

to help communities purchase these lifesaving devices.

I hope that the President does not send Congress another budget that proposes Draconian cuts in funding for heart disease and stroke research, prevention, and treatment programs. Failing to make these investments will have real consequences. It is projected that, if we don't act today, deaths from heart disease alone will increase by nearly 130 percent by 2050.

I encourage my colleagues to take a few minutes during February to recognize American Heart Month and to join me in starting a national dialogue about making the fight against cardiovascular disease a priority.

HONORING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I join millions of people across our Nation to commemorate Black History Month.

Black History Month is a time to honor those heroes of the past and present who have played pivotal roles in African American history. During this month, we celebrate the lives of these extraordinary individuals and pay tribute to their many sacrifices and great accomplishments in strengthening the diverse cultural history we have in America. We are especially reminded during this month to renew our commitment to ensuring equality and justice for all Americans.

Black History Month was originally established as Negro History Week, later known as Black History Week, in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a son of former slaves who became the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Woodson chose the second week in February in remembrance of the birthdays of two prominent individuals in the history of African Americans—President Abraham Lincoln, who promulgated the Emancipation Proclamation, and Frederick Douglass, one of the most renowned black abolitionists. In 1976, Black History Week was officially expanded to a month-long celebration—Black History Month, or African-American History Month.

Since 1926, the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, ASALH, has established the national theme for Black History Month. This year's theme is "From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas." Long after slavery was abolished, people of African descent struggled for the basic rights afforded American citizens. This year's theme brings to light this quest for equality and freedom during the age of emancipation, when Africans throughout the Americas were emerging from the bonds of slavery to take their rightful place in society. The path was not an easy one—independence and liberty remained elusive for many. Yet through the work of visible leaders and heroes and those individuals who quietly per-

severed, we see great achievements in the African-American experience—triumph that went hand in hand with some of the greatest struggles and most severe obstacles.

In Idaho, many individuals have continued Woodson's vision to educate and inform our communities about the great contributions of African Americans. For over 85 years, Idaho's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP—comprised of some of Idaho's finest citizens and humanitarians—has served as a leader for promoting cultural diversity and awareness in our state.

I also commend the work at the Idaho Black History Museum. Established in 1995, this museum is the only one of its kind in the Pacific Northwest. Through its exhibits and community outreach programs such as lectures, workshops, literacy courses, and musical performances, the Idaho Black History Museum successfully fosters a deeper understanding of cultural diversity in the State of Idaho.

HONORING MAMIE OLIVER

Today, I join with the Idaho Black History Museum in honoring a special Idahoan—Dr. Mamie Oliver—for her outstanding record of achievement and efforts on behalf of Idaho's communities. A historian, professor, and community leader, Dr. Oliver truly embodies what Black History Month is all about.

When Mamie Oliver accepted a position at Boise State University in 1972, she became Idaho's first African-American professor. At Boise State, Dr. Oliver and her students completed foundational research on African-American history in Idaho, launching the early development of what was previously untold history.

Dr. Oliver was influential in getting the St. Paul Baptist Church building on the Historical Register. The church, established in 1909, was one of two African-American churches in Idaho and is now the home of the Idaho Black History Museum. Together with her husband and fellow community leader, Dr. H. Lincoln Oliver, Ph.D., B.D., she sought to meet the needs of the less fortunate in the community by founding the Treasure Valley Council for Church and Social Action 25 years ago.

For her remarkable service, Dr. Oliver was recognized as a Distinguished Citizen by the Idaho Statesman and as one of the ten Outstanding Women in Idaho by the Boise March of Dimes. Dr. Oliver was selected for the Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service Benefiting Local Communities by the American Institute for Public Services and received the 2004 Women of Today and Tomorrow Award from the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council (Boise).

Dr. Oliver was appointed by Governor Evans to chair the first Martin Luther King, Jr., Task Force and by Governor Kempthorne to serve two terms on the Governor's Coordinating Council for Families and Children.

Dr. Oliver and her late husband, Dr. Lincoln Oliver, have two adult children

and two grandchildren. Currently, she teaches at Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, ID.

We in Idaho are proud to have individuals such as Dr. Mamie Oliver in our community. It is through the dedication of people like Dr. Oliver that we realize as a Nation our strengths and are empowered by what is integrally part of our American history and brought to the forefront this February—Black History Month.

Our Nation has made great strides in putting civil and human rights challenges behind us. But we must be ever vigilant in pursuing the fundamental principles of equality and justice and in continuing the legacy that so many individuals have worked so hard to achieve. In Congress, one of our most important duties is to protect these core personal freedoms that we as American citizens enjoy.

