

and passion who has dedicated his work to remembering the Holocaust and educating future generations on the many lessons learned from this tragedy.

In March, 2002, Fred was appointed chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council by President George W. Bush. The museum is a living memorial to the Holocaust and serves as a point of inspiration for countless numbers worldwide to promote human dignity, confront hatred, and prevent genocide. Since 1993, the museum has welcomed nearly 30 million visitors.

As chairman, Fred is leading the museum's plans for a promising future, including building the institution's endowment campaign and increasing educational opportunities for students. He has worked tirelessly at the helm of the museum to broaden the focus beyond just telling the story of the Holocaust to thoroughly examining the tragedy's lessons and legacy. One of Fred's greatest accomplishments as chairman of the museum has been developing the profile and influence of the Committee on Conscience and, in turn, calling increased attention to genocide around the world.

This week, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is honoring Fred at its National Tribute Dinner. I can't think of anybody that deserves this any more. Fred is a dedicated and visionary leader who has guided the transformation of the museum into a global institution that challenges people everywhere to remember, to learn, and to act. Inspired by the survivors and their legacy, Fred has helped place the museum at the forefront of Holocaust education and worked tirelessly to empower leaders and citizens alike to create a more just world. The Holocaust Museum today is stronger because of his leadership and dedication.

Not only is Fred Zeidman known for his work here in Washington but also he's a fellow Texan and a leader in the business and Jewish communities in Houston.

I have had the great opportunity of working with Fred through AIPAC for several years now and have seen firsthand his tireless devotion to this great American institution. Today, I am proud to honor Fred upon his recognition at the National Tribute Dinner and the many successes the Holocaust Museum has seen in recent years.

Fred, thank you for your service as chairman of the Holocaust Museum. I look forward to your continued leadership in the future.

#### RECOGNIZING VIRGINIA SHELTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize my chief caseworker, Virginia Shelton, who will retire at the end of this month after 25 years of service to the Illinois 17th Congressional District and our Nation.

Ginny, as she is known by her friends and colleagues, handled one of the most important jobs in any congressional office: outreach to veterans.

My predecessor, Lane Evans, had a great reputation for fighting for our Nation's heroes. I have sought to continue that legacy. But the constant behind both of our efforts has always been Ginny, who has dedicated not just her career but her entire life to the men and women who served our Nation in uniform. She is known for spending countless hours explaining each and every right to veterans who are looking to exercise them. She built invaluable relationships with VA staff, putting herself in the best position to advocate for the constituents who sought her help. She studied hard and made herself an expert on VA disability, health care, and other crucial benefits.

For Ginny, serving our veterans was a labor of love. Whether it was on the phone or over a drink at a VFW, Ginny listened and learned about the lives of our veterans. She knew them personally. She was not only an advocate, she was their friend. Their struggle was her struggle. She recognized that behind every case file was a human being, and she understood that when it comes to our veterans, justice delayed is justice denied.

Ginny was passionate about the issues of veterans' homelessness. Each and every year, she was active in the local Stand Down, an event where our homeless heroes are provided haircuts, food, medical care, a place to stay for the night, and counseling. She believed that our Nation should have a Stand Down 365 days a year. Inspired by her efforts, I introduced a bill last year to reduce veterans' homelessness.

Ginny was instrumental in helping me secure a VA outpatient clinic for Whiteside County. The VA predicts approximately 2,500 veterans will use this facility during its first year of operation. Thanks to Ginny, many veterans will no longer have to travel hours upon hours just to receive basic care.

Ginny also managed my nominations to America's service academies, fully investing herself in the process to ensure our young people get the best opportunities possible. She always made sure students filled out their applications fully and got them in on time. She treated each applicant as if they were one of her own kids. I know one of her favorite things to do is visit the academies and see firsthand the young men and women who will be our future warriors.

