

A former prosecutor with the Los Angeles City Attorney's office, Christopher has spent over 15 years serving as the General Counsel to the Board of Public Works. He has been the Public Works Department's legal counsel on environmental regulatory issues including wastewater treatment, air quality, and storm water management. He played a leadership role in guaranteeing clean and safe water for future generations of Californians by helping ensure the upgrade of the Hyperion Treatment Plant to full secondary treatment of its wastewater. Christopher helped to develop and defend policies that have helped clean up the Santa Monica Bay, and achieve 100 percent beneficial reuse of the city's biosolids. His negotiations in a landmark settlement agreement for Los Angeles' collection systems led to a reduction in sewer spills of more than 70 percent. Christopher also participated in the development and implementation of Proposition "O", which provided for \$500 million in bonds for stormwater management improvements and green technologies.

In 1999, Mr. Westhoff was elected to NACWA's Board of Directors. He currently acts as the Association's Vice President and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. Later this month, Christopher will become NACWA's President. As the President of NACWA, he will build on its reputation as the leading advocate for responsible national policies that advance clean water and a healthy environment.

For his tireless commitment to ensuring that Los Angeles becomes an environmentally smart city, I ask all Members of Congress to join me in congratulating Christopher Westhoff on becoming President of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies.

IN HONOR OF THE MONTEREY  
SCOTTISH GAMES & CELTIC FESTIVAL

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Monterey Scottish Games & Celtic Festival which is celebrating an outstanding 40-year tradition. A special Monterey County Celtic Week, with a variety of Celtic-themed activities and events, will commemorate this milestone. These events include a Caber Parade in Carmel; the 3rd Annual Monterey Bay School of Piping and Drumming; a performance by the Monterey Bay Pipe Band in the 4th of July Parade in downtown Monterey; a Celtic Concert with musicians and dancers; culminating in the 40th Annual Monterey Scottish Games and Celtic Festival on July 7th–8th.

Featuring fun activities for the entire family, the Monterey Scottish Games & Celtic Festival is a wonderful "festival for the senses" which includes authentic Celtic music, colorful Highland, Scottish and Irish dancing, athletic competitions such as the famous Caber Toss, massed pipe bands on parade, children's games, delicious food, great shopping, and more.

The Monterey Scottish Games & Celtic Festival not only is an exciting event to attend, it also raises money to benefit many local chari-

table organizations. Over the past 40 years, the Festival has donated thousands of dollars to various organizations such as Peninsula Outreach, Alliance on Aging, Monterey Schools, Meals on Wheels, Boy Scouts of America, and the Armed Forces Relief Fund.

The Monterey Scottish Games & Celtic Festival celebrates tradition and family by highlighting and creating music, dance and athletic competitions for the youth and participating community members of the Monterey Area. The festival keeps alive the Celtic culture in Monterey County, promotes the study of Celtic music and dance, and awards funds and youth scholarships to the Monterey School of Piping and Drumming.

Madam Speaker, the Monterey Scottish Games & Celtic Festival provides quality events in a unique, friendly setting to educate, entertain, and inspire the local Monterey community as well as attract visitors to the County. The contributions the Festival has made to the community are invaluable and I am honored to acknowledge July 1–8, 2007, as Monterey County Celtic Week.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am writing to notify you that I was absent for votes on June 22, 2007. The reason for my absence was that I was attending a memorial service for the nine firefighters who so bravely gave their lives in the line of duty on June 18, 2007, in Charleston, SC.

Regarding the votes that I missed, please see below how I would have voted had I been present:

Rollcall vote No. 543: On the Motion to Call the Previous Question for the Rule on H.R. 2771, The Legislative Branch Appropriation Act.—"nay."

Rollcall Vote No. 544: On the Motion adopting the Rule for H.R. 2771, The Legislative Branch Appropriation Act.—"nay."

Rollcall vote No. 545: On the Amendment offered by Mr. FLAKE of Arizona to reduce funding for the Government Printing Office by \$3,200,000.—"yea."

Rollcall vote No. 546: On the Amendment offered by Mr. JORDAN of Ohio to reduce appropriations in the bill by 4 percent across the board.—"yea."

