

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 5721, THE
STRENGTHENING THE SAFETY
NET ACT OF 2008

HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam Speaker, today, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 5721, the Strengthening the Safety Net Act of 2008. This important legislation will increase Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments to Oklahoma and 19 other low DSH States and bring Oklahoma's hospitals on equal footing with other States who receive their fair share of DSH funds.

With Oklahoma having the fourth highest rate of uninsured in the Nation, it is critical that Oklahoma hospitals receive a fair distribution of DSH funds we need to care for our indigent population. This legislation will increase the rate that unused DSH funds are reimbursed to these low DSH States from the current rate of 16 percent to 19.5 percent for the next 5 years. The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 statutorily defined low DSH States and provided these States with 16 percent funding increases each year for the last 5 fiscal years. In total, there are 20 States that have lower DSH allotments, including: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The 16 percent rate expires at the end of this fiscal year, so it is critical that we increase this percentage so that our hospitals do not feel the financial strain of providing health care services to the indigent.

Under the 19.5 percent increases, Oklahoma will receive an additional \$49 million in Federal funds which, when matched by the State, could amount to \$75 million over the 5-year period to allocate to Oklahoma hospitals to help offset the costs of uncompensated care. Oklahoma hospitals provided \$325 million in uncompensated care costs in 2006. H.R. 5721 will help decrease uncompensated care costs for Oklahoma hospitals and ensure fairness among all 50 States by equitably distributing unused DSH Funds.

Since this bill is being solely funded through unused Federal DSH allotments, the funding source of the bill merely utilizes funds that are currently being returned to the Federal Government by other States that do not use all of their DSH funds. These unused funds currently are not being used toward any other health care related programs.

Another important issue which needs to be addressed is access to quality, affordable health care, especially within our Nation's indigent population. Indigent patients in Oklahoma and our Nation face a significant number of unmet health care needs. These patients have difficulty accessing primary, diagnostic and specialty care and rely on hospital emergency rooms as their primary entry into the health care system. The price of treating the indigent at hospital emergency rooms is astounding compared to care found in a primary care setting. H.R. 5721 will help bring down these costs and save taxpayer dollars in the process.

My legislation will create an innovative new grant program through the Department of

Health and Human Services to help our Nation's health care providers fund health access networks, which will get low income and uninsured patients who need basic medical care out of emergency rooms and into primary care facilities. These networks would be required to provide high quality primary, outpatient, inpatient and specialty care to uninsured and other medically vulnerable populations in an effort to reduce the costs of treating these individuals for hospitals and taxpayers alike.

According to a 2005 study by the Lewin Group on Strategic Planning for Safety-Net Services, Tulsa, like many communities, faces many challenges in its delivery, financing and organization that limit its ability to successfully meet the needs of safety-net populations. To give an example, the price of treating the indigent at our hospital emergency rooms is astounding compared to the cost of treating someone in a primary care setting. To give you an example: the Oklahoma Health Care Authority recently found that the cost of a claim for asthma treatment in a primary care setting was \$34.12 per claim, while the average cost for the same asthma treatment in an emergency room setting was \$61.20 per claim. While some of these claims may have been emergencies, it is clear that treatment in an outpatient setting is significantly less, almost two times less, than treatment in an emergency room. Without these networks in place, the majority of Oklahoma's uninsured will continue to go without a primary healthcare provider.

Lastly, my bill also changes the grandfather clause for the mandatory requirement related to hospitals providing nonemergency obstetric services which are located in low DSH States. The new grandfather clause will be the date this law becomes enacted. The purpose of this change is to remove a constraint imposed on low DSH States whose rural hospitals stopped providing nonemergency obstetrics during the 1990s and early 2000s due to rising liability insurance costs. The change is intended to encourage low DSH States to change their approach to funding more hospitals through the DSH program. Should my legislation become law, 16 additional Oklahoma hospitals will be able to qualify for DSH funds.

I am pleased to have the support of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, the Oklahoma Health Association and advocates for Tulsa health-plexes for the Strengthening the Safety Net Act of 2008. As a member of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, I am looking forward to working with my colleagues on the committee to see this legislation become law.

RECOGNIZING CAPTAIN JEREMY D.
ANZEVINO

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Captain Jeremy D. Anzevino as a recipient of a Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement during combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Bronze Star is the fourth highest award that the Department of Defense gives for bravery, heroism, and meritorious service.

