

Madam Speaker, we want to honor Ben Stone today for his 20 years of service to Sonoma County and the Economic Development Board. He has made many friends in the many communities he serves and is always willing to give a boost to new arrivals or make that important contact for someone who needs assistance. As Ben always says to others, we wish him many more "Onward and Upward" years at the Sonoma County Economic Development Board.

INTRODUCING THE PRESCRIPTION
DRUG AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Prescription Drug Affordability Act. This legislation ensures that millions of Americans, including seniors, have access to affordable pharmaceutical products. My bill makes pharmaceuticals more affordable to seniors by reducing their taxes. It also removes needless government barriers to importing pharmaceuticals and it protects Internet pharmacies, which are making affordable prescription drugs available to millions of Americans, from being strangled by federal regulation.

The first provision of my legislation provides seniors a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their prescription drug costs. While Congress did add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare in 2003, many seniors still have difficulty affording the prescription drugs they need in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. One reason is because the new program creates a "doughnut hole," where seniors lose coverage once their prescription expenses reach a certain amount and must pay for their prescriptions above a certain amount out of their own pockets until their expenses reach a level where Medicare coverage resumes. This tax credit will help seniors cover the expenses provided by the doughnut hole. This bill will also help seniors obtain prescription medicines that may not be covered by the Medicare prescription drug program.

In addition to making prescription medications more affordable for seniors, my bill lowers the price for prescription medicines by reducing barriers to the importation of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals. Under my bill, anyone wishing to import a drug simply submits an application to the FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S. or is adulterated or misbranded. This process will make safe and affordable imported medicines affordable to millions of Americans. Madam Speaker, letting the free market work is the best means of lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

I need not remind my colleagues that many senior citizens and other Americans impacted by the high costs of prescription medicine have demanded Congress reduce the barriers which prevent American consumers from purchasing imported pharmaceuticals. Congress has responded to these demands by repeatedly passing legislation liberalizing the rules governing the importation of pharmaceuticals. However, implementation of this provision has been blocked by the federal bureaucracy. It is

time Congress stood up for the American consumer and removed all unnecessary regulations on importing pharmaceuticals.

The Prescription Drug Affordability Act also protects consumers' access to affordable medicine by forbidding the Federal Government from regulating any Internet sales of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals by state-licensed pharmacists.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Internet makes pharmaceuticals and other products more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. However, the federal government has threatened to destroy this option by imposing unnecessary and unconstitutional regulations on web sites that sell pharmaceuticals. Any federal regulations would inevitably drive up prices of pharmaceuticals, thus depriving many consumers of access to affordable prescription medications.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make pharmaceuticals more affordable and accessible by lowering taxes on senior citizens, removing barriers to the importation of pharmaceuticals and protecting legitimate Internet pharmacies from needless regulation by cosponsoring the Prescription Drug Affordability Act.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL DESIGNATED AS MAGNET HOSPITAL BY THE AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, December 20, 2006, the University of Kansas Hospital became the first hospital in Kansas to attain the coveted Magnet™ designation. The Department of Nursing began working toward this goal in 2002.

Since the American Nurses Credentialing Center developed the Magnet Recognition Program® in 1990, approximately 225 facilities—less than 3 percent of all hospitals—have attained Magnet designation. To join this exclusive group, both the nursing staff and hospital have demonstrated their ability to meet and exceed more than 150 professional standards of excellence.

Magnet designation recognizes the quality and importance of our nursing department. It also emphasizes the important role our nurses play in the hospital's success. Magnet hospitals exemplify the very best in patient care and outcomes. Just 3.5 percent of health care organizations are Magnet hospitals.

This designation proves the commitment of the University of Kansas Hospital to excellent patient care outcomes. Magnet designation means a hospital outperforms others and is statistically proven to have: higher quality care; better patient outcomes; lower mortality rate; significantly higher levels of patient satisfaction; salaries typically above average; excellent nursing recruitment; higher nursing retention; and greater consumer confidence. Madam Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to bring this noteworthy designation to your attention, and to the attention of the House of Representatives as a whole.