SENATOR GEORGE SMATHERS

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the life and achievements of Senator George Smathers. I delivered remarks at his memorial service on January 29. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the remarks.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

It is fitting that we gather in this community, in this state, to honor George A. Smathers—an outstanding American, and one of the great sons of Miami and Florida.

Because it was here that George Smathers grew up.

It was here that he became president of the student bodies at Miami Senior High School and his beloved University of Florida, where he also was captain of the basketball, track and debate teams.

It was here that he joined the Marines, faking appendicitis so he could avoid a Navy desk job and see combat in World War II.

And it was here that the handsome young Miamian broke into public service as an assistant prosecutor, after which he kept ascending and never looked back.

This community, this state—this is where George Smathers devoted so much of his life.

I am honored that his family asked me to pay him tribute. He has two wonderful sons, John and Bruce, and is survived by his devoted wife Carolyn.

The fact of the matter is—my life has intersected with the family for 45 years. Even today, my desk in the chamber of the United States Senate is the one used by George Smathers.

I first met the Smathers' family when I was a college intern in the senator's office.

But it is the friendship of one of George Smathers' sons that has been especially important in my life.

At a time in my young life when I lost both parents, Bruce was more than a friend, he was a brother. Bruce is always faithful, never waivers, always encourages. He is a loyal friend—a Smathers' trait.

Bruce and I even introduced each other to our wives. And "little" Bruce is my godson.

As a kid, I'll never forget attending the funeral of President Kennedy with the senator and his sons, watching the rider-less horse with the boots turned backward, following the caisson down Pennsylvania Ave. and across Memorial Bridge for the burial at Arlington.

In the nine days since George Smathers has left us, many people have paused to remember.

The senator had become quite a successful businessman and philanthropist, giving the University of Florida \$20 million for its libraries, and the University of Miami \$10 million for its Wellness Center.

He was, in the words of his biographer, Brian Crispell, "congenial, humorous, and respected as a highly effective orator and legislator."

He also has been described as prophetic.

Indeed, he was so sure years ago that Miami would become a major international city and gateway to the rest of the hemisphere, that he insisted his sons learn to speak Spanish.

The year was 1946 when he set his sights on Congress.

That's when he took on a four-term incumbent U.S. congressman—and, with a group of young turks in Miami he beat the odds.

That was quite a class that went to Washington with him. It included the late Jacob Javits and Hale Boggs.

The young congressman from South Florida soon became close with President Truman, as the president would visit the Key West White House for his retreats.

No one will ever forget one of Smathers' earliest accomplishments, which was helping to create the Everglades National Park.

While he was in the House of Representatives, he also developed a passion for the politics and peoples of Latin America, making some 14 trips there.

Many years later in the Senate, his colleagues would refer to him, in jest, as the Senator from Latin America.

Everyone would laugh, and Senator Smathers would go along. But he would offer a disclaimer: Sure he had a specialty in foreign affairs in the Western Hemisphere, but his first duty was being the senator from Florida.

In 1948, the senator from Florida met Fidel Castro. And in a private conversation, Fidel told him he was going to take over Cuba. Smathers always was leery of Castro. And sure enough, 11 years later, Castro overthrew Batista.

While so many in America thought that was a good thing—ousting the hated dictator Batista—Smathers was one of the strongest anti-Castro voices around, saying, "Watch out for this fellow. You better be careful."

Leading up to the elections of 1950, President Truman called Smathers to the White House and asked him to run against Florida's incumbent Senator Claude Pepper. Apparently there had been a misunderstanding between Truman and Pepper, and the president still was angry.

Up to that point, Smathers had not seriously considered the Senate.

That 1950 campaign still is noted for remarks supposedly made to play on the ignorance of certain voters.

Years later, Smathers decided to debunk the myth by offering a \$10,000 personal reward to anyone who could authenticate and verify his alleged comments.

Nobody could.

When he went to the Senate, George Smathers joined the "club." There were giants. Symington of Missouri, Johnson of Texas, Dirksen of Illinois, Kerr of Oklahoma, Kennedy of Massachusetts. And right there with them were Smathers and Holland, of Florida.

Smathers became close friends with John Kennedy, and was one of the best men in the wedding party when JFK married Jacqueline Bouvier.

LBJ depended on George Smathers, too, even though they differed on a number of issues.

When there was a vacancy in the assistant majority leader, Lyndon Johnson asked Smathers to fill that position.