Captain Anzevino earned the Bronze Star while he was commander of Co. L, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division of the II Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq. He was team chief and staff maneuver advisor for the Military Transition Team, 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, from January to July 2007.

His award citation states, "Anzevino provided advice and assistance to Iraqi leaders of 1st Battalion during counterinsurgency operations, which led to the elimination of numerous insurgents."

Captain Anzevino's bravery goes above and beyond what we are asked of as citizens of this country. His heroism illustrates the compassion of Iowans; willing to risk their own lives for their country. For this I offer him my utmost respect, congratulations, and thanks.

I commend Captain Jeremy Anzevino's courageousness and service to our great nation. I am honored to represent Captain Anzevino in the United States Congress and I wish him the best in his future service to our country.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING
JAMES VAN VOORHIS FOR WIN-
NING THE BOYS' DIVISION II
STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPION-
SHIP

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, James Van Voorhis showed hard work and dedication to the sport of basketball; and

Whereas, James Van Voorhis was a supportive team player; and

Whereas, James Van Voorhis always displayed sportsmanship on and off the court; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that along with his friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I congratulate James Van Voorhis on winning the Boys' Division II State Basketball Championship. We recognize the tremendous hard work and sportsmanship he has demonstrated during the 2007–2008 basketball season.

IN MEMORY OF PETTY OFFICER
MICHAEL ANTHONY MONSOOR

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the life and memory of former Petty Officer Second Class Michael Anthony Monsoor, who has been awarded this Nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor. A California native, Michael courageously gave his life in the service of his country, upholding and reflecting the highest traditions of the United States Navy.

Born April 5, 1981, in Long Beach California, Michael attended Garden Grove High School where he played football. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on March 21, 2001 and attended Basic Training at Recruit Training

Command, Great Lakes, Illinois. After graduation, he attended Quartermaster School and then transferred to the Naval Air Station, Sigonella, Italy, for a brief period.

From this assignment, Michael entered Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training in Coronado, California, where he graduated as one of the top performers in his class. After BUD/S training, he completed advanced SEAL training, including parachute training, at Basic Airborne School, Fort Benning, Georgia, and cold weather training in Kodiak, Alaska.

Following his rating as Master-at-Arms, he was assigned to SEAL Team THREE Delta Platoon and deployed with his platoon to Iraq in April 2006 in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, and was subsequently assigned to Task Unit Bravo in Ar Ramadi. From then until September 2006, Michael served as a heavy weapons machine gunner and, during combat patrols, he walked behind the platoon point man with his Mk 48 machine gun as protection against a frontal assault. On 15 such missions Michael served tirelessly with his platoon in one of the most hazardous areas in Iraq and, under the rendering of summer heat, he bore the extra burden of heavy communication gear and a full ammunition load.

Michael and his platoon operated in a highly contested part of Ramadi city called the Ma'laab district. During their deployment he and his fellow SEALs came under enemy attack on 75 percent of their missions. On May 9, 2006 Michael rescued a SEAL who was shot in the leg. He ran out in the street with another SEAL, shot cover fire and dragged his comrade to safety under intense enemy fire earning a Silver Star for gallantry.

But Michael's bravery did not end with this brave act. His Medal of Honor Citation reflects that on September 29, 2006, "as a member of a combined SEAL and Iraq Army sniper overwatch element, tasked with providing early warning and stand-off protection from a rooftop in an insurgent held sector of Ramadi, Iraq, Petty Officer Monsoor distinguished himself by his exceptional bravery in the face of grave danger. In the early morning, insurgents prepared to execute a coordinated attack by reconnoitering the area around the element's position. Element snipers thwarted the enemy's initial attempt by eliminating two insurgents."

"The enemy continued the assault engaging the element, engaging them with a rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire. As enemy activity increased, Petty Officer Monsoor took position with his machine gun between two teammates on an outcropping of the roof. While the SEALs vigilantly watched for enemy activity, an insurgent threw a hand grenade from an unseen location, which bounced off Petty Officer Monsoor's chest landing in front of him. Although he could have escaped the blast, Petty Officer Monsoor chose instead to protect his teammates. Instantly and without regard for his own safety, he threw himself onto the grenade to absorb the force of the explosion with his body, saving the lives of his two teammates."