PROTECTING IMPACT AID FOR
NORTH SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to ensure the federal government fulfills an important obligation to the families of servicemen and women in my district. In 1950, President Harry Truman established the Impact Aid program to assist school districts and communities that lose their property tax base because of the presence of the federal government. Without this federal money, the burden would fall to the remaining residents whose property taxes would continue to rise while impacting the quality of education which can be provided. The Impact Aid program helps to alleviate this problem by directly reimbursing public school districts for the loss of traditional revenue sources.

For years Impact Aid was fully funded and offered some of the strongest direct assistance to military families across the nation. Unfortunately, over the last decade we have fallen behind on this commitment, and it is time to reverse this trend.

While I support fully funding the Impact Aid program, I believe the situation in my district warrants special attention. In order to ensure that our students most in need continue to receive necessary resources, I have introduced this bill to help North Chicago to continue to qualify for heavily impacted payments, and Glenview and Highland Park receive fair compensation.

Due to a unique housing situation for the Great Lakes Naval Training Facility, Impact Aid funding should be higher in five of my school districts. This Naval base is located in North Chicago, one of the poorest school districts in my state. However, some service members and their families live in Navy housing obtained when Ft. Sheridan and Naval Air Station Glenview, located in other suburbs, were closed in the 1990's. These former bases are located within the boundaries of other school districts that now must bear the economic cost of educating children from a base, but receive none of the economic benefits a base provides. Thus, it is vitally important that we both ensure North Chicago continues to receive heavily impacted payments for the benefit of students living there, and that the surrounding communities are more fairly compensated for their loss of property taxes.

By passing this bill, the federal government will be fulfilling its responsibility to these communities, and giving our military families the support they deserve.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND RETIREMENT OF CHARLES E. COOKE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of a valued staff member—Charles E. Cooke—who retired this month from the

House Science Committee. As a professional staffer on the Energy Subcommittee, Charlie's expertise on the issues of energy production, energy research and development, and energy conservation have been unmatched.

Charlie has been working on energy issues since the 1960s, when he was a staffer for the Texas State Legislature. In the 1970s he moved to Washington to work with the Federal Power Commission. He represented Southern California Edison in its Washington office in the late seventies. From 1979 to 1985 he was a principal in a consulting firm that represented Texas interests in Washington and Austin.

Charlie came to Capitol Hill in 1985, first as a legislative assistant to Rep. RALPH HALL (TX) and then as staff of the Committee on Science. In 1990, Charlie went back to work for Southern California Edison on energy restructuring, telecommunications, electric transportation, and tax issues. After leaving Edison, he joined the EOP Group, an energy and environmental consulting firm, and then returned to the Hill in 1998 to serve as Special Assistant to Congressman HALL, working on utility restructuring. Finally, in 2000 Charlie returned to the Science Committee as a professional staff member with responsibility for energy issues.

Before switching to the political science field, Charlie began his early studies in electrical engineering, and his engineering training comes through, both in his approach to problems and in his passions: home improvement and landscape architecture. He has been an active volunteer in planning the House botanical gardens and on the Advisory Board of the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Texas.

Charlie's easy going personality, issue expertise, and his talent for making great barbeque will be long remembered on this Committee. The Science Committee's Members and staff wish him well as he moves on to new endeavors and a relaxing retirement. Thank you, Charlie, for your many years of dedicated and loyal service.

TRIBUTE TO THE FIRST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to pay my respects to the First Greek Orthodox Church in Springfield, Massachusetts upon the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

In 1907 an old house was acquired on Auburn Street, converted into a place of worship and it was here that the rapidly growing Greek community held their first church services.

By 1920 the Greek population had grown so large that the Auburn Street building no longer could accommodate the members of St. George's Greek Orthodox Church. A building fund campaign was soon inaugurated to raise the funds to buy a new church. A building was purchased on Patton Street which provided adequate facilities for church services, a Greek School and administrative offices.

By 1940 the Greek population had again increased greatly. It was at this time that the

Congregational Memorial Church at Main and Plainfield Streets became available. The Greek Community took advantage of this opportunity and purchased the Memorial Church and its spacious parish house on October 7, 1940. This magnificent Gothic Church, built in 1866, was designed by the noted architect, Richard Upjohn, with a high vaulted ceiling and priceless stained glass windows.

