

If we reach that point, Medicare will have failed in its mission to provide equality in access to health care for our senior citizens.

Twice we have tried to pass legislation to address the physician payment cut and these bills were vetoed twice by the President.

H.R. 6331 will delay by 18 months the 10.6% physician pay-cut in Medicare reimbursement rates due to take effect July 1 and will give physicians a 1.1 % payment update for 2009.

This bill is not a long term solution to the physician payment and SGR problem, but it does give Congress time to revamp the program.

CREDIT UNION, BANK, AND
THRIFT REGULATORY RELIEF
ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6312, The Credit Union, Bank, and Thrift Regulatory Relief Act of 2008. I am particularly pleased to speak in favor of this legislation because I have always been a strong supporter of credit unions. These institutions have been effective in pursuit of their mission to serve people of modest means and underserved communities, both of which characterize much of my district. Regulatory improvement in this industry is long overdue and I want to thank Mr. KANJORSKI and Mr. MOORE for their work on this bill.

Credit union regulatory relief is especially urgent in light of the nation's current financial crisis. We are either at the brink of a recession—or already in one—largely because of the crisis in the subprime mortgage market that has led to a wave of foreclosures unlike any since the Great Depression. In significant part, this crisis resulted from certain financial institutions, many of them largely unregulated, peddling dangerous mortgage loan products to borrowers who did not fully understand the risk they were taking on. Meanwhile, the lenders themselves whisked their own risk to the four corners of the earth via securitization and the secondary market. Much of the Financial Services Committee's work in the past year has involved working to enact legislation that prevents this from ever happening again.

Notably, credit unions did not help to create this mess. Indeed, analysis of 2006 home mortgage disclosure data reveals that credit unions were far less likely than other lenders to make subprime loans to low and moderate income households, especially minorities.

So credit unions were not part of the problem. But they can and must be part of the solution. If there is any lesson to be learned from this crisis, it is that low or moderate income households and residents of underserved communities don't just need access to any credit, but rather access to sound and appropriate financial products. Credit unions stand ready to provide such products to more people and more communities, but need Congressional action to do so. Specifically, H.R. 6312 would allow credit unions to extend their services to areas with high unemployment rates and below median incomes that are generally underserved by other depository institutions.

Critically, it would also allow some people who don't belong to a local credit union nonetheless to go to that credit union for short term loans, as an alternative to the exorbitant rates charged by payday lenders. This is progress in achieving the outcome policymakers must pursue in the financial services sector, namely, connecting households of modest means with the soundest financial products and institutions available to them.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN LEE
VANDEWATER

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize CPT Lee J. Vandewater of Winterset, Iowa who was honored by the Central Iowa Chapter of the American Red Cross for his heroic efforts serving in the Iowa National Guard overseas, earning him a Bronze Star.

Captain Vandewater served as the 1st Platoon Leader, Company B, 168th Infantry of the Iowa National Guard. While serving overseas, he commanded a nine-vehicle convoy carrying 30 soldiers along the Afghanistan and Pakistan borders. Insurgents ambushed the battalion and Captain Vandewater commanded his team to safety and returned with three other men to successfully rescue four stranded soldiers. For his efforts, Captain Vandewater was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. The Bronze Star is the fourth highest award that the Department of Defense gives for bravery, heroism, and meritorious service. For his service he earned a promotion to Captain and was assigned as Commander, Company A 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry of the Iowa National Guard.

The bravery and sacrifice displayed by Captain Vandewater goes above and beyond what we are asked of as citizens of this country. I commend CPT Lee J. Vandewater's courageousness and service to our great Nation. It is an honor to represent him in the United States Congress, and I know my colleagues join me in wishing Captain Vandewater safety and success in his future service.

STOP CHILD ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL
PROGRAMS FOR TEENS
ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Chairman, I rise today to express my support of the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008, introduced by Representative GEORGE MILLER.

The bill H.R. 5876 provides American teenagers with security and safety in residential programs. The passage of the bill is crucial for the American Education System and American society. Many times residential programs

leave teenagers without necessary attention and care, which can lead to abuse, harm and even death of children. It is critical to address this problem now. Through various requirements and changes, The Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs Act will significantly improve residential programs for children. This important legislation will better the lives of many young Americans by making them safer and healthier.