Rollcall vote No. 547: On Republican Motion to Recommit that would strike the \$16 million included in the bill for the congressional takeover of the former FDA building.—"yea."

Rollcall vote No. 548: On Passage of H.R. 2771, The Legislative Branch Appropriations.—"nay."

TRIBUTE TO COMMISSIONER  
CONNIE HUGHES

**HON. MIKE FERGUSON**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2007

Mr. FERGUSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Commissioner Connie

Hughes for a long and distinguished career as she retires July 1, 2007, after more than 30 years of public service to New Jersey and its residents.

A commissioner with the New Jersey board of Public Utilities, Commissioner Hughes was appointed to the board in July 2001 by then-Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco. She also has served as board president.

She has held numerous senior positions within the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, including serving as its representative to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Government Coordinating Council for the Telecom Sector.

Before joining the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, Commissioner Hughes served as then-Governor DiFrancesco's Chief of Management and Policy; ex-officio Commissioner of Higher Education; and on the New Jersey State Planning Commission, the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology, the New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education, the New Jersey State Board of Human Services, and the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission Board of Directors.

Known chiefly for her expertise in telecommunications policy, Commissioner Hughes focused her career on issues affecting New Jersey and its consumers. My staff and I, as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, had the pleasure of working with her on matters of mutual interest to the State.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Connie Hughes on her more than three decades of outstanding public service to my state of New Jersey and its residents.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT  
AND RELATED AGENCIES  
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2641) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I supported the Hinchey-Wolf amendment to the FY 2008 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill. This amendment would have established a one-year spending limitation with regard to the designation of National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors under section 1221 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. I supported this limitation amendment because section 1221 is a flawed provision of federal law, and the Department of Energy's implementation of the provision has enhanced concerns about the law rather than addressed them.

Section 1221 of the Energy Policy Act grants the Department of Energy unprecedented siting and construction authority for transmission lines. While I strongly support the upgrade of our nation's transmission infrastructure and believe that states and the federal government need tools to make this happen, section 1221 goes too far. The provision

invites only illusory participation from the states—one year is much too short a time-frame for states to make any decision about transmission siting, much less the right one.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to provide a realistic backstop for the federal government that gives the states time and flexibility to suggest alternatives. I hope that this Congress can advance a more balanced approach.

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THE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE  
TRUTH IN ADVERTISING ACT

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 28, 2007*

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, Medicare Advantage Plans—by name and by advertising—promote that they provide added value to the Medicare benefit.

But under current law, MA plans are allowed to manipulate cost sharing for Medicare benefits. In some instances, enrollees save compared to Medicare. In many other instances, they spend more than they would in the traditional Medicare program. Few seniors or people with disabilities understand that—depending on their health—they could spend far more in a Medicare Advantage plan than they would under traditional Medicare.

Beneficiaries are often charged more for home health, skilled nursing facilities, hospitalizations, durable medical equipment, Part B drugs (chemotherapy being the biggest service), and inpatient mental health services. These services are vital to millions of Medicare beneficiaries who face multiple chronic conditions and depend on affordable health care for their very lives.

As Barbara Kennelly, President of the National Committee To Preserve Social Security and Medicare so aptly puts it, “While MA plans are required to cover everything that Medicare covers, they do not have to cover every benefit in the same way.”

The Medicare Rights Center emphasizes that, “On a daily basis, our counselors assist older adults and people with disabilities enrolled in these plans who run into unexpectedly high out-of-pocket costs for their health care.”

In my district in California, one of the major MA plans in our community charges \$275 a day for the first 10 days in the hospital. This compares to a single charge of \$992 in traditional Medicare for a hospital stay of up to 60 days. That means patients in this so-called Medicare Advantage plan who have to go to the hospital for 10 days are paying \$2750 instead of \$992—that is not an advantage!

With regard to home health benefits, Medicare charges no copayment for these services as recipients tend to be the most frail, elderly women who are often widows and living on very low fixed incomes. Yet many MA plans charge a 20 percent copayment for home health. They also impose tough utilization review standards to further restrict access to this needed benefit for our most at-risk beneficiaries.