And then, when Johnson suffered his heart attack and was out for seven months, Smathers filled in as the acting majority leader.

When LBJ resumed his duties running the Senate, he asked his friend from Florida to be his permanent assistant majority leader.

Johnson, who was not accustomed to hearing the word no, had to accept just that from his friend from Florida.

In 1956, the senator was considered for vice president, for the first of two times.

During his Senate career, he chaired the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee and is credited with passing legislation to help small businesses, reform immigration and advance tourism for Florida.

He helped upgrade transportation, and fought for what would become, under JFK, the Alliance for Progress in Latin America.

He also helped eliminate the poll tax, establish the Kennedy Space Center, set up the Permanent Select Committee on Aging and, of course, set aside that natural wonder, Everglades National Park, the "River of Grass" that means so much to us in Florida.

In 1960, he was the southern chairman for Kennedy and Johnson; and that same year he created a new judicial district for southern Florida to handle an increasing case load.

In the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Smathers Beach in Key West, named after the senator, was an antimissile battery. The world now knows just how close we came to a nuclear exchange in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Few know that George Smathers helped President Kennedy write the speech that warned the Soviet Union that any attack upon the United States from Cuba would be considered an attack by the Soviet Union.

After the Kennedy assassination, Smathers became a regular at the Johnson White House and an adviser to LBJ. In 1968, he turned down presidential nominee Hubert Humphrey's offer of being his vice presidential running mate.

The next year, he stepped out of public service and into private life, ending three terms in the Senate and two terms in the House.

Among the many accolades he received, perhaps the one he prized most came from Louisiana's Senator Russell Long. George Smathers, in Long's words, "was a statesman."

During a lifetime of public service, he also was a good husband and father, a Marine, a prosecutor, congressman, senator—a leader.

In later years, George Smathers said when asked, that he'd like to be remembered as a fellow "who worked hard for the people he represented and did his best for his country."

That he will be and much more.

Senator Smathers, thank you on behalf of a grateful nation.

LIHEAP FUNDING

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a very important Federal program that helps hundreds of thousands of Michigan families and millions of Americans across the country. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP, is critically important for families and seniors who struggle to pay high energy bills to heat their homes in the winter and cool their homes in the summer. Without LIHEAP, many of these households would be forced to make the impossible

choice between paying for energy or paying for food and medicine.

Today is the National Fuel Funds Network's Washington Action Day for LIHEAP and folks from many different States will be walking the Halls of Congress to make sure we know how important it is to fully fund LIHEAP.

As winter kicks into high gear, the importance of the LIHEAP program is even more pronounced. According to the Energy Information Administration, American households spent an average of \$948 in 2006 on their winter heating needs—an increase of \$250 over the 2000–2001 winter season. That might seem like a modest increase, but for most Americans living paycheck to paycheck, it could have disastrous effects on their household budgets. LIHEAP assistance, which emphasizes partnerships between utilities, charitable organizations, and State governments, is a highly effective and cost-efficient way for our country to help the neediest families manage these incremental increases in their home energy costs. It has thus become an important component of our social safety net.

Not surprisingly, LIHEAP assistance historically has been targeted to cold-weather States in the Northeast and Upper Midwest. In the State of Michigan, for instance, more than 470,000 households received LIHEAP aid in 2006. In recent years, however, the program has been retooled in order to recognize the need to provide similar assistance to warm-weather States in the South and Southwest to help their neediest citizens meet their home cooling needs. Last year, more than 6.2 million households received assistance nationwide, including many new families in the warm-weather areas.

Unfortunately, the LIHEAP program has never been funded to its authorized level—which recently was raised to \$5 billion as part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Even though LIHEAP was funded at \$3.1 billion in fiscal year 2006 the highest level ever—many who are eligible remain unable to get help because there are simply not enough funds to help them. We need to take a good, hard look at our funding efforts so that we are not forced to make unfair choices between cold and warm-weather States, much less deny support to eligible recipients.

Increased gas prices, unforeseen medical bills, sudden unemployment, or any other unexpected situation that causes a family's living costs to rise while their income stays fixed, forces families to make some truly hard choices. But no one should have to choose between the need to heat and the need to eat. At its foundation, the LIHEAP program helps these families deal with one of the most basic of their needs—a warm home in wintertime as they work to regain their footing.

Today, the National Fuel Funds Network has mobilized a coalition of charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army and The Heat And Warmth Fund, THAW, utilities such as CMS Energy and DTE Energy of Michigan,