

much to be done. I am introducing this bill because the lives of our most frail senior citizens are at stake, and our return to this issue is long overdue. I recognize we are in the waning days of this Congress, and I look forward to hearing feedback from my colleagues and interested parties in the coming months. It is my hope we will move forward on this issue in the 111th Congress.

A disturbing trend has been underway in the nursing home industry recently. Nursing home chains have changed their corporate structure in ways that conceal the ownership and management of individual facilities. In doing so, the chains are able to shield assets and limit liability. They obscure regulators' efforts to find the responsible party and seek corrective action or collect monetary penalties. Beneficiaries are similarly limited in their ability to seek remuneration for injury or neglect.

The result is a woeful lack of transparency and accountability. How can we hold nursing home chains accountable for the quality of care if they are hiding their true ownership relationships?

Even more worrisome is the negative effect on quality that may result from these changing corporate structures. The heightened focus on profit maximization in the restructured organizations may come at the expense of quality of care. When cost cutting leads to staffing cuts, patient care suffers, and our most frail seniors and people with disabilities are put in jeopardy.

We must not forget that this industry operates largely on the government dime. Medicare and Medicaid pay for the majority—60 percent—of spending on nursing homes annually, with the remainder coming from people's own wallets or from private insurance. At any one time, nearly 80 percent of residents living in nursing homes are supported by public funds.

These troubling trends in ownership and quality are occurring at the same time that the nursing home industry is enjoying healthy Medicare margins of nearly 13.1 percent in 2006. For profit nursing homes are doing even better, with soaring stock prices and Medicare margins of 16 percent in 2006.

The federal government has a moral and fiduciary responsibility to make sure we know who those providers are and what they are doing, and ensure they are using government dollars to provide high quality care for our nation's nursing home residents. That is why we are introducing this legislation.

The Nursing Home Transparency and Quality of Care Improvement Act would place patients before profits. It provides protections to residents when a home closes, and brings structure to the complaint process. It increases the transparency of nursing home ownership and operations so that seniors and their families know who is calling the shots, and what level of care is being provided in the home. It improves the data available on Medicare's Nursing Home Compare Web site so that families are well-informed when making decisions about the care of their loved one. The bill also improves staff training. The bill strengthens the current enforcement system via mandatory compliance and ethics programs, new quality assurance efforts, and meaningful enforcement penalties.

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK TURNER

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. LEWIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute and say farewell to Chuck Turner, a hard-working, highly valued staff member of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. It is a privilege to consider Chuck a part of the extended Lewis family.

Throughout his over 30 years of service to the legislative branch, Chuck represented the highest values we in Congress want to provide: courtesy, commitment, and a dedication to public service. He has distinguished himself as a champion of this great institution, working tirelessly to ensure the Capitol stays the "people's house" and that it remains a beacon for motivated and service-minded young people.

Appropriations staffers have a special role in Congress, helping to ensure that our government spending meets the needs of the public and stays within our budget. At the same time, they must help us to win the support of a majority of Congress, since these spending bills must pass every year. New staff members working on Legislative Branch appropriations could always rely on Chuck's expertise, generosity, and insight. He has been an example of the very best of the Appropriations Committee and has been a staffer that colleagues and Members on both sides of the aisle could turn to.

Retirement is something to be celebrated and enjoyed. It is not the end of a career, but rather the beginning of a new adventure. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in sending our best wishes to Chuck in his retirement, and let him know that we will miss him every day and will always be grateful for all he's done for Congress and the Legislative Branch.

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN ON THEIR NATIONAL DAY

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Taiwan on the occasion of their National Day on October 10. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I am pleased to send my best wishes to our friends in Taiwan.

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is our ally in the Pacific. Although it is a small island nation, it has a growing and progressive economy, providing its citizens with quality education, health care and affordable housing. Also, with its well-educated population, Taiwan is an ideal place for business entrepreneurship. Much of Taiwan's economic prowess is directly attributable to Taiwan's political system.

