy makers that early detection and management of some chronic and acute condi-

tions may reduce the amount of health care needed and improve quality of life and improve outcomes." Christensen commended some businesses that have "looked at health disparities among your own employees and the costs of care and are beginning to institute programs to improve both their health and your costs."

Christensen said that it should be a matter of conscience that "in the richest, most technologically advanced and supposed humanitarian country in the world . . . there are an estimated 100,000 annual preventable, premature, excess deaths in African Americans." Similar statistics exist in the Hispanic, Native American and Asian and Pacific Islander communities. "For years politicians, community activists, advocates and organizations have been calling for an appropriate response to such devastating but preventable disease, disability and death in communities of color," she said. "We have argued on the humanity of it, on the right and God-fearing thing to do."

Christensen pointed to the role that underinsurance and underinsurance play in the persistence of health disparities and the effect that it has had on the wider community. She pointed to the fact that many communities, including her district of the U.S. Virgin Islands have struggled to determine the fairest way to provide coverage for employees in businesses large and small. "Lack of insurance and (the) resulting poor health undermines everyone else's healthcare," she said, emphasizing that it is only through "prevention and comprehensive care for which providers are adequately compensated that the rising cost of health care will be controlled and reduced." She urged the executives to "use their corporate influence" to ensure that "wellness is within the reach of everyone living in this country."

Other speakers on the Summit's agenda included former Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Senator John Breaux, author Glenn Hubbard and members of the McGlaughlin Group.

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**CONGRATULATING THE COMMISSION
ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ON THE OCCASION OF
ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY**

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the Commission on Economic Opportunity, located in the City of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, for 40 years of exemplary community service.

Created on November 3, 1966, pursuant to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, CEO was designated by the Luzerne County Board of Commissioners which included Edmund C. Wideman Jr., James Post and William Goss.

The mission of the agency has always been to empower the less fortunate in our community by providing the resources needed to improve the quality of their lives. Over the years, CEO has developed an array of services to assist people. The weatherization program has had great success helping people with older housing stock insulate their homes in order to save money on heating fuel. The Chore program has given older citizens and low-income

individuals the opportunity to repair essential elements of their homes at affordable prices.

CEO came to the aid of senior citizens in the wake of the devastating Flood of 1972 by developing Washington Square Towers, an apartment complex for the elderly. For nearly 20 years, CEO operated a successful senior citizens market that enabled the elderly to save significant sums on basic food items. Today, CEO's Weinberg Food Bank provides staple food items to those who meet income guidelines.

Indeed, over the years, CEO has fostered several community services that eventually became independent entities. These include Legal Services, Rural Health Corporation, Maternal and Family Health Services, Child Development Council, Luzerne County Human Resources Development Department and Head Start.

The original incorporators of CEO included Gottfried Csala, Mrs. Horace Kramer, George Troy, Carlo Poerio and Raymond Batow.

Today, CEO's board of directors officers include Monsignor Andrew J. McGowan, president; Attorney David Aikens, vice president; John Namey, vice president; Gary F. Lamont, treasurer; and Marie McCormick, secretary.

The board also includes Peter D. Aula, Jollene Bradford, Attorney Joseph Cannody; William Cherkas, Attorney David Glassberg, Judge Hugh F. Mundy, George Nicholson, Michael Pasonick Jr., Rev. Wallace Smith and Estelle Strykowski. CEO's professional staff operates under the continued leadership of Gene Brady, who was appointed executive director of CEO in 1978.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating CEO on 40 years of remarkable achievements that have touched the lives of tens of thousands of residents in northeastern Pennsylvania.

CONGRATULATING DEBRA LAS

HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Debra Las of Rochester, Minnesota on receiving the 2005 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

This award was established in 1983 by an Act of Congress and is administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation. The award recognizes teachers who are both role models for colleagues and encourage talented individuals to become and remain teachers. Outstanding math and science educators are nominated each year from the United States and four other jurisdictions. Teachers may be nominated by faculty, students, parents or members of the community. After advancing through an intense selection process at both state and national levels, the final winners are announced by the President of the United States.

Ms. Debra Las teaches eighth grade science at John Adams Middle School in Rochester, Minnesota where she utilizes the school's diversity to connect to her students. Viewing diversity as a strength rather than a weakness, Ms. Las believes that both staff and students alike need to spend the time and

the energy to learn about each other. For this commitment to her profession and to her students, Ms. Las will receive The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching—the highest honor a teacher of mathematics or science can receive.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Ms. Debra Las for receiving the 2005 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Quality science teachers, like Ms. Las, inspire our students' inquisitive nature to explore new challenges, innovative career paths, and the future of ideas. Her steadfast professionalism and abilities in the classroom are a standard for which all educators should aim.

