

other coverage and showed proof of that coverage. As such, parents would retain the choice to enroll eligible kids in private plans or other Government programs such as Medicaid or SCHIP. However, if a lapse in the other insurance coverage occurred, MediKids would automatically fill in the gap.

MediKids doesn't have complicated enrollment and eligibility hoops. Instead, it assures that families will always have access to affordable health insurance for their children, and it ensures that all children get a truly healthy start in life.

MediKids was originally written in close collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics. They have endorsed MediKids as the best way to provide health coverage to all our children. The bill has also been endorsed by the Children's Defense Fund, Families USA, the National Association of Children's Hospitals, and other organizations advocating for better health care for America's children. As we work on health care reform, we need to pay particular attention to the unique needs of our Nation's children. MediKids is a model that accomplishes that goal.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE
ACCESS TO REHABILITATION
ACT OF 2009

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Medicare Access to Rehabilitation Act of 2009 with Representatives ROY BLUNT and MIKE ROSS. This important bill repeals the monetary caps that limit beneficiary access to medically necessary outpatient physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech-language pathology services. Senators JOHN ENSIGN and BLANCHE LINCOLN are introducing this legislation in the Senate.

To remove all uncertainty for Medicare beneficiaries about being able to receive the appropriate therapy, the bipartisan Medicare Access to Rehabilitation Act of 2009 creates a stable payment environment so that health professionals can focus on providing quality health care. Rehabilitation services provided by physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists are essential to assisting individuals reach their highest functional level possible and the monetary caps are inconsistent with this objective.

A March 2008 Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) study provided evidence that enforcement of the monetary caps could cause Medicare beneficiaries harm since it may require them to delay necessary medical care, force others to assume higher out-of-pocket costs, and disrupt the continuum of care for many seniors and individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the study provided data that the sickest patients who suffered from Parkinson's disease or who have multiple medical problems were most likely to exceed the monetary caps.

Since inclusion of the caps in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, both Democratic and Republican Congresses and administrations have interceded to prevent their implementation and enforcement citing the negative impact the caps would have on elderly patients' access to

necessary services. Most recently, Congress extended through 2009 the existing medical exceptions process that gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to allow patients to exceed the monetary caps if deemed medically necessary.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to continue ensuring that Americans have access to the highest quality physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language pathology services by supporting this legislation.

HONORING SUPERVISOR ED ROBEY
OF LAKE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Supervisor Ed Robey on the occasion of his retirement from the Lake County Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Robey has served the citizens of Lake County honorably for 28 years, the last 12 as a County Supervisor.

Supervisor Robey has had an illustrious career in public service. Since he was first elected to the Clearlake City Council in 1980, Supervisor Robey has consistently gone the extra mile for his constituents. The list of boards and commissions he has served on during his career is overwhelming. It includes LAFCO, the Area Planning Council, the Regional Council of Rural Counties, the California State Association of Counties, the Committee working with the Yolo County Flood Control District in regard to Clear Lake water rights issues, the Proposition 10/First Five Commission, the PEG Board of Directors, North Coast Emergency Medical Services, the Lake County Community Action Agency Board of Directors, the Area Agency on Aging Board of Directors, the North Coast Opportunities Board of Directors, the Caltrans DEAL Committee, and the County Reclassification Committee, among many others.

Supervisor Robey will be remembered for his great sense of humor and superior accessibility to his constituents. His legislative and community accomplishments are much too numerous to be noted here; however, the true test of any elected official is if his constituents are better off when he retires than when he first took office. This is unquestionably the case for Supervisor Robey. The citizens of Lake County owe him a great debt.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is appropriate at this time that we thank Supervisor Ed Robey for his years of dedication and service on behalf of Lake County and beyond. He has been a model of dignified and effective public service. I join his wife Beth, his son and two stepchildren in thanking Ed and wishing him a lifetime of fulfillment.