A vibrant democracy, Taiwan's history of democratization is an important example of how other countries can change. In a little more than two decades, Taiwan has peacefully transformed its political system, from

authoritarianism to democratic government, providing a role model for other non-democratic political governments in Asia. Taiwan's successful democratic experience proves that democracy can thrive on Chinese soil.

We hope that in the years ahead, Taiwan and China will reach a rapprochement of sorts. Cross-strait relations are improving every day: There are now charter flights from Taiwan to the mainland, relaxation of China-bound investments, more visas for mainland tourists, and more exchange in many areas. Taiwan's new president Ma Ying-jeou is committed to pursue reconciliation and truce with the People's Republic. President Ma looks for peace and co-prosperity with the People's Republic.

Congratulations to the people of Taiwan and a warm welcome to Ambassador Jason Yuan. Ambassador Yuan is a distinguished career diplomat and will represent his country well.

CONGRATULATING SAMUEL BECK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Samuel Beck Elementary School in Northwest ISD. The school has been awarded a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Award for 2008.

This prestigious award honors schools that have shown remarkable gains in student achievement. Samuel Beck Elementary was one of only 18 public elementary schools in Texas and 320 schools across the nation to receive this great honor.

The No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School award distinguishes and honors schools for helping students achieve at very high levels and for making significant progress in closing the achievement gap. The program honors public and private elementary and secondary schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

Samuel Beck Elementary School was selected for the achievement of having students score in the top 10 percent of the state on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. The No Child Left Behind Act requires schools to make adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics.

The accomplishments of the staff, faculty, and students at Samuel Beck Elementary School have extended beyond test scores—they've learned the value of teamwork and they've shown how dedication and persistence can lead to success. I am proud to represent Samuel Beck Elementary School in the 26th District of Texas, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BOB SEGAL

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today to honor my good

friend, Bob Segal, by entering his name in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress since 1873. Today, I pay tribute to Bob Segal for his advocacy on behalf of cancer patients.

Bob was diagnosed with cancer in 2005 and has undergone extensive treatments to combat the disease. Following his diagnosis, Bob resolved to not only fight his own personal battle with cancer, but also assist other suffering from the disease, ease the suffering of cancer survivors, and advocate for funds for cancer research.

Bob volunteered to join the Lance Armstrong Foundation's fight against cancer and has participated in several LIVESTRONG Challenges since 2006. The LIVESTRONG Challenges allow individuals and teams to help raise money for the Foundation by holding cycling events. Bob participated in his first 100-mile fundraising effort in Orange County, California, in June 2006. That year Bob raised over \$15,000 for the Lance Armstrong Foundation and was invited to the Ride for the Roses, the Foundation's main fundraising event, in Austin, Texas.

Following his first LIVESTRONG Challenge, Bob joined the Cyclists Combating Cancer Team and has been riding with them ever since. Bob has also participated in the Moad Skinny Tire Festival in both 2007 and 2008, a 4-day 200-mile event, the Portland LIVESTRONG Challenge, in 2007 and the Ride for the Roses in 2007. Bob also plans to participate in the Portland Challenge in October and next year he and his team are planning a ride that will start in a number of locations in the United States with all of them meeting in Washington, DC and culminating in the participants talking with their Members of Congress about cancer research.

In 2007, Bob rode over 4,800 miles and plans to complete 3,500 miles this year as well as raise over \$20,000 for the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Bob attributes his success to his grassroots methods, which include personal solicitation and sponsorships.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor my friend, Bob Segal. His advocacy on behalf of cancer research and treatment is commendable and his accomplishments with fundraising for the Lance Armstrong Foundation as well as riding over 7,000 miles the last 2 years are truly inspiring. I applaud Bob for all his success and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING DR. REGINA BENJAMIN FOR WINNING A JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to congratulate Dr. Regina Benjamin of Bayou La Batre, Alabama, for winning a 2008 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. As one of 25 recipients of this year's prestigious "genius grant," Dr. Benjamin's star is rising on the national level even as she continues to work daily to

improve the lives of the people of south Mobile County and the State of Alabama.

