

2010, I am not recorded because I was absent because I gave birth to my baby daughter. Had I been present, I would have voted, "yea."

**MEDICARE AND MEDICAID  
EXTENDERS ACT OF 2010**

SPEECH OF

**HON. RUSH HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 9, 2010*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4994, the Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act, which would provide a one year extension for Medicare reimbursement rates for physician services.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 established a new way to determine Medicare physician payments: the Sustainable Growth Rate, SGR, formula. Since 2002, this formula has called for an automatic decrease in Medicare physician payments each year, potentially limiting physician access for Medicare patients. The formula goes beyond Medicare and also affects TRICARE, the insurance plan for active and retired military personnel and their families, and its reimbursements for civilian physicians.

According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, there is a broad consensus that this physician payment formula is flawed. These parts of the Balanced Budget Act should not have been passed in the first place and should be repealed and rewritten anew. The health reform legislation passed by the House of Representatives last year, which I supported, included a provision that would have repealed and replaced the SGR formula with a new Medicare physician payment plan. Unfortunately, the final health reform bill that was signed into law did not include this provision, which would have been a permanent solution to the SGR formula.

Unless Congress acts, this formula would lead to a 25 percent cut in doctor's payments in 2011, discouraging many doctors from continuing to accept Medicare patients.

The Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act would freeze the current rates for physician services through December 31, 2011, giving Congress time to work on a permanent solution. Further, this piece of legislation would extend the 5 percent increase in Medicare payments for mental health providers that is set to expire at the end of 2010. This provision would expand access to mental health care for millions of Medicare patients.

Additionally, this bill would extend funding for the special diabetes program through 2013. Without this bill, the special diabetes program, which funds 35 percent of all Federal research on Type I diabetes and supports research and prevention diabetes programs for Native Americans and Alaska Natives would expire at the end of 2011.

This bill is completely paid for by making small changes to the health reform law.

I am frustrated by these continuing short-term extensions. This is unfair to physicians who must plan their office budgets and unfair to patients who face unnecessary anxiety about the availability of the doctors on whom they depend. I will continue to advocate for legislation that eliminates the broken SGR for-

mula and replaces it with a system that fairly compensates physicians for treating Medicare patients. Until we have a new system, we must pass this one-year fix to ensure that American seniors and military families have the access to their physicians.

**HONORING J. DAVID COLFAX OF  
MENDOCINO COUNTY**

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the civic accomplishments and dedicated public service of J. David Colfax who has served on the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors for the past 12 years.

As supervisor, educator and exemplary citizen his service has benefitted the ruggedly beautiful Mendocino County in northern California where he has lived with his wife Micki since 1973. He has served on many boards, committees and organizations including the Mendocino County Office of Education, First 5 Mendocino, the Economic Development and Finance Corporation, the North Coast Railroad Authority, the Criminal Justice Board Standing committee and the Local Agency Formation Committee.

David and Micki raised four sons whom they homeschooled on their Shining Moon ranch, where they built their own house and raised award winning goats. Their children went on to such universities as Harvard and Yale and all are working in professions that give back to others. David and Micki authored the book Home Schooling for Excellence which continues to inspire. And they wrote Hard Times in Paradise about their transition from their urban lives in the eastern United States to their rural ranch outside of Boonville not far from the Pacific Ocean.

During his three terms as a Mendocino County Supervisor, David has represented his geographically diverse district that ranges from the coast to 4,000-foot ridges to valleys and includes at least five watersheds. He has won the support of constituents who are entrepreneurs, fishermen and women, winemakers, brewmasters and mavericks of many persuasions. With a college professor style and animated discourse, David Colfax has served with passion and dedication.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, David Colfax has earned the admiration and respect of his peers, his community and his family. He is a friend and colleague whose legacy and contributions are long lasting in Mendocino County. For these reasons, it is appropriate that we honor J. David Colfax.

**IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MICHAEL  
BLANDINA**

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Michael Blandina, a resident of Brick Township, New Jersey and dedicated

member of the community. On October 30, 2010, Mr. Blandina retired from his position as Manager of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission in Lakewood, New Jersey. He is also recognized for his work with various political organizations in Ocean County, including the Brick Township Democratic Municipal Committee where he serves as Chairman. Today, I applaud Mr. Blandina, as his achievements should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Blandina began his professional career as a Special Police Officer with the Brick Township Police Department in 1983. He valiantly served the constituents of Brick Township for seven years. In conjunction with his service as Special Police Officer, from 1985 through December 1999, Mr. Blandina served in the Tax Assessor's Office. His outstanding abilities and commitment were evident as he soon rose to the position of Principal Assessing Clerk. After approximately fifteen years of service to the Tax Assessor's Office, Mr. Blandina soon accepted a position with the Administration Department where he assisted constituents with various local issues. His responsibilities also included coordinating media related events for the Township of Brick. During his tenure, Mr. Blandina also spent summers working in the Recreation Department, specifically assisting the Township Recycling Program. In June 2007, Mr. Blandina accepted a position as Manager of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission in Lakewood, New Jersey. Throughout his professional experience, Mr. Blandina's generosity has undoubtedly touched many lives and has helped countless people throughout central New Jersey.

Mr. Blandina is also a valued member of various local and political organizations. Since 1983, he has proudly served on the Brick Township Democratic Committee, eighteen of those years as Municipal Chairman. He has also served as Democratic Finance Committee Chairman and has dedicated his time to assisting the Ocean County Young Democrats. Similarly, Mr. Blandina has assisted with the Ocean County Columbus Day Parade Committee, one of the largest parades and ethnic festivals in the state of New Jersey. His other affiliations include the Ocean County Saint Patrick's Day Parade Committee, The Girls Scouts of the Jersey Shore Awards Reception Committee, Brick Township Democratic Club, among others. Mr. Blandina continues to mentor, exemplifying confident leadership and management skills.

As a result of his outstanding service, Mr. Blandina has been the recipient of numerous awards. He has received Brick Township Democratic Club's "1999 Democrat of the Year" award and the Columbia Civic League of Ocean County's "1999 Man of the Year" award. He has also been the recipient of the Heritage Festival Ball Committee's "2003 Outstanding Ethnic Leader" award and Brick UNICO Chapter's "2004 Italian American of the Year" award.

Madam Speaker, please join me in acknowledging Mr. Blandina's multiple years of service to the Ocean County community. His dedication and commitment are positive examples of what steadfast determination and hard work can accomplish.

HONORING THE HONORABLE  
RONALD PANIOTO

**HON. JEAN SCHMIDT**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of the Honorable Ronald Panioto, who is retiring as a judge of the Hamilton County Common Pleas Court. Judge Panioto leaves the courtroom some 35 years after he first ascended the bench of the Hamilton County Municipal Court.

Judge Panioto became presiding judge of the domestic relations division of the Common Pleas Court in 1981, and he quickly gained a reputation for fairness and sensitivity for families—especially the children—who came before him.

On the occasions in domestic cases when he had to interview children, Judge Panioto bought stuffed animals to give to the children to put them at ease.

Throughout his life, Judge Panioto has rightfully been proud of his Italian heritage and served as President of the United Italian Society from 1971 to 1993.

Judge Panioto's diligence, humanity and graciousness on the bench have won him the respect of the community.

Madam Speaker, please join me in wishing Judge Panioto a long and happy retirement and thanking his wife Judith, his son Ronald Jr., his granddaughter Christine and great-grandson Andrew for sharing the judge with us over all these years.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF  
RON SANTO

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the passing of legendary Chicago Cubs third baseman and broadcaster Ron Santo, and to recognize his lifetime of achievement both on and off the baseball diamond.

Ronald Edward Santo was born February 25, 1940 in Seattle, Washington. Twenty years later, he made his professional baseball debut at third base for the Chicago Cubs. Over his 14-year major league career, the first 13 with the Cubs and the final season with the cross-town White Sox, Santo hit 342 home runs, had 1,331 RBIs, won 5 Gold Gloves, and appeared in 9 All-Star games. He is considered perhaps the greatest player not currently in the Hall of Fame. Nonetheless, his number 10 is immortalized on the North Side, hanging on the left field pole at Wrigley Field, which Santo referred to as "my Hall of Fame."

