

All of these scams and efforts to mislead seniors for private financial gain are a result of the lack of standardized regulations and real accountability. It has been reported that the government pays private Medicare Advantage insurers an average of \$9,000 a year for each person enrolled. Private insurance agents receive between \$350 and \$600 commission for each person they enroll. With nearly nine million Americans currently enrolled in these private plans, the profits going to these insurers and away from America's health care system is astronomical.

Without a standard method used for regulation, the financial gain of private insurers will continue to rise at the health expense of seniors and the personal and financial stress of all Americans.

We must implement transparency requirements that will ensure companies are held accountable and publicly identified, in the event of marketing abuses. The Accountability and Transparency in Medicare Marketing Act of 2007 will address all of these issues. It will create standardized marketing practices to be enforced by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). These standard practices will exclude telemarketing and cold calling, deceptive selling and other abusive practices.

This bill will create transparency by requiring that all violations be reported to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and in turn reported to Congress.

Additionally, this legislation will require the NAIC to create a committee to study and make recommendations to the Secretary and Congress on the establishment of standardized benefit packages for Medicare Advantage plans.

This legislation will help us to continue our effort to make Medicare safe, beneficial and accountable to our seniors, family care givers and all Americans. It will enforce regulations that will demand ethical and helpful tactics. It will alleviate private insurers unfairly benefiting from the hard-earned dollars of all American families. Further, we will provide seniors and family care givers with the protection and care that they deserve. It is our responsibility to keep fraud and unethical practices from plaguing our health care system, and the Accountability and Transparency in Medicare Marketing Act of 2007 seeks to help us step up to this duty.

COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SILVER BRIDGE

HON. CHARLES A. WILSON

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate one of the worst infrastructure disasters this Nation has ever seen. On December 15, 1967, at about 5 p.m., the Silver Bridge collapsed. It spanned the Ohio River from Gallia County in my district to Mason County West Virginia. That disastrous accident killed 46 people. Most of them had just left work and were headed home. This horrible tragedy, which was the result of the failure of a single eye-bar supporting the bridge, spurred Congressional ac-

tion that led to the first federal bridge inspection requirements.

Madam Speaker, I wish I could announce today that our nation wisely learned the lesson of the Silver Bridge Collapse. Unfortunately, the more recent collapse of the I-35 bridge in Minneapolis shows just how much our infrastructure has decayed because of inadequate investment. While I am glad that the appropriations bill we passed last night includes investment in bridges, I am convinced that much more work needs to be done.

On this 40th anniversary, let us take a moment to remember the 46 people killed in the Silver Bridge collapse. Even 40 years after the disaster, their absence is felt by their families and communities. Let us resolve today to honor their memories by doing all we can to ensure that the bridges, tunnels and roads that make up our nation's byways are safe and secure.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF MCLEANSBORO, ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the city of McLeansboro, Illinois upon receiving the Governor's Cup Award for efforts to build a youth playground in the city park.

The Kids Kingdom Playground was made possible thanks to a donation by the Jerry and Bobbye Sloan Hand-in-Hand Foundation as well as thousands of volunteer hours. I have had the opportunity to visit the Kids Kingdom Playground with Coach Sloan and I can attest that this is an excellent addition to the park for the McLeansboro community.

This project is a shining example of the willingness of a community to work together for the greater good. I extend my gratitude to those who made this playground a reality. I am pleased to congratulate the city of McLeansboro and all those who made the Kids Kingdom Playground possible.

HONORING THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM AT BARTOW HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the International Baccalaureate School at Bartow High School in Florida's 12th Congressional District for being recognized as a gold medal school in U.S. News & World Report's first ever ranking of America's Best High Schools.

U.S. News & World Report analyzed over 18,000 public schools across the United States in an effort to find the top 100 public schools. They used a three-step analysis to sort through the many schools taking into consideration how each school's students performed on state tests, evaluating how well each school's disadvantaged students performed, and looking at whether the school was successful in providing college-level

coursework. Bartow's IB School placed third among the 100 other gold medal schools. This is quite an accomplishment and I commend the school for leading the way in excellence and for their commitment to empowering young minds.

Bartow High School has a rich history of providing a high caliber education. Distinguished from other high schools in Polk County and from most high schools in Florida, its origin began in 1887 as the Summerlin Institute. Bartow High School is proudly 117 years old and because of its history and tradition, many of its former students have gone on to achieve great success.

Included in this list are distinguished leaders from various professions. Spenssard Holland served as Florida's Governor in the 1940s and as a U.S. Senator from 1946-1970. Army General James Alward Van Fleet served as a commander and led major campaigns in WWII and the Korean War, and President Truman once remarked that he was America's "greatest general." In addition, Kenneth Jerome Riley was honored as a Rhodes Scholar Candidate while attending Florida A&M University and went on to play as an NFL defensive back for the Cincinnati Bengals.

In 1996, Bartow High School embarked on its next endeavor when the school was selected by the International Baccalaureate World School program to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma program. Students that attend the IB School are challenged with increased expectations in both academic and community involvement, and because of this they graduate ready to compete and enter into a fast-paced world that offers endless opportunities.

The IB School's mission is "to ensure each student has the opportunity to achieve his or her potential and creatively influence society by providing students with an advanced international curriculum." Today, it is my honor to commend Dr. Edwin Vetter and his staff of extraordinary educators, including some who shaped my classroom experience, for their dedication and hard work. It is clear that the commitment by both staff and students surpasses their mission, as the IB School continues to be recognized for its performance, not only in the State of Florida, but across the nation too. As an alumnus of Bartow High School, which hosts the IB school, I look forward to their many future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING COREY DYLAN JEPSON FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Corey D. Jepson, 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 and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

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

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Corey D. Jepson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "REDUCING OVER-CLASSIFICATION ACT OF 2007"

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, today all Democratic members of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment are introducing legislation that will put the Department of Homeland Security on the path to better information sharing by turning back the tide of over-classification that imperils our ability to make America safer from terrorism.