U.S. Government can not allow further abuse and neglect of teenagers in private or public residential programs. Members of Congress must understand how crucial Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act is and must strongly support its enactment. In taking action to enact this proposed legislation today we will send a strong message that this abuse must stop.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT
MONDAVI

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Con. Res. 365, which my fellow co-chair of the Congressional Wine Caucus, MIKE THOMPSON and I introduced in remembrance of a friend and giant in the California and international wine community, Robert Mondavi, who passed away in May of this year.

Robert may most be remembered for his tremendous success in producing and promoting California wines to the international community. After graduating from Stanford, Robert joined his family in running the Charles Krug winery in Napa, and then went on to found the Robert Mondavi Winery in 1966.

His tireless efforts to introduce California wine to the world and compete against established European wines are much of the reason why winemaking in California is now an 18 billion dollar industry—the largest retail wine market in the world. In fact, the United States accounts for 61 percent of wine sold in the world. This would not be possible without the lifetime of hard work by Robert Mondavi.

He was also extremely involved in charitable causes across the country to promote wine, food and the arts.

Robert Mondavi was an inspiration to my own winemaking ventures as I'm sure he was to many boutique winemakers across the country. Such inspiration has led to wine being produced in all 50 States. His innovation, spirit and passion for winemaking will be sorely missed throughout our Nation and the world.

RECOGNIZING HIGH SCHOOL VAL-
EDICTORIANS OF GRADUATING
CLASS OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 23, 2008

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the achievements of America's high school valedictorians and the graduating class of 2008.

With House Resolution 1229, I know that I capture the sentiment of all Members of the 110th Congress in promoting the importance of intellectual growth and the academic excellence of America's graduating high school students. In my southeast Queens community, New York's Sixth Congressional District, I personally know that great achievements have taking place in the high schools servicing my young constituents. My district's graduating seniors have achieved a major milestone in their educational and social development. With this accomplishment, I now encourage these young adults to take their next major step towards becoming our Nation's future leaders and engaged citizens by entering higher education institutions or by beginning their young careers.

For this graduation celebration, I want to specifically recognize the stellar accomplishments of our Nation's high school Valedictorians. Each year, every high school recognizes an individual student who has risen above his or her fellow students through their consistency of intellectual inquiry, in their demonstration of academic discipline, and their utilization of teacher mentoring. Through their dedication and hard work, these students have attained the position of top academically ranked student within their graduating class and are honored as the "Valedictorian" at their graduation ceremony. Throughout their high school careers, Valedictorians have served as peer role models to fellow high school students by succeeding academically and contributing to community improvement. It is their example that shines clearly to their fellow students and community members, demonstrating the dedication and drive that it takes to become America's future civic, business, and political leaders, and maintaining our Nation's global leadership position through strengthening its economic competitiveness.

During this graduation season, let us not forget that no child achieves alone, but rather it takes an entire community to rear a socially and educationally mature child. Along with our Nation's valedictorians and graduating class, I want to recognize and honor the love, support, and contributions of the parents, community members, teachers, and school administrators, who have provided these students with the resources and guidance needed to achieve. It has been the selfless contributions of these individuals who have nurtured the intellectual growth and rewarded the academic achievements of our Nation's valedictorians and graduating seniors.

In closing, I make the call to all graduating seniors to further their intellectual interests and academic studies by enrolling in universities and postsecondary educational institutions and to continue their social engagement, utilizing their knowledge and skills for the betterment of their communities and the social, cultural, and economic advancement of our great Nation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PUGET SOUND RECOVERY ACT OF 2008

HON. NORMAN D. DICKS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Mr. DICKS. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Puget Sound Recovery Act of 2008.

With 2,500 miles of shoreline and 2,800 square miles of inland marine waters, Puget Sound is the Nation's second largest estuary. The Sound is a cornerstone of the Pacific Northwest's identity and at the heart of the region's prosperity, supporting a thriving marine and natural resource industry. And it is truly one of America's most spectacular bodies of water, home to more than 200 species of fish, 25 kinds of marine mammals, 100 species of sea birds as well as clams, oysters and shrimp.