By 1975 the Church began looking at new sites for a community center and by June 1977 it was decided that St. George would expand and stay in Springfield. A General Assembly approved plans for a parish center by purchasing the old Memorial Square Library Building. The St. George Greek Orthodox Church Cultural Center was opened in 1978 and to the present time it houses administrative offices, classrooms for Sunday and Greek Schools, a gymnasium and facilities for social functions. A Chapel was added to the building in 1986.

The first Greek immigrants in Springfield brought with them their history, their philosophies, their democratic ideals, their courage, their culture and traditions, their Greek language and customs, their festive celebrations, their foods, music and dance and most of all their Greek Orthodox faith which they have handed down from one generation to the next all of which we celebrate this Centennial Year.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GERALD R. FORD, JR. POST OFFICE ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation to name the post office in Vail, Colorado, after our Nation's 39th President, Gerald R. Ford, Jr.

I believe this legislation is appropriate as another means of honoring the legacy of President Ford, in large part because of his special connection to Colorado and the Vail Valley.

In 1968 then-Congressman Ford and wife, Betty, first came to Colorado with their children to celebrate Christmas and to ski in the mountains at Vail. Like many other visitors, President Ford was inspired by the beauty of the area and found a connection to the land and to the surrounding community.

The Fords later owned a home and continued to vacation in Vail. When he became President, his vacations in Colorado helped introduce the world to the Town of Vail, and in fact, the family home was dubbed "the Western White House."

Vail residents knew President Ford and his family as neighbors and friends and are proud of their long association with them. Gerald Ford was beloved in Vail, where he was known to be a good neighbor, an avid golfer and a lover of the outdoors.

President Ford will rightly be remembered for his personal warmth, his decency, his interest in bridging the many divisions in America during the 1970s. My father, Mo Udall, served in Congress with Gerald Ford, and while they were often on different sides in political matters—so much so that my father hoped to run against President Ford in the famous election of 1976—they were united by a common view

that politics should unite people. They both were firm believers that in public life one could disagree without being disagreeable.

This is a credo I continue to believe in, and I commend the memory of both good men to this House, an institution they loved.

Coloradans, especially those in the Vail Valley, have come to think of him as the first President from Colorado because he was a great ambassador for the State, who established long ties to the people of Colorado.

As a dedicated public servant, President Ford served honorably in his years in Congress and in the White House. Most important, when America needed someone to reassure their trust in government after Watergate, he filled that leadership role with authenticity.

I believe President Ford's special relationship and legacy in Colorado should be appropriately recognized by naming the postal facilities in Vail, Colorado, in his honor.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION ACT

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, in the last two Congresses we have spent considerable time on the extremely important issue of immigration and homeland security. In the 108th Congress, we passed the National Intelligence Reform Act, a landmark piece of legislation to overhaul our intelligence agencies. But, as I noted at that time, the bill unfortunately did not go far enough in addressing the major security vulnerability presented by the porous nature of our borders.

Seeing that need, in the 109th Congress we debated immigration extensively and even passed H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Regrettably, the Senate failed to act on this important piece of legislation. That is why I rise to ask for the support of my colleagues for an illegal immigration control plan that I am pleased to introduce today. This proposal, the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, is designed to eliminate up to 98 percent of the illegal border crossings into the United States.

I believe that in order for any proposal to stop illegal immigration to be successful, it must get at the root cause of what attracts illegal immigrants to our country—and that is the lure of economic opportunity and the ease with which illegal workers can find jobs. Under the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, we will dramatically increase the enforcement of laws which prohibit American businesses from employing illegal immigrants. Regrettably, too many employers have been unwilling to comply with the law. The growing availability of counterfeit identity documents has also undermined the current system because employers are increasingly unable to establish the authenticity of documents presented by job applicants.

Our legislation adds new features to the Social Security card to deter counterfeiting and make it easier for employers to determine whether a card is genuine by including a digitized photo of the cardholder on the card.