After a successful baseball career, Santo spent 15 years in business before returning to the Cubs as the color commentator for WGN Radio's Cubs broadcasts in 1990. He spent the next 20 years in the Cubs radio booth, and his passion and enthusiasm for the home team, which surfaced in disheartened groans as often as supportive exclamations, endeared him to a new generation of Cubs fans. Santo always seemed at ease in the WGN booth

and established himself as the rightful heir to Harry Carey's oversized throne as the king of Chicago Cubs commentary.

Away from the "Friendly Confines," Santo worked tirelessly to raise money and awareness for Diabetes through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Diagnosed at age 18, his diabetes was unknown even to his teammates until 1971, when Santo decided to use his star power to draw attention to the disease. From 1979 until his death, Santo sponsored the JDRF Walk to Cure Diabetes, helping to raise over \$60 million for research and advocacy. Santo's teammate Ernie Banks said of his fellow Cub, "Ronnie has handled his own ailment like the true champion he is. He is the most courageous person I've ever been around. I'm inspired by him and by his spirit. He is one of my idols, one of my heroes. I love Ron Santo."

Ron Santo passed away on Thursday, December 2. He will be sorely missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire us all.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL JAMES L.  
JONES

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, let me take this means to recognize an American hero, General James L. Jones, for his lifetime of public service. Having served more than 40 years in the United States Marine Corps as a diplomat in the Middle East and around the world, and most recently as the National Security Advisor to the President, he is a true public servant.

On October 8, 2010, the President announced that General Jones made the decision to step aside from his post as National Security Advisor and that his good friend and deputy, Tom Donilon, would succeed him.

Through the years, I have been honored to work with General Jones, and I have always trusted him to offer his best counsel on national security matters. A true patriot and strategic visionary, he has performed each and every mission with utmost dedication. The American public will forever be indebted to General Jones and his family for their service to our country and the many sacrifices they have made.

Madam Speaker, I trust my fellow members of the House will join me in paying tribute to General James L. Jones for his leadership and commitment to the safety and security of the American people. I wish him and his family the very best in the days to come.

ON THE DEATH OF AMBASSADOR  
RICHARD HOLBROOKE

**HON. JANE HARMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, after hearing encouraging news over the last few days, learning that my friend Richard Holbrooke had died last night felt like a sucker punch. A day later, it still does.

I suppose, in an ironic way, Richard would smile at the enormous impact he had on friend and foe alike. He was a life force, a force of nature—someone always operating on multiple levels, in high gear, and in more than three dimensions. I used to chafe when in the middle of a phone call he would put me on hold to talk with someone else—but I bet he did it to everyone.

He was a consummate juggler—the master diplomat. He knew precisely what he was prepared to tell someone, and what he was not. Though it takes years to settle on how history will view someone, my guess is Richard Holbrooke will be considered, hands down, as the best diplomat of my generation. Indeed, he will be in a small pantheon that includes Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Averell Harriman.

But the public Richard is not all of it: the private Richard was a generous and loyal friend. Before joining the Obama Administration, he chaired the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. For a time, one of our grandchildren was on its staff. He loved her, and forever after asked about her life, boyfriends, etc. No question the huge staff he built over his many careers over many years is devastated by his untimely death. Surely Megan Quitkin is. To Kati, whom he adored, and the extended Holbrooke family, we mourn your loss—and our country's loss.

I like to think that Richard has just put us all on hold while he takes another call...

2010 MILITARY FAMILY OF THE  
YEAR

**HON. WALTER B. JONES**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Kennedy family for being selected as the National Military Family Association's Coast Guard Family of the Year.

Commander John Kennedy has served in the Coast Guard for 16 years. He is supported by his wife, Bobbi, and their 3 children Olivia, Marissa, and Jack.

The Kennedy family has moved 6 times within 14 years, most recently to Atlantic Beach, NC.

Cmdr. Kennedy currently serves as Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Cutter *Elm*.

The Kennedy family is very active in the United States Coast Guard, and their community. They volunteer with Operation Christmas Child, and are active with numerous activities including a variety of athletics and the high school marching band.

Being a military family has shown them all how to be independent, and taught them what is truly important in life.

The Kennedy's admit they are not finished moving! They will continue to make friends wherever they go, which exemplifies the Coast Guard motto of *Semper Paratus*, "Always Ready".

I am proud to have the Kennedy family reside in the 3rd district of North Carolina. I thank all the men and women who have bravely served in our military.

Congratulations to the Kennedy family on 2010 Military Family of the Year!