PROTECTING IMPACT AID FOR
NORTH SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to ensure the federal govern-

ment fulfills an important obligation to the families of service men and women in my district. In 1950, President Harry Truman established the Impact Aid program to assist school districts and communities that lose their property tax base because of the presence of the federal government. Without this federal money, the burden would fall to the remaining residents whose property taxes would continue to rise while impacting the quality of education which can be provided. The Impact Aid program helps to alleviate this problem by directly reimbursing public school districts for the loss of traditional revenue sources.

For years Impact Aid was fully funded and offered some of the strongest direct assistance to military families across the Nation. Unfortunately, over the last decade we have fallen behind on this commitment, and it is time to reverse this trend.

While I support fully funding the Impact Aid program, I believe the situation in my district warrants special attention. In order to ensure that our students most in need continue to receive necessary resources, I have introduced this bill to help North Chicago to continue to qualify for heavily impacted payments, and Glenview and Highland Park receive fair compensation.

Due to a unique housing situation for the Great Lakes Naval Training Facility, Impact Aid funding should be higher in five of my school districts. This Naval base is located in North Chicago, one of the poorest school districts in my state. However, some service members and their families live in Navy housing obtained when Ft. Sheridan and Naval Air Station Glenview, located in other suburbs, were closed in the 1990's. These former bases are located within the boundaries of other school districts that now must bear the economic cost of educating children from a base, but receive none of the economic benefits a base provides. Thus, it is vitally important that we both ensure North Chicago continues to receive heavily impacted payments for the benefit of students living there, and that the surrounding communities are more fairly compensated for their loss of property taxes.

By passing this bill, the federal government will be fulfilling its responsibility to these communities, and giving our military families the support they deserve.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BALANCED
BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to re-introduce legislation that will amend the United States Constitution to force Congress to rein in spending by balancing the federal budget.

It is common sense to American families that they cannot spend more than they have—yet far too frequently, this fundamental principle has been lost on a Congress that is too busy spending to pay attention to the bottom line.

Our federal government must be lean, efficient and responsible with the dollars that our Nation's citizens worked so hard to earn. We

must work to both eliminate every cent of waste and squeeze every cent of value out of each dollar our citizens entrust to us. Families all across our Nation understand what it means to make tough decisions each day about what they can and cannot afford and government officials should be required to exercise similar restraint when spending the hard-earned dollars of our Nation's citizens.

Congress took a dramatic step forward during the 109th Congress when it passed the Deficit Reduction Act. This law found savings of approximately \$40 billion over five years by eliminating wasteful spending and programs. This legislation was an important first step, but it was just that—a first step. Furthermore, the legislation was passed by the Senate by a margin of just one vote and was passed by the House by a margin of two votes, which shows exactly how difficult the task of balancing the budget is—and how important it is to force Congress to do so. This is exactly why I am re-introducing this legislation today.

My legislation, which garnered 163 bipartisan cosponsors in the 110th Congress, would amend the Constitution to require that total spending for any fiscal year not exceed total receipts and require the President to propose budgets to Congress that are balanced each year. It would also provide an exception in times of war and during military conflicts that pose imminent and serious military threats to national security.

Furthermore, the legislation would make it harder to increase taxes by requiring that legislation to increase revenue be passed by a true majority of each chamber and not just a majority of those present and voting. Finally, the bill requires a 3/5 majority vote for any increases in the debt limit.

This concept is not new. 49 out of 50 states have a balanced budget requirement.

It has become clear that it is extremely difficult for Congress to agree on a budget that is fiscally responsible. By amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, we can force Congress to control spending, paving the way for a return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, rather than allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and in doing so leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

Our Nation faces many difficult decisions in the coming years, and Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than to make difficult decisions about spending priorities. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking this responsibility. The Balanced Budget Constitutional amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that America's families face each day.

I urge support of this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UDALL-EISENHOWER ARCTIC WILDERNESS ACT

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wil-

derness Act, which would give permanent protection to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This legislation also honors two great American visionaries—President Dwight Eisenhower and Representative Morris Udall—by designating this pristine wild place as wilderness in their names. President Eisenhower—a Republican—began the bipartisan legacy of fighting to protect this special place for future generations of Americans when he set aside the core of the Refuge in 1960. Twenty years later, in 1980, Representative Morris Udall—a Democrat—succeeded in doubling the size of the Refuge and protecting even more of this untrammeled wilderness.

