

HONORING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER STEPHANIE MORRISON, U.S. COAST GUARD, FOR HER SERVICE AS DEPUTY LIAISON TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service, dedication and professionalism of Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Stephanie Morrison, who has served as the Coast Guard's Deputy Liaison to the House of Representatives from August 2009 through June 2012. The consummate professional, LCDR Morrison exemplified the Coast Guard's motto "Semper Paratus" or Always Ready, as she coordinated staff and Member briefings, worked with Committee staff and Coast Guard leadership to prepare for critical operations, acquisitions, and policy hearings, and helped respond to hundreds of constituent issues from around the country. She was an integral part of the Coast Guard's Congressional Affairs team that supported my Subcommittee's efforts in the passage of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010, and has continued to be an invaluable resource as we move forward to support the Coast Guard's vital recapitalization and modernization efforts during the 112th Congress. In addition to her numerous duties and responsibilities here in Washington, D.C., LCDR Morrison also deployed to the Gulf Coast in the Spring of 2010 during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response, where she assisted numerous congressional staff and Members of Congress with detailed briefings and site visits, which were vital to Congress' ability to execute its oversight responsibilities during this tragic event.

As the Ranking Member of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, I am honored to represent the fine women and men of the United States Coast Guard not only from my District, but everyone who has accepted the challenge and endured the sacrifice necessary to serve. The men and women who serve as Congressional Liaisons take on a particularly difficult challenge; one which can easily be overlooked but is nonetheless as important to the success of the Coast Guard as the cutter and aircraft crews who protect our waterways every day. I would like to thank LCDR Morrison for her dedication and service in this challenging position. She has been a tremendous help to me and my staff, and I wish her well as she transitions to her new assignment as the Chief of Waterways Management at Coast Guard Sector Baltimore.

HEALTHCARE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following:

DALLAS HEALTHCARE POLICY CONFERENCE

Congressman Pete Sessions, Congressman Michael Burgess, MD., Congressman John Fleming, MD, and Congressman Bill Cassidy, MD.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Safety Net

We support a healthcare safety net, which guarantees all Americans access to healthcare that is consistently and adequately funded by a rational system that ensures coverage regardless of employment or economic status to encourage maximum participation by physicians. Funding for this safety net should be government subsidized without mandates.

Patient/Doctor Relationship

The sanctity of the patient-physician relationship must be the foundation of healthcare in America and is the product of every individual's right to choose. This bond is freely chosen and based upon mutual trust, informed consent, and privileged confidentiality involving every citizen. This sacred trust must not be violated.

Personal Responsibility

In order to have a sustainable healthcare system every patient has to have a personal investment in the cost and maintenance of their care. The patient should be empowered to responsibly choose the best use of their health care resources.

Choice (Physicians and Patients)

Patients are entitled to the maximum possible freedoms in choosing how to care for themselves and their families. Physicians and healthcare professionals are entitled to the maximum possible freedoms in choosing how they provide care for their patients, manage their practice, and compete in the market.

Privacy (Digital and EMR)

Privacy must stand at the core of the trusted and inviolable patient/physician relationship in order to maximize the quality of care we provide our patients. Patient's personal information, particularly digital, must be protected. That information must be owned by the patient. It is the only the patients' to share with their informed consent and must be protected from all third parties including the government.

Patient Ownership/Portability

Health insurance may be purchased across state lines consistent with interstate commerce. Each American deserves the opportunity to own their individual healthcare policy with guaranteed renewability and community rating that is appropriate for their family needs, not contingent upon a specific job, and irrevocable except by personal choice or cases of fraud.

Payment and Price Transparency

Transparency should be encouraged by all those who participate in the healthcare marketplace. It is the patient's right to know the cost of care and the payment provided by insurance or government. It is the core of the free market for consumers and professionals to know the true costs and prices of all goods and services provided.

Funding (Premium Support/Defined Contributions)

Individual citizens should be permitted to own a Health Liberty Account (HLA) that may receive defined contributions from employer or government, or a tax-deductible contribution from any source, that is dedicated to the purchase of healthcare coverage and payment for healthcare services. Those unable to fund their own HLA would be eligible for adequate funding for annual healthcare coverage with a defined contribution from the government.