Ginny has been a wonderful friend to my wife, Beckie, and me for many years. I know her late husband, Jack, himself a Marine, is very proud of her today. There are many things I will miss about Ginny: her sense of humor, that unmistakable voice, her invaluable advice and guidance. But it is our veterans who will miss her the most. Her retirement is the end of an era, but I know she will continue her great work going forward. She leaves a leg-

acy marked by selfless service to our Nation and its heroes. And for all the work she has done for our veterans, Ginny Shelton is a hero in her own right.

Ginny, thank you. Thank you so much for 25 years of wonderful work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### MEDICARE FRAUD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, this morning, my good friend and Florida colleague Congressman RON KLEIN and I held a press conference at the Little Havana Activity and Nutrition Center where we unveiled our bipartisan anti-Medicare fraud bill.

Medicare fraud is a problem that hurts our most vulnerable citizens. Our South Florida community knows firsthand the hardship that it creates. In 2008, approximately \$703 million in false Medicare claims originated from South Florida. Last year, that figure rose to \$952 million from South Florida.

Our community needs to say in no uncertain terms that fraud and abuse in Medicare will not be tolerated and that our seniors will not be preyed upon by opportunistic vandals. That is why Congressman RON KLEIN and I filed the Medicare Fraud Enforcement and Prevention Act. This legislation will help curb the fraud in the Medicare system. It will not only toughen the penalties on those individuals who engage in fraud but it will also help implement new screening procedures and biometric checks for all Medicare claims and services.

Medicare fraud is not isolated to cases that involve rogue individuals. Unfortunately, the reality is that more and more Medicare fraud is being perpetrated by groups that are organized and are sophisticated in their technique. This bipartisan bill will help catch up existing rules and regulations with the reality of today's threats.

Fraud and abuse costs the Medicare system billions of dollars each year. It costs the system, in fact, \$60 billion every year. It harms the health care industry as a whole, and it undermines the market for legitimate health care products. It hurts legitimate suppliers who cannot compete with illegitimate suppliers who pad their income by billing for services that they never rendered. Fraud undermines public confidence in health care providers.

The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill will create a strong deterrent for would-be

criminals by doubling the fines and jail time for those convicted of scamming the Medicare system. It creates a new offense for illegally distributing a Medicare or Medicaid beneficiary ID and establishes a penalty of 3 years in prison and a fine equivalent to the dollar amount stolen from Medicare. The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill doubles the criminal penalty for making false statements and for violating the anti-kickback statute from 5 to 10 years in prison and from \$25,000 to a \$50,000 fine. The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill will also create a pilot program that will implement biometric technology to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries are physically present to receive those services. This bill mandates strict background checks for Medicare suppliers that would be carried out before they start cashing those taxpayer checks.

Since its inception in the year 2007, Miami-Dade County's interagency Medicare Strike Force has helped stem the tide of Medicare fraud in our South Florida community. It has gotten more than \$220 million in court-ordered restitution to Medicare from defendants in 87 separate cases. The task force has saved Medicare approximately \$1.75 billion in phony claim submissions. But, Madam Speaker, lamentably there is so much more that needs to be done.

The bill that RON KLEIN and I have filed today will help give law enforcement the tools necessary to make even more arrests and to crack down on fraud in a more efficient and effective manner. It will direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide real-time access to data regarding fraud that will then be given to local law enforcement officials. The Klein-Ros-Lehtinen bill also directs the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, to follow up with Medicare contractors and report back to us in Congress with recommendations to make this system work even better for seniors all across the country.

#### STOP THE FREELANCE SPYING AT THE PENTAGON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, a war that is illegitimate with no continued justification inevitably will be managed irresponsibly. But sometimes the excesses and the incompetence continue to shock me.

The Pentagon is now investigating a rogue spy operation that allegedly used private contractors to carry out attacks on militants and paid them inappropriately using a legitimate information-gathering program as a cover. It seems a Pentagon official named Michael Furlong was hiring private firms to gather intelligence about the whereabouts of top insurgents with the goal of hunting them down and killing them.