"By his undaunted courage, fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of certain death, Petty Officer Monsoor gallantly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great credit upon himself and upholding the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service." For this the most extreme sacrifice,

Petty Officer Michael Anthony Monsoor was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by the President of the United States on April 8, 2008.

An ancient historian once wrote, "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet not withstanding, go out to meet it." Madam Speaker, these words could speak no better for the personal commitment of warriors like Petty Officer Monsoor whose service and sacrifice in the face of evil cannot be forgotten.

Michael is survived by his mother Sally, his father George, his sister Sara and his two brothers James and Joseph who will always cherish the memories of his loving and caring devotion to all that touched his life. A loyal friend and an exceptional SEAL, he is sorely missed by his brave brothers in Task Unit Bravo. I extend my prayers and deepest condolences to his loving family and friends and ask that my colleagues join me today in paying tribute to the life and memory of this true American hero.

RECOGNIZING THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE MANIFESTO ON FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR VIETNAM

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the second anniversary of the signing of the Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam. This Manifesto, originally signed by 118 Vietnamese citizens and subsequently signed by thousands of others, has been an inspiration to many who seek to bring democracy and human rights to the citizens of Vietnam. Many signers of this document have been detained and have endured great sacrifice in the name of their cause, and it is with the utmost respect that I rise in their honor.

CONGRESSIONAL VICTIM'S RIGHTS CAUCUS HONORS JAMIE LEIGH JONES

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, April 9, 2008, the Congressional Victim's Rights Caucus will holds its annual awards ceremony to recognize individuals for their significant contributions to the victim's rights field. The Congressional Victim's Rights Caucus will award Jamie Leigh Jones with the Suzanne McDaniel Public Awareness Award to recognize her efforts in raising national awareness of the plight of American contractors victimized abroad.

Jamie Leigh Jones was only 20 years old when she went to work for KBR in Baghdad. She was only at the ironically-named Camp Hope a few days before her coworkers allegedly drugged and gang-raped her. An Army doctor administered a rape kit, which was then

turned over to KBR, not the appropriate law enforcement authorities as is standard in rape cases. It's not a surprise then that KBR lost the very evidence that could be used against it.

Jamie was then kept in a shipping container, under armed guard. She was told that this was to protect her. It was really a way to keep her from telling others what she endured. Jamie convinced a sympathetic guard to let her use his cell phone. Jamie called her dad and asked for help. Her dad then called my office. My staff and I contacted the Department of State. Within 48 hours, agents were dispatched from the embassy in Baghdad and sent to rescue Jamie.

It's been nearly 3 years since Jamie was assaulted. No one has been held accountable for what happened to Jamie. For 2½ years, the Department of Justice was silent as to what it was doing, if anything, to prosecute the criminals. Its silence was broken once Jamie went public with her case.

In December 2007, Jamie went to the national media with her story. Since Jamie went to the press, my office has heard from several other former contractors alleging sexual assaults in Iraq. Jamie has heard from as many as 40 women through the nonprofit organization she created, the Jamie Leigh Foundation, to help other Americans victimized while working abroad as government contractors.

By telling her story, Jamie showed other victims that it is okay to come forward and talk about their assaults. She opened this country's eyes to the "boys will be boys" atmosphere among the contractors in Iraq. And perhaps most importantly, she showed other victims that they are not alone in their struggle to piece their lives back together.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING PHIL FLEISTER OF ST. ANSGAR, IOWA

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedication and hard work of one of my constituents. Phil Fleisher of St. Ansgar, Iowa, who has organized one of the most ambitious tributes to tell the story of America's veterans.

This Saturday, April 12, the first annual Veterans Heritage Day will be observed at the St. Ansgar Walter T. Ennenberg American Legion Post headquarters, thanks to Phil's coordination.

The event will display the largest military history collection in the north central region of Iowa, including thousands of veteran histories compiled by Fleischer, a Vietnam war veteran, in one of the most ambitious chronicles anywhere, dating back to the American Civil War.

It has been noted in press reports that Phil has sponsored and organized a number of these events, at his own expense, designed to educate and promote awareness for the sacrifices of U.S. military personnel in American history.

And, even though it is reported that Phil prefers to remain in the shadows and allow other veterans to take the spotlight, I wanted to properly recognize Phil's dedication to telling