Tax Parity (Deductions)

The purchase of health benefits are should be tax deductible whether purchased by the employer or individual, regardless of income. Charitable healthcare should be a tax deductible item by the physician.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse (Inefficiency)

Physicians are committed to protecting the taxpayers by stopping fraud (e.g. phantom billing, home health, and medical equipment fraud) and considering methods to accomplish this goal, including smart cards. Physicians are committed to strengthening and reinvigorating the peer review system. Physicians and their professional scientific organizations should continue to seek efficiencies by eliminating wasteful healthcare spending that does not improve outcomes.

Liability Reform

The fear of lawsuits drives up the cost of medical care due to the practice of defensive medicine. Tort reform will lower inefficient spending and help to ease the upward pressure on healthcare costs. Examples of such reforms include caps on non-economic damages and the formation of expert medical panels to evaluate and when indicated compensate significant adverse outcomes to eliminate costly litigation.

THE TEN CANNOTS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday at the Patriotic Sunday service of Grace Baptist Church in West Columbia, South Carolina, Dr. Bill Egerdahl, the Church's Pastor quoted an extraordinary pamphlet which has real meaning today:

"In 1916, a minister and outspoken advocate for liberty, William J. H. Boetcker, published a pamphlet entitled "The Ten Cannots":

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

You cannot help the poor man by destroying the rich.

You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.

You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence.

You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.

You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.

You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.

You cannot establish security on borrowed money.

You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they will not do for themselves.

Simply put, the central government cannot give to anybody what it does not first take from somebody else."

CONGRATULATING THERESA LOU BOWICK

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Theresa Lou Bowick, BSN, RN

upon the realization of her vision and to recognize her for her dedication to the Rochester, New York community.

July 7, 2012 will mark the official kick off of the Conkey Cruisers, a free neighborhood "biking to better health" program that will journey throughout the northeast crescent of Rochester, otherwise known as the Conkey-Clifford Neighborhood. The Conkey Cruisers is an official 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has singlehandedly unified an inner city neighborhood by addressing two important factors: crime and health.

Just one year ago, Ms. Bowick was out running in her neighborhood when she had two disturbing encounters. First, a young boy called out to her, "Hey, lady! Are you on probation?" He assumed that Ms. Bowick was running from the police, as he apparently had little understanding of any other reason for running in that particular neighborhood. Soon after, an older man accused Ms. Bowick of being an undercover cop, boldly stating, "She is the police, because nobody exercises in this neighborhood!"

These encounters inspired Ms. Bowick to start an exercise program in the ConkeyClifford Neighborhood. The program advocates "Getting fit, one street, one person, one bike at a time." As a registered nurse, Ms. Bowick understands the health benefits of regular exercise, particularly at a time when our nation is experiencing an epidemic of obesity. Her efforts are getting an entire neighborhood up and moving, all the while restoring safety and a sense of home back to the residents.

The signature black, yellow and white Conkey Cruiser t-shirts can now be seen daily on the streets of Conkey Avenue, as neighbors both young and old exercise on their bikes. Beginning July 7th, youth from the Conkey-Clifford neighborhood will participate in the six-week, five days a week free Conkey Cruisers program, which provides an introduction to safe bicycling and healthy eating, as well as an opportunity to earn President Obama's Active Lifestyle Award.

I am proud that such dedicated individuals call my district home, and that they have committed themselves to improving their neighborhoods, increasing safety, and pursuing health for all of our residents. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Theresa Lou Bowick and the Conkey Cruisers.

IN RECOGNITION STEVEN ROLLINS

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Stephen Rollins upon his retirement after twenty-five years of public service as Town Administrator and Town Manager of Hanover.

Mr. Rollins' career in public service began in 1973 when he worked for the Illinois Department of Local Government Affairs following his graduation from The University of Vermont. Since then, he has proved himself to be an innovative and efficient administrator in a variety of public service roles. He was a leader in the centralization of the Hanover town government, and was instrumental in streamlining the

town's process for grants and expenditures. Mr. Rollins has received national recognition for his work on Hanover's health plan and local praise for his simplification of the town's yearly budget.