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And the whole time he was claiming simply to be involved in an above-board project to give us a better understanding of Afghan society and culture.

The CIA, the United States Government's legitimate intelligence-gathering agency, felt that its work was undermined by Mr. Furlong's freelance shenanigans. And it was the CIA's complaints that finally shut Mr. Furlong down and prompted the investigation. You know you've gone off the deep end when the CIA thinks your covert operation is beyond the pale.

No one can say for sure who was supervising or approving Mr. Furlong's operation, and apparently some of the money he was given control over has gone missing.

Mr. Furlong was something of a cowboy, actually. According to news accounts, he liked to brag about having a notorious Iran Contra figure on the payroll, and he likened his contractors to fictional movie assassins.

But this isn't a movie, Madam Speaker. It's not like we can all go home with a clear conscience after the lights come up and the credits roll. There are grave life-and-death consequences to the decisions made inside the Pentagon. And while a movie costs us maybe \$12, this war in Afghanistan is costing us millions every single day.

It's bad enough that this Congress is repeatedly asked to sign another check to pay for a war that is bankrupting our country and failing to advance our national security interests. But then we learn that the money being authorized, which I have consistently voted against, is being used on secret and illegal operations for which there is no transparency or accountability. And this is just the latest example of private contractors being used to carry out questionable wartime activities to get around the rules governing military operations.

It's an encouraging sign, however, that the Pentagon has begun to look into Furlong's operation, and this episode has prompted Secretary Gates to order a review of all the military's information operations programs to make sure everything is on the up-and-up. I'm expecting the oversight committee of this body to ask some tough questions. I can't imagine how we can debate another supplemental unless we've demanded and received answers about Mr. Furlong's spy ring and other possible wrongdoing.

It has to stop, Madam Speaker. It's time to rein in the contractors, and it's time to bring our valiant troops home.

We know there is a better way to fight terrorism and rebuild Afghanistan. It's time to turn our approach to national security upside down. We need a smarter strategy. We need to show American compassion, not American aggression.

We need a humanitarian surge, not a military surge. Instead of troops, we need to send aid workers and other civilian experts. That is the best coun-

terterrorism approach of all. That is what will give Afghan people hope for a better life. That is what will build a durable peace.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE THIRD FRONT—PAGE II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I bring you news from the third front, and that's the war for this Nation's national security on our southern border with Mexico.

We are engaged in three conflicts, three wars: the one in Afghanistan, the one in Iraq, and the border war on our southern border.

The \$40 billion a year illicit drug trade in Mexico has resulted in a vicious wave of violence in northern Mexico. Over 18,000 Mexican nationals have been killed in recent years by the criminal drug cartels, most of those, innocent civilians; but also many of them are the competition among the drug cartels. And they're fighting for control of the routes that lead into the United States where those drug cartels can sell their wares.

Just a few days ago there was a bombing at the United States Embassy in Nuevo Laredo, just on the border. Recently, a pregnant U.S. Embassy employee and her husband were murdered in Juarez, Mexico, right in front of their young daughter and other witnesses.

And in 2008 there were 1,500 murders in Juarez, Mexico alone; and this year, over 500 people have been killed. To put it in perspective, in 2008 there were only 300 murders in all of Houston, a city that dwarfs the size of Juarez, Mexico. And the violence is escalating.

Good people are abandoning the border cities in Mexico and fleeing further into the interior, and some are fleeing to the United States to stay with relatives, all because of the violence on the U.S.-Mexico border.

And people in this country who say that the violence on the border won't come into the United States live in blissful ignorance of reality. It's already here.

In the El Paso sector of the Border Patrol in Texas, our agents are being targeted by the Azteca hitmen for the Juarez drug cartel. The Azteca gang is a group of individuals who work for the drug cartel, the Juarez drug cartel, and their primary mission is to enforce the ability to bring drugs into the United States. And now we understand our Border Patrol agents in the El Paso sector are being targeted to be shot