But beneath the water's surface and despite its breathtaking natural beauty, Puget Sound is sick. Scientists have detected low levels of oxygen and increasing concentrations of toxic substances in aquatic animals that live in the Sound. Some of its most iconic resident species—including salmon and orcas—are on the brink of extinction. Up to 70 percent of all its original estuaries and wetlands have disappeared and about 8,700 acres at the bottom of the Sound are dangerously contaminated.

The declining health of Puget Sound threatens the economic and environmental vitality of the Pacific Northwest. Washington State's Governor Chris Gregoire has taken steps at the State Government level to combat this decline by setting up a Puget Sound Partnership. Now it is time for the U.S. Government to match these efforts, with the Environmental Protection Agency taking the lead to create, with the State of Washington, a comprehensive recovery package for Puget Sound.

Already, we have launched a cooperative effort involving all of the local government entities, as well as the State and Federal Governments, to curtail any harmful substances from being introduced into its waters, to change unwise industrial and agricultural practices and to continue our aggressive research into the causes of pollution in the Sound. The Fiscal Year 2008 Interior Appropriations bill included \$20 million for the EPA geographic program to ramp up the Puget Sound work, and earlier this month the Interior Subcommittee which I chair passed a spending bill for fiscal year 2009 that includes an additional \$20 million to implement the program.

The Puget Sound Recovery Act that I am joined by all of my colleagues from around the Puget Sound area in introducing today furthers these efforts by establishing an EPA Puget Sound Office in Washington State that will coordinate action among the many Federal agencies involved in the cleanup, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Park Service, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service within the Department of Agriculture, the United States Geological Survey, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Departments of Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security and Transportation. In addition, this bill authorizes grants to study the causes of the Sound's declining water quality and ways to counter these threats, as well as grants for sewer and stormwater discharge projects.

Madam Speaker, the Federal Government must continue to play a leading role in restoring the health of Puget Sound, and I believe the Puget Sound Recovery Act is fundamental to this effort.

PUGET SOUND RECOVERY ACT OF 2008

SECTION-BY-SECTION

Sec. 1. Short Title.

Sec. 2. Findings. Congress finds that Puget Sound is important to the Pacific Northwest's regional identity and industry. Puget Sound's water quality is in decline, which threatens the region's economy. Washington State has taken steps to address the problem. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should create a comprehensive recovery package for Puget Sound and should establish a "Puget Sound Office" in Washington State. Other federal agencies should be involved, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Park Service, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service within the Department of Agriculture, the United States Geological Survey, the Corps of Engineers, the Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security, Defense, and Transportation. The Puget Sound recovery efforts should be included in the President's annual budget. Canada should join in this enhanced effort.

Sec. 3. Puget Sound. This section amends Title I of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) by adding at the end a new section ("Sec. 123. Puget Sound."). The Puget Sound Recovery Act creates the following provisions within the new Sec. 123 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act:

(a) Program Office.

(1) Establishes an EPA Puget Sound Program Office ("Office").

(2) States that the Office is to be headed by a Director and located in the State of Washington.

(3) Provides the Office with additional staff as needed.

(b) Duties of Director.

(1) Directs the Director to assist the Puget Sound Partnership in carrying out its goals.

(2) Specifically, the Director should:

(A) Assist and support the implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan ("Comprehensive Plan");

(B) Coordinate the major functions of the Federal government related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan;

(C) Conduct or commission studies and research necessary for implementation of the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan;

(D) Coordinate and manage environmental data;

(E) Coordinate Puget Sound grant, research, and planning programs;

(F) Coordinate efforts in Puget Sound and the Georgia Straits with Canada;

(G) Coordinate efforts, including activities under species recovery plans, with other Federal agencies with jurisdiction in the Puget Sound watershed;

(H) Collect and make available to the public information relating to the environmental quality of Puget Sound; and

(I) Biennially issue a report to Congress that—

(i) Summarizes the progress made;

(ii) Summarizes any modifications to the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan; and

(iii) Incorporates specific recommendations concerning the implementation of the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan.

(3) Specifies that the studies and research mandated under (2) (C) should include:

(A) Population growth and the adequacy of wastewater treatment facilities and on-site septic systems;