Attached is a chart which further highlights how beneficiary cost sharing for various services in a variety of MA plans surpasses Medicare's cost-sharing for those same services. It is just an illustrative sampling.

The Medicare Advantage Truth in Advertising Act would fix this problem. It would require MA plans to cover all of Medicare's benefits with no greater cost-sharing than is charged in the traditional fee-for-service Medicare program. It would preserve the ability of MA plans to use flat copayments and per diem rates in lieu of deductibles and co-insurance charged in traditional Medicare, but it would prohibit their costs from exceeding the overall fee-for-service cost. In other words, it holds private plans to their propaganda that they're an advantage.

This is a simple bill. It holds Medicare Advantage plans to their word and assures Medicare beneficiaries that they won't face higher out of pocket costs if they choose to join one of the private plan options so heavily promoted in Medicare today.

With thousands of different MA plans out there and numerous complaints being filed about inappropriate and illegal sales techniques, the least we can do is assure Medicare beneficiaries that they'll still be eligible for Medicare-covered services at no more than Medicare prices.

I developed this bill in direct response to testimony presented by Medicare beneficiary advocates before our Ways and Means Health Subcommittee this year. I am pleased that numerous groups support this bill, including the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Medicare Rights Center, Consumers Union, the Alliance for Retired Americans, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, Families USA, the National Senior Citizens Law Center and California Health Advocates.

I urge you to join me in support of this common sense improvement to the Medicare Advantage program.

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF EDOUARD  
BRUNNER

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 28, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of a dear international colleague who passed away this weekend.

A world renowned diplomat, Edouard Brunner began his career in the Swiss Foreign Ministry in 1956. Rising through the ranks, he served as the Swiss Secretary of State from 1984 to 1989. He then went on to serve as Ambassador to the United States from 1989 to 1993.

In 1991, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar appointed him to a parallel role as his special envoy to the Middle East, replacing Gunnar Yarring of Sweden. Following this position, he served as Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN for Abkhazia from 1993 and 1994, where he led a U.N. mission that brokered a truce ending 2 years of fighting between the Georgian government and separatists in the Black Sea province of Abkhazia.

He is often cited for coming out of retirement in 1998 to address concerns related to his beloved country during the Nazi era, which with his involvement, provided an acceptable solution to the international community.

However, it is through our work within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in

Europe (OSCE) that I came to know him. Appointed to head the Swiss mission in 1972, Brunner played a key role within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which served as a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between the East and West and culminated in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In 1994, the CSCE changed its name, becoming the OSCE. Over the years, in a testament to his dedication to the organization and its standing in the world, Brunner remained active within the OSCE both formally and informally.

In 2005, during my presidency of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Brunner and I, in his capacity as chairman of the Swiss Foundation for World Affairs, held a Colloquium on the Future of the OSCE. A report on the findings of the colloquium was then provided as a report to the then-OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel.

A major goal of the colloquium and subsequent report was to give new impetus to political dialogue and provide strategic vision for the OSCE. The initial purpose of the Helsinki Accords had been to expand cooperation in the areas of security, economic, and humanitarian affairs.

Additionally, for the first time, it afforded a systematic review of human rights practices in the Soviet Union and all other signatories of the accords.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states from its territories, spanning from Europe into Asia, questions of the expanding role of the OSCE in politico-military, election observation, and relationships with other multilateral organizations were being raised.

Working together, Brunner and I were not only able to encourage and host the colloquium, but also actively succeeded in addressing those concerns, and establishing a path forward that addressed the new challenges of the 56 participating states of the OSCE.

In my current role as chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation Europe, I will sorely miss Brunner's counsel at the OSCE, but know that his memory will live on through his extraordinary contributions to this organization that has been instrumental to peace and security here in the United States as well as throughout Europe. He will not be forgotten.

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HONORING NICK SWYKA FOR HIS  
DEDICATED SERVICE

**HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 28, 2007*

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize and commend the tireless public service of a dedicated and talented member of my staff, Nick Swyka. Nick has worked in my office for 4 years, the first 2 as a Legislative Assistant and the last 2 as my District Director, and he is one of the most intelligent and hard-working staffers I have had the privilege to employ.

Nick was born and raised in Houston, attended St. John's School and graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service with a degree in International Political