Dr. Benjamin, a lifelong resident of Alabama, has dedicated herself to serving the underserved—providing high-quality medical care to shrimping communities of the Alabama bayou. When Bayou La Batre was devastated by Hurricane Georges in 1998 and again in 2005 by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Dr. Benjamin rode from house to house in a pickup truck, caring for her patients one by one until her clinic could be rebuilt. Her dedication to serving her community stands out as an example for us all, and I am so glad she has been recognized by one of the world's truly prestigious foundations.

The MacArthur Fellowship is awarded annually to individuals recognized for "extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction." Fellows are awarded \$500,000 with absolutely no strings attached, a complement to the virtues of creativity and self-direction recognized by the foundation. Though Dr. Benjamin has not yet decided how she will use her grant, she is considering a program to help lower-income students pursue careers in medicine. It would be a worthy use of this award and truly a gift that would keep on giving.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the proud citizens of the First Congressional District and the entire State of Alabama, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Benjamin on her MacArthur Fellowship. I know I speak for all my colleagues in the House of Representatives when I say we can't wait to see what she does next.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FREDERICKTOWN

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker: Whereas, the dedicated people of the First Presbyterian Church of Fredericktown celebrate the church's 200th anniversary with great joy; and

Whereas, occasions such as these illustrate the resiliency and determination of spirit a congregation such as this can have over such a long period of time; and

Whereas, it is the fond wish of this body that you will continue to be a model for worship and a beacon for hope to the destitute and that your presence over these two centuries has made the community a better place to live due to the contributions made by members of the congregation both past and present, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend the congregation for your unwavering commitment to the residents of Fredericktown and recognize the tremendous impact the church and members of the congregation have had on the community over two centuries. With great appreciation and respect, we express great appreciation for your 200 years of service to the community and to the lives of those people you have touched.

TRIBUTE TO RUDY GARCIA-TOLSON

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to congratulate an amazing athlete who broke the world record time, winning him a gold medal, in the 200m individual medley in addition to winning a bronze medal in the 100m breaststroke at the Beijing Games of the XIII Paralympiad this summer. He was awarded 2 of the 99 medals the United States proudly won.

By the age of five, this brave young man had already undergone 15 surgeries as a result of having been born with pterygium syndrome, resulting in a clubbed foot, webbed fingers on both hands, a cleft lip and palate, and the inability to straighten his legs. However, having endured so much at such young age, he decided to have both legs amputated above the knee.

Mr. Garcia-Tolson took it upon himself to embrace these new prosthetic legs and began running, cycling and swimming. By 1999 at the age of 10 years, he had become the youngest bilateral amputee to ever complete a triathlon on his own. Within that same year, he also set his first national record in swimming.

In 2000 and 2001, Mr. Garcia-Tolson finished in first place in the Silver Strand Marathon. In 2002, he was a recipient of the Casey Martin Award which honors individuals with a disability fighting for the right to compete in sports. In 2004, Teen People Magazine names him one of "20 Teens Who Will Change the World."

In 2004, having just turned 16 years old, Rudy Garcia-Tolson received his first gold medal at the Paralympic Games by breaking the 200m individual medley world record. He continued his training as well as passion for sports by completing the Ford Ironman World Championship 70.3 in 2006. Not long after, he broke the world record swimming the 200m individual medley at the 2007 U.S. Paralympics Open Swimming Championships.

As an athlete myself, I recognize the necessary courage, strength and dedication one must possess to triumph all that Mr. Garcia-Tolson has accomplished. Turning 20 years old earlier this week, he is to be celebrated not only for achieving the most impressive awards in his sport, but smashing world records along the way. More than anything, he is an inspiration to us all, conquering so much despite what hurdles laid in his path.

God Bless Rudy Garcia-Tolson for his talent, passion and love of country and mankind.

LOCAL HEROES

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 26, 2008

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great appreciation and sincere gratitude that I take this time to honor three local men whose recent selfless acts have made them heroes to grateful communities in northwest Indiana. This exceptional group of heroes consists of