**RECOGNIZING SAMUEL A. BRANDT
FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF
EAGLE SCOUT**

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Samuel A. Brandt, 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 357, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Samuel has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Samuel has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

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

THE AMERICAN DREAM ACT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of an article published in the New York Carib News urging passage of the "American Dream Act". This act has bipartisan support in Congress and it needs much more support so that it can be passed in the House. The act enables U.S.-raised immigrant students to go to college which will put them on the correct path toward citizenship.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., has expressed a great amount of support for this very important piece of legislation. There are many students in the country who have little to look forward to after high school. The article points out that every year 65,000 young people who are brought to the U.S. by their parents cannot seek higher education after high school due to their status as immigrants. That fact of life hinders them from further enjoying the wealth and opportunity of our Nation.

I fully support the passage of this bill in the House. Passage of this bill will allow for tal-

ented students to have access to higher education, something they otherwise would not have. This will show our strong-willed commitment to offering the best opportunities for those that work hard. Everyone deserves an equal chance for an education.

We cannot delay any longer the passage of this bill since graduation is just around the corner for many students. We need to further encourage our young people to achieve more and to better their lives and the lives of their families. Americans must understand that the power of the American Dream is that it is extended to all those who seek it. It shall be available today just as it was for their forbearers' centuries ago.

I enter into the RECORD this article for highlighting the importance of an effective and comprehensive immigration reform policy. This country is about allowing all those who wish to work hard to advance their status the opportunity to do so. It should be in the best interest of our nation and the people to provide education to the children of immigrant families and to extend the same assistance that we would want extended to us in time of need.

NCLR SUPPORTS "THE AMERICAN DREAM ACT" AND URGES NEW LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COLLEGE

WASHINGTON, DC—The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., expressed strong support to "The American Dream Act" recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Howard Berman (D-CA), and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) . . . This bipartisan legislation will enable U.S.-raised immigrant students to go to college and start on the path to citizenship.

"This bill will give thousands of young people who have worked hard in school and have demonstrated a willingness to contribute to this country the chance to follow their dreams to college," stated Janet Murguia, NCLR President and CEO. "We are pleased that Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee came together to include the language of the 'DREAM Act' (S. 2075), which also broadens access to college, as part of the immigration legislation now under debate. We urge the House to follow the Senate's lead and approve 'The American Dream Act' as soon as possible."

Every year, 65,000 young people whose parents brought them to the U.S. as babies or toddlers graduate from American high schools. While they have the academic credentials to pursue a higher education, their immigration status bars them from opportunities that make a college education affordable—in-state tuition rates, loans and grants, most private scholarships, and the ability to work legally to earn their way through college. "The American Dream Act" and its companion legislation in the Senate will significantly increase access to college for talented young people who otherwise would not be able to seek higher education.

"With graduation around the corner, Congress cannot delay in passing this bill. Otherwise, high school will be the end of the road for thousands of students who have worked hard in school and aspire to contribute to our society as productive, tax-paying workers. These young people are certain to add to the great abundance and economic vitality of this country. Congress must not fail these students and their families by continuing to keep the doors to college and the American Dream closed to them," concluded Murguia.

CONGRATULATING HICKORY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the Hickory Street Presbyterian Church in Scranton, Pennsylvania, which was founded Jan. 28, 1856, and is now celebrating its 150th anniversary.

At the time of its founding, the church was known as the German Presbyterian Church. It was renamed the Hickory Street Presbyterian Church in 1931.

The church has been served by 11 pastors, four of whom have served tenures in excess of 20 years. In 1993, Hickory Street Presbyterian Church and Petersburg Presbyterian Church merged.

Hickory Street Presbyterian Church has been a community leader in many ways over the years. It has been a passionate supporter of many charitable agencies including Bread Basket of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Safety Net, Exodus Prison Ministries, St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen and the Bethel AME Homeless Shelter.

Hickory Street Presbyterian Church is the largest Presbyterian Church in Scranton and one of the largest Presbyterian Churches in the region.

Many of the church's members are active in the community and have served as judges, physicians, councilmen, teachers, neighborhood leaders, bankers, lawyers, firemen and police officers. Eight Hickory Street church members have been called into the professional ministry.

Hickory Street Presbyterian Church has a rich history of youth ministry that has carried out mission trips to Maine, Virginia, Tennessee, Washington, DC and Montana.

The church structure is a landmark in Scranton that has received awards from the Architectural Heritage Society.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Hickory Street Presbyterian Church on this auspicious occasion. More than anything, Hickory Street Presbyterian Church has spread the love of Jesus Christ through its mission and ministry, through its local, national and world outreach and through the devotion and love of its people.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE MEN
AND WOMEN OF THE JOINT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORT ELEMENT
IN SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA**

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the men and women of the Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE). JPASE stood up in early 2005 at the Joint Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Virginia.

JPASE is instrumental in providing public affairs training, counsel, doctrine and personnel