

It is apparent that with the availability of new stem cell lines, the ability of medical researchers to alleviate the suffering of millions will be bolstered. The United States should support comprehensive stem cell research of all kinds, instead of tying the hands of researchers and asking patients with some of the most debilitating diseases to wait even longer. Federal policy must be updated to reflect science advancements.

Moving forward, I believe we need to look for ways to strengthen the ethical framework which guides all forms of regenerative medicine. Policies should be in place to allow scientists to pursue fundamental science inquiries. It will also be essential that Congress work with the National Institutes of Health to ensure that any change in policy can be implemented with ease. When Congress votes to expand the Federal policy or when the next Administration changes the policy, which I am confident will happen, we must have the capacity to move forward quickly to expand the Stem Cell Registry to include the many lines derived post August 9, 2001, and to supply new Federal grants.

We simply must pursue all avenues of science that show promise for advancing human health—and the role of the Federal Government in carrying this out is paramount. For more than a century, the National Institutes of Health has promoted cooperation among the scientists who receive Federal research dollars, and has made knowledge sharing a priority. While state-funded stem cell initiatives are important, without the support of Federal Government there remains a void.

In just 10 short years since Dr. James Thompson announced the first embryonic stem cell line, we have made great strides. Without the Federal funding restriction, who knows where we would be today. Nearly three-quarters of Americans from all walks of life support embryonic stem cell research, as does the majority in Congress who support expanding the Federal stem cell policy to allow for funding and oversight of embryonic stem cell research and who voted for the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which with great disappointment was vetoed twice by President Bush.

I cannot stress enough the promise of stem cell research of all kinds for alleviating the suffering of the 100 million American patients and so many more around the globe who are living with devastating diseases for which there are no good treatments and for which there is no cure. As Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director of the National Institutes of Health, stated in Senate testimony in March 2007: "It is clear today that American science will be better served and the nation would be better served if we let our scientists have access to more cell lines." We must work to remove the barriers to Federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.

WELCOMING HONOR AIR

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I rise to welcome World War II veterans from Western North Carolina to Washington, DC. I am honored to have these members of the Greatest

Generation here in Washington to visit the National World War II Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery.

Honor Air of Henderson and Buncombe counties provides free trips for World War II Veterans to ensure that they have an opportunity to see the memorial which honors their service to our nation, and to commemorate their fallen comrades. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the dedicated volunteers of Honor Air in all of its locations across the country for making these trips possible.

The National World War II Memorial was opened to the public in May of 2004, and has since been visited by millions of people from around the world. Built to honor the 16 million Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Merchant Mariners who served our Nation during World War II, the National World War II Memorial serves as a reminder of their sacrifice and service to the American people. I am thankful that we have finally found a permanent memorial here in the Nation's capital to honor their service.

On behalf of the residents of North Carolina's 11th District and all Americans, I offer our deepest appreciation to these visitors for their service, their sacrifice, and their presence here today. These men and women represent the bravery and benevolence of America—past, present, and future.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring and welcoming these distinguished veterans from Western North Carolina to the Capital of our grateful Nation.

HONORING SAMUEL H. HOWARD ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SIXTY- NINTH BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 69th birthday of Samuel H. Howard, a man who has made an indelible impact on the health of Americans and whose life is an inspiration to us all.

During his more than 40-year career, Sam has served as a White House fellow, been a leader at colleges and health care organizations, and founded and led several corporations charting a course to improve health care for all Americans.

A proud graduate of Oklahoma State University, Sam also holds a master's degree from the prestigious Stanford University. He has received multiple awards for his business acumen, including being inducted by his alma mater into the Oklahoma State University School of Business Hall of Fame. Sam was twice awarded the Federation of American Hospitals President's Achievement Award.

In 1994, Sam received the Nashville NAACP Branch Image Award for Lifetime Achievement. His life has shown how much one can achieve when grounded by faith, family, and fortitude.