President Eisenhower and Rep. Mo Udall had the vision to protect a remote but very special piece of pristine wilderness. I am proud to introduce legislation today that would complete the job they began by permanently protecting the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge from oil drilling.

I am also proud to once again introduce this legislation under the bill number H.R. 39, a bill number with important historical significance in the fight to preserve the land within the Arctic Refuge. H.R. 39 was the bill number given to Mo Udall's Alaska Natural Interest Lands Conservation Act that became law in 1980. This Act expanded the area President Eisenhower had originally set aside and renamed it as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Rep. Udall later began introducing his legislation to designate the coastal plain of the Refuge as wilderness under that same bill number. Introducing the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act under the bill number H.R. 39 offers an important reminder of the history of the fight to protect this special place.

The coastal plain is the biological heart of the Refuge and is central to the survival of many unique species of animals including polar bears, caribou, musk oxen, wolves, and over 160 species of birds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls the coastal plain the "center for wildlife activity" in the Refuge. If we were to allow drilling in the Refuge it would irreparably disrupt this important ecosystem and one of our last great wild places will be forever destroyed.

We know that the Arctic is already feeling the strains of global warming. Alaska has warmed at four times the rate of the rest of the planet over the last fifty years and the impacts of a warming Arctic on iconic species such as the polar bear are disastrous. Last year, the Bush Administration listed the polar bear as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act because of melting sea ice and government scientists project that the prospects for the polar bear's survival are bleak. A team of scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey released a series of reports at the end of 2007 which concluded that by mid-century, two-thirds of all the world's polar bears could disappear and that polar bears could be gone entirely from Alaska. The USGS team also noted that based on recent observations, this dire assessment could actually be conservative.

The 111th Congress marks a time of real change for our nation's energy policy. The Bush Administration and Republicans in Congress have argued for a shortsighted energy policy of "drill, drill, drill" that would forever sacrifice our beaches and most pristine wilderness areas for a few short months worth of oil. The United States consumes 25 percent of the

world's oil but controls only 3 percent of the world's oil reserves. We cannot drill our way energy independence. But we can enact smart, green energy policies that can simultaneously grow our economy, spur technological innovation, protect our environment, reduce global warming pollution and end our addiction to oil.

There are some places in our world that are so rare and so special that we have a responsibility to protect them. The Arctic Refuge is one of those places. Protecting the Arctic Refuge will send a strong statement of our nation's intent to preserve America's pristine wilderness areas, break our dangerous addiction to oil, and kick-start a green revolution to create jobs, grow the economy, and promote energy independence.

As Mo Udall said, "In our lifetime, we have few opportunities to shape the very Earth on which our descendants will live their lives. In each generation, we have carved up more and more of our once-great natural heritage. There ought to be a few places left in the world the way the Almighty made them." The Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act will ensure that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is forever protected for future Americans and never carved up by the big oil companies.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION ACT

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, over the last few years we have spent considerable time on the extremely important issue of immigration and homeland security. In the 108th Congress, we passed the National Intelligence Reform Act, a landmark piece of legislation to overhaul our intelligence agencies. But, as I noted at that time, the bill unfortunately did not go far enough in addressing the major security vulnerability presented by the porous nature of our borders.

Recognizing that need, in the 109th Congress we debated immigration extensively and even passed H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Regrettably, the Senate failed to act on this important piece of legislation. In the 110th Congress, the House passed legislation to reauthorize the Basic Pilot, or E-Verify, employment verification program.

A tremendous amount of work remains in the effort to secure our borders. That is why I am reintroducing the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, which is designed to eliminate up to 98 percent of the illegal border crossings into the United States.

I believe that any effort to end illegal immigration will be viable only if it addresses the root cause of what attracts illegal immigrants to our country: the lure of economic opportunity and the ease with which illegal workers can find jobs. Under the Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act, we will dramatically increase the enforcement of laws which prohibit American businesses from employing illegal immigrants. The growing availability of counterfeit identity documents