As town administrator, Mr. Rollins demonstrated his flexibility and leadership ability. Not only were these characteristics seen in the day-to-day operations of local government, but they were also evident in crisis situations—perhaps, most memorably, when Hanover's town hall was severely damaged in a fire. As de facto contractor overseeing the town hall's renovations, Mr. Rollins repeatedly demonstrated his ability to improvise and assume unconventional roles when necessary. It was therefore very fitting when he was given the title of Town Manager in August of 2010, and became the town's first person to occupy this position. In his role as a representative of Hanover, Mr. Rollins typified the best of what the town has to offer. Always putting the community first, he dedicated his career to making local government work for the people.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Stephen Rollins on this remarkable occasion. I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing him a wonderful retirement and many years of happiness, as well as in thanking him for working tirelessly to build the town of Hanover into the beautiful community we know today.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE REHAB AND AHMED AMER FOSTER CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduced the Rehab and Ahmed Amer Foster Care Improvement Act of 2012. The Act will enhance the existing federal policy of encouraging state foster care programs to place children in the care of willing and able relatives.

This legislation accomplishes that goal by requiring States that receive federal funding for foster care programs to add certain procedural enhancements to their foster care programs so as to ensure a more fair placement decision-making process.

Specifically, my bill requires that, within 90 days after a State makes a foster care placement decision, the State must provide notice of such decision to the following affected parties:

- the child's parents;
- relatives who have informed the State of their interest in caring for the child;
- the guardian;
- the guardian ad litem of the child;
- the attorney for the child;
- the attorney for each parent of the child;
- the prosecutor involved; and
- the child if he or she is able to express an opinion regarding placement.

Additionally, States must establish procedures that:

- allow any of the parties who receive notice of the State's placement decision to request, within five days after receipt of the notice, documentation of the reasons for the State's decision;

- allow the child's attorney to petition the court involved to review the decision; and

require the court to commence such review within seven days after receipt of the petition and conduct such review on the record.

The harrowing story of Rehab and Ahmed Amer of Dearborn, Michigan prompted me to craft this bill.

In 1985, the Amers lost two of their children to Michigan's foster care system after Rehab had been subject to criminal charges related to the death of her two-year-old son Samier, who died because of head injuries resulting from a fall in a bathtub.

Although Rehab had been acquitted in August 1986 of any criminal wrongdoing in connection with Samier's death, the State refused to return the Amers' other two children to them and, in fact, removed a third child from the Amers' custody four months after Rehab's acquittal.

As a temporary alternative, Rehab's brother petitioned to be a foster parent to the Amers' three children, but was denied his petition even though he had previously served as a foster parent for other children.

It is important to note that the Amers are Muslim. Nevertheless, the State, rather than placing the Amers' children with a foster family of the same faith and cultural background, sent them to live with an evangelical Christian family, which re-named the Amers' children—Mohamed Ali, Sueheir, and Zinabe—with Christian names and raised them as Christians.

Today, only the oldest of the Amers' three living children, Mohamed Ali, now known as Adam, communicates with them.

In reaction to the Amers' story, Michigan enacted what became known as the Amer Law. That law requires foster care placement agencies in Michigan to consider and give special preference for relatives when making a foster care placement decision.

The Amer Law is consistent with federal foster care policy, which also seeks to give preference to a child's relatives and, for Native American children, a family of the same cultural background as the child, when making placement decisions.

The Amer Law, however, has several provisions that go beyond current federal law to ensure due process. In sum, this law gives parents, relatives, guardians, and the child in certain cases additional procedural rights, including the right to written notice and an explanation of a placement decision. In addition, it authorizes judicial review of a placement decision by a foster care agency.

My legislation simply adds these enhanced due process features of the Amer Law to existing federal foster care law.

The best interests of the child should always be the overriding consideration when making foster care placement decisions. That standard, however, should also require foster care agencies to give special preference to placing a child with relatives, where the child can be raised in the same culture or religion as his or her own, all other things being equal.

I thank Rehab and Ahmed Amer for bringing this issue to light and for their tireless efforts to make the foster care placement process fairer for everyone, first in Michigan, and, now, nationally.