Madam Speaker, in Tennessee we are fortunate to have Sam Howard as a pillar of our community, and I am privileged to call him my friend. Today, on his birthday, I rise to salute him, express my gratitude for his service to his fellow man and wish him warm blessings for many years to come. Happy Birthday, Sam.

COVERING THE UNINSURED

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the issue of the uninsured in recognition of National Uninsured Week in our country.

In recent years the cost of health care has grown wildly. Those who can afford private or employer-based health insurance are fortunate. Unfortunately, 47 million Americans lack health insurance, including nine million children—and in Texas one out of every four individuals is without health insurance.

We need a national health care plan, but until we make it a national priority, Congress will continue to make incremental steps.

That's why Congress has worked so hard to include more children under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and I have introduced the Health Centers Renewal Act (H.R. 1343), the Community Mental Health Services Act (H.R. 5167) and the Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act (H.R. 154).

Ten years ago Congress created the SCHIP to help provide health insurance for children of low-income workers. These are hard-working families whose jobs don't offer employer-sponsored health insurance, or whose dependant coverage for children is unaffordable.

Nationwide there are approximately 9 million uninsured children. Alarming, more than 1.5 million of those children live in Texas. Our state had significant barriers against the enrollment of new children in SCHIP, and even has policies that have kicked kids out of the program.

As a result, Texas SCHIP enrollment has dropped from about half a million in 2003 to 350,000 in 2007. While children are unceremoniously removed from SCHIP, the number of uninsured continues to grow in our state.

There are about 1.5 million Texas children in households earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level and 750,000 to 850,000 of them are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP coverage. Three fourths are not enrolled in either program, meaning there are 200,000 to 300,000 kids in Texas who are eligible but not enrolled in SCHIP.

Tragically, the state doesn't even use all the funds the federal government has provided for our children who are going without basic care. Eventually the money—more than \$850 million in the last seven years—goes to other states or back to the Federal government.

Bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress have supported an expansion of SCHIP that would help solve some of Texas's problems twice over the last year. Sadly, President Bush vetoed our efforts both times, but we will not give up until our children have the health care they need.

In the meantime, we have opened other fronts in the battle to improve the quality of health care in our country. The Health Centers Renewal Act was introduced last year and approved by the Subcommittee on Health on April 23, and will go to the full committee soon.

Health centers represent our Nation's largest primary health care system and serve as

a medical home to more than 15 million Americans, most of whom are uninsured or have low incomes.

By providing people who are medically underserved with primary and preventive health care, the health centers reduce the need for expensive specialty care in hospitals and emergency rooms. The Health Centers Renewal Act will allow health centers to nearly double the number of individuals they can serve.

The Community Mental Health Services Improvement Act, which was introduced in January, will improve medical care for often-neglected mental health patients. Community mental health organizations serve more than six million adults and children across the country.

Many of these people are Medicaid beneficiaries, children in foster care, the destitute, homeless and uninsured. Unfortunately, community mental health centers have been chronically underfunded for many years and struggle to meet the basic health needs of the people they serve.

This bill will allow mental health care providers to recruit medical primary care doctors to care for patients with serious mental illness. Patients with mental illnesses die on average 25 years earlier than the average American, demonstrating the criticality of the need for better health care.

The Ending the Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act was introduced last year would close a loophole that allows more than a million people with disabilities to go without medical care for extended periods of time.

When Medicare expanded in 1972 to include individuals with significant disabilities, Congress stipulated that they had to first receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for two years before becoming eligible for Medicare, resulting in a three step process.

First, the Social Security Administration has to determine SSDI approval. Second, an individual has to wait five months before receiving SSDI benefits. Third, after receiving SSDI benefits an individual has to wait two more years before they can receive Medicare coverage.

More than 26 percent of individuals with significant disabilities have no health insurance during this two-year wait. Before becoming disabled, most of these people worked full time and paid into Medicare like everyone else.

Now, when they need help the most, they are required to wait without coverage. This bill would phase out the two-year wait over 10 years and completely eliminate the waiting period for people with life-threatening conditions.