The "Reducing Over-Classification Act of 2007" (ROC Act) gives Congress the tools to curtail the federal government's widespread and mushrooming practice of classifying practically everything that moves.

Almost three and a half years ago, the 9/11 Commission made clear the urgent need to eliminate the over-classification of intelligence information by the Federal Government.

The Commissioners found that over-classification interferes with the sharing of critical information between the Federal Government and its State, local, and tribal partners on the front lines of our nation's homeland security efforts.

Sadly, the numbers tell us that we're still not heeding the 9/11 Commission's warning.

According to the Information Security Oversight Office at the National Archives, the number of new classification actions jumped from eight million in 2001 to 14 million in 2005. During the same period, the quantity of declassified pages dropped from 100 million in 2001 to 29 million in 2005.

To make matters worse, we learned this past year that some agencies were withdrawing archived records from public access and reclassifying them.

Together with the exponential growth in the amount of material that is classified, we've seen the level of spending on classification go up considerably.

In 2001, \$4.5 billion was spent on classification but by 2004, we were spending \$7.1 billion.

In addition, there has been a troubling proliferation of new policies and labels to limit the distribution of sensitive but unclassified information across the Federal Government.

At the Federal level alone, there are over 28 distinct policies for the protection of this "SBU" information.

Unlike with classified records, there is no monitoring of or reporting on the use of SBU information markings or its consequences.

The proliferation of these SBU "pseudo-classifications" interferes with interagency information sharing—increasing the cost of information security and limiting public access.

It's also an obstacle to sharing information with our first preventers and first responders in the field—precisely what the 9/11 Commission warned against.

During this session, Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Intelligence that I chair has held numerous hearings and received invaluable input from subject matter experts on what first steps to take to address the twin problems of over- and pseudo-classification.

The bill we're introducing today reflects that input.

The goal is simple: make the Department of Homeland Security the "gold standard" when it comes to preventing over-classification and to limiting the use of sensitive but unclassified markings.

The only way to ensure that the Department gets it right going forward is to promote an enforceable and understandable strategy that applies to everyone.

DHS is an excellent place to start and—if it gets a handle on its own burgeoning over- and pseudo-classification addiction—can become a "best practices" center and the test bed for the rest of the Federal Government.

Accordingly, our bill will require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a strategy that will: allow the classification of documents only after unclassified, shareable versions of intelligence have been produced; develop a new "sensitive and shared" information program that will provide protections for certain sensitive and unclassified information for limited periods of time under narrowly tailored circumstances; propose new incentives and disincentives to encourage Department personnel to classify documents properly and to use "sensitive and shared" markings sparingly; create training programs and auditing mechanisms for all Department employees in order to ensure that the Strategy is being implemented properly; establish an independent Department declassification review board to expedite the declassification of documents when the need for public access outweighs the need to classify; and propose legislative solutions to ensure that the Strategy is implemented in a way that not only promotes security but also fosters both information sharing and the protection of privacy and other civil rights.

Our Subcommittee plans to move this legislation early next year and hopes our colleagues in the House will join us in the effort to ensure that the Federal Government gets accurate and actionable information to those who need it in a timely fashion.

THE 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF CONRAD AND FRANCES GASKIN

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. McNULTY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Conrad and Frances Gaskin on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Both first generation African Caribbean Americans, Conrad and Frances met in elementary school and were married on September 14, 1957 at St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church in the Bronx. Conrad served in the United States Air Force before eventually working for the New York State Teacher's Retirement System. After receiving her doctorate from Fordham, Frances went on to found and serve as a professor for a program in nursing at the Hostos Community College at the City University of New York.

Moving to Albany in August of 1980, the Gaskins helped found an additional Church home in the Faith Community of the Black Apostolate. This later expanded to include St. Joan of Arc and Sacred Heart Churches of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, where both serve as Ministers of the Eucharist.

Committed to serving the community, Conrad and Frances continued to stay active and involved after retirement. Conrad coached basketball and swimming while Frances worked for the American Red of America Cross and is a Staff Officer with the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. They are blessed with three children and five grandchildren.

It is my honor to recognize Conrad and Frances Gaskin and provide my heartfelt congratulations to them on this wonderful event in their lives. I would like to extend my best wishes to the Gaskins and their family on their 50th wedding anniversary.

HONORING CPL TANNER O'LEARY

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor the life of CPL Tanner O'Leary, who died December 9, 2007, while serving his country in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Tanner, who was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division based in Fort Bragg, N.C., graduated from Timber Lake High School in 2003. He joined the Army in 2005. He graduated from infantry training in May 2005 and airborne school in June 2005.

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Tanner's compassion and service. He represented the best of the United States, South Dakota, and the Army. His life continues to inspire all those who knew him and many who did not. Our Nation and the State of South Dakota are far better places because of his service.

Today, we remember and honor Tanner's noble service to the United States and the ultimate sacrifice he has paid with his life to defend our freedoms and foster liberty for others.

I would like to express my condolences to the family and friends of CPL Tanner O'Leary. His commitment to and sacrifice for our country will not be forgotten.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SANTA FE QUADRICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Santa Fe Quadricentennial Commemorative Coin Act. The minting of a commemorative coin will serve as a historic national tribute to the ever-distinct City Different.

Santa Fe was officially elevated by the Spanish settlers from a plaza to a capital city in 1610 and has continued to be a meeting