Finally, I strongly support restoring funding for the Healthy Community Access Program, which in my community has helped enroll an additional 250,000 individuals in Medicaid and CHIP, while also directing the uninsured away from the ERs and toward an appropriate health care home.

To address this issue, I introduced the Community Coalitions for Access and Quality Improvement Act, H.R. 3561. This legislation would provide grants to community health access coalitions to implement best practices proven to reduce health care costs, achieve better health outcomes and improve access to health care for uninsured and low-income Americans.

Congress should enact legislation to provide all Americans with health insurance. Ideally,

no child, no disabled worker, and no uninsured woman would suffer from a lack of adequate health care. As we work toward that goal, Congress should take every opportunity to put in place policies that provide as many people as possible with quality, affordable health insurance.

HONORING ELKS NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Santa Maria Elks Club to honor the first week of May as Elks National Youth Week in tribute to our junior citizens and to honor them for their achievement and contributions to their community, State and Nation.

Youth Week is designed to guide, inspire and encourage our youth to serve their community and help prepare them for the duties and opportunities of citizenship. Across the country, our Nation's young people are becoming active citizens and learning the importance of civic involvement. I firmly believe in encouraging the sense of community demonstrated by these ambitious and engaged young people.

As a mother and a grandmother, I am amazed by the strength of character I see in junior citizens. I commend the goals and ideals of the Santa Maria Elks Club and am proud to honor America's future leaders today.

H. RES. 49, TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL LETTER CARRIERS APPRECIATION DAY

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 49, a resolution that establishes National Letter Carriers Appreciation Day.

Letter carriers are vital to the United States economy and help keep families and friends in touch with one another. They provide mail service 6 days a week, in good and bad weather, to more than 144 million households. The United States Postal Service employs more than 705,000 letter carriers who deliver more than 43 tons of mail each year. This averages to approximately 2,300 letters, cards, magazines, and circulars per carrier per day.

In addition, I would like to specifically honor Perry Bennet Schmitt, who has delivered mail to my District Office since I was first elected to Congress in 2000. My staff and I look forward to his daily visits where he brightens our day with jokes and stories. Perry has served the people of Saint Paul as a letter carrier for 28 years and has delivered mail on his current route for over twenty. It takes him six hours to deliver mail each day to over 350 stops. Perry is a designated letter carrier trainer and during his time with the Post Office has trained over a hundred carriers. He is also an active mem-

ber of Local 28 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, which represents over 1,000 members.

I want to thank Perry and all letter carriers for their dedication and urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

HONORING COUNCILMAN GENE BELMARES

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Councilman Gene Belmares, who will be presented with the Liberty Bell Award by the Laredo-Webb County Bar Association on May 9, 2008.

Gene Belmares is the son of a decorated World War II veteran, Ignacio Belmares, and Elvira Belmares. He grew up in Laredo, Texas, and attended United High School and Laredo Junior College. Gene utilized his marketing skills to great effect in his work with some of South Texas's most prestigious companies such as Thomas Petroleum, Arguindegui Oil, and WestWind Homes. Gene is now enjoying his work with the marketing and sales team at the famous La Posada Hotel, one of the oldest hotels in South Texas that is leading the revitalization of downtown Laredo.

Councilman Belmares was elected to the Laredo City Council in 2002, and is seated on the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Water Issues, Sports Venue, and Legislative Committees. He is currently serving as Mayor Pro Tempore, and is responsible for the unprecedented fiscal growth of the City of Laredo for the last 6 years through his work on landmark ordinances and legacy projects. Councilman Belmares also has admirably served the community of Laredo, Texas, through his civic work with the March of Dimes, Muscular Dystrophy, and the American Cancer Society. He enjoys coaching the Gateway Girls Softball League, and the Boys and Girls Club flag football.

Councilman Belmares is a truly deserving recipient of the Liberty Bell Award, which is given out annually by the Laredo-Webb County Bar Association to those who have demonstrated exemplary community service, and contributed to good governance in the community.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the dedication of Councilman Belmares to the City of Laredo, and I thank you for this time.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO HARVEY ALLEN

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today to honor my friend Harvey Allen 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