

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 21, 2012*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system:

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Chair, since 1965, Medicare has provided seniors guaranteed health benefits and today, close to 50 million Americans who have paid into the system now rely on the program for care. While the program's sustainability is stronger than in recent past, this Congress, like those before it, has an obligation to ensure sustainability of the program for current enrollees and future beneficiaries. The Independent Payment Advisory Board, IPAB, was created with this objective in mind. However, despite best intentions, I believe that IPAB is the wrong approach to achieve this shared goal.

Relinquishing control of Medicare provider reimbursements to an unelected IPAB is problematic to me for a number of reasons. Congress has helped shape a Medicare system that reflects unique care needs of varying demographics as well as differences between regions and states. Further, this system has been developed with transparency and accountability in congressional debates. Implementing IPAB would limit the strengths of the current system, and would continue a trend of ceding congressional authority to the Executive branch. This is, in part, why I cosponsored the Medicare Decisions Accountability Act, H.R. 452, legislation to repeal IPAB.

The fact is that the Affordable Care Act will contain spending growth in the Medicare program—independent of proposed IPAB reforms—through integrated and coordinated care models and modest reimbursement changes. The Congressional Budget Office, CBO, estimates that the law will slow annual Medicare growth from seven to four percent over the next decade. And, over the past year, the S&P has measured the lowest rate of growth in the history of Medicare—below three percent.

Today, the House considered legislation to repeal IPAB, a goal that I support. Unfortunately, a calculated choice to polarize the vote by incorporating the HEALTH Act (H.R. 5)—an unrelated and divisive bill—emphasizes the cynical gamesmanship of Republican leadership who clearly are not interested in forging a partisan coalition to repeal IPAB. The HEALTH Act, in part, limits intentional torts or cases where harm is deliberate. A recent case in Connecticut, which involved victims of sexual assault, underscores the harm in these restrictions. Under H.R. 5, these victims would be denied their day in court.

Over the next ten years, Medicare will cost between \$8 trillion and \$9 trillion and there are a whole host of offsets which would easily counter the costs of IPAB repeal without injecting scorched earth partisan politics. For example, MedPAC has recommended rescinding duplicative bonus payments to private insurance providers that administer Medicare Advantage plans, which have historically been overpaid by 14 percent. At the very least, this option provides a more tempered approach to offset H.R. 452 and build an honest consensus on repealing IPAB.

Despite my long-standing support for the repeal of IPAB, I cannot support H.R. 5 as presented to the House today. It is my sincere hope that this chamber can debate the repeal of IPAB through a more measured, balanced, and reasonable approach in the future.

## ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF ROBERT GRACELY FROM GENISYS CREDIT UNION AFTER YEARS OF FINANCIAL SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

**HON. GARY C. PETERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2012*

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Robert Gracely on the occasion of his retirement from Genisys Credit Union after more than three decades of dedicated and passionate service to its members and the greater Southeast Michigan community. A member of Genisys since October 1967, his work has been significantly focused on Genisys' role as a steward of the Southeast Michigan community.

Within the varied positions he has served during his time with Genisys Credit Union, Mr. Gracely has been a passionate advocate of its mission as a not-for-profit, member-owned financial institution that has been committed to helping its members since its formation in 1936. Based out of Auburn Hills, Michigan, Genisys is one of the largest credit unions in Michigan and one of the strongest in the country with over \$1.4 billion in assets. Genisys and its members are deeply involved in altruistic work which supports local charities, organizations and events that enrich the lives of many throughout Michigan. These endeavors have earned Genisys and its members not only considerable praise but numerous awards for their commitment to community service and volunteerism.

Throughout his tenure with Genisys, Mr. Gracely's colleagues have routinely praised his exceptional talent for recognizing client needs and recommending the right services. With his focus on building community partnerships, Mr. Gracely has leveraged his leadership within Genisys Credit Union to partner with and support local businesses, which has cultivated a vibrant small business community. Furthermore, Mr. Gracely has been praised for

his ability to work within a team, to work with his staff and to identify issues and find innovative solutions. His strong command of financial issues, dedication to high quality customer service, and focus made him an invaluable asset. Genisys continues to develop its partnerships within the community and could not have been done without the help of Mr. Gracely.

Mr. Speaker, as a leader within Genisys Credit Union Mr. Gracely has done so much to guide it and its members in their philanthropic activities within the communities that Genisys serves. Like so many of his colleagues in senior leadership positions at Genisys, he has worked tirelessly to provide the credit union's members with quality customer service and financial advising. His spirit of collegiality, dedication to his employees and the greater community, and his creativity will be sorely missed. I wish Mr. Gracely many happy years in retirement and I know he will continue to be involved in volunteer efforts here in Southeast Michigan for years to come.

HONORING BLAKE HUDDLESTON

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2012*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Blake Huddleston is a senior at Pasadena Memorial High School in Harris County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

The American form of Democracy is built upon the principle that every man has the right to have his voice heard, yet today many Americans revoke this right. Neither Congress nor the President can adequately govern such a vast land and people as the United States without participation in government, which has been declining in recent years due to an increase in American apathy.

Adequate governance does not require petitions, marches, or protest; simply voting for issues and candidates is enough to ensure that the American voice is heard in the white halls of the Capital. But in order to create a sense of honor in participating in our centuries old processes, both those who are in positions of power and those who seek office must offer their constituents something worth speaking for.

In times of discord and partisanship the American people become disillusioned with

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

what is perhaps the greatest Democracy to ever exist. By compromising, by understanding not only their own personal beliefs, but the beliefs of those opposed to them, congressmen and presidents inspire the people they represent to become involved in the American process because their electors believe that the system does work; that the system can solve serious problems without mindless bickering over irrelevant issues. There exist a social bond between electors and the elected in America: when the elected rise above politics and become statesmen, Americans will rise as well. When the elected fall, so too does the will of Americans to participate.

#### CONGRATULATING THE MY POSSIBILITIES HIPSTORE: OPEN FOR BUSINESS

##### HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2012*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to recognize the great staff, board of directors, and Hugely Important People—or HIPsters—of My Possibilities in Plano, Texas as they celebrate the organization's newest venture, the HIPstore.

My Possibilities is a non-profit organization that provides daytime, year-round vocational training and other programs for adults with special needs. The first organization of its kind in Collin County, My Possibilities opened its doors in June of 2008 when caring moms joined forces to create a safe, social atmosphere for young adults who had “aged out” of secondary education. Today, ten full-time staff members serve 125 HIPsters each week.

Inspired by the My Possibilities motto, staff and HIPsters alike work hard to “Make every day count.” The new HIPstore provides a great enterprise opportunity to do just that.

The store is a 3,000 square-foot facility that features gift items like candles, jewelry, and artwork all handmade by HIPsters. The HIPsters not only learn creative skills, put them into practice, and watch their handiwork make a profit, but learn the ins and outs of operating a retail outlet. For instance, they help to stock the shelves, monitor inventory, interact with customers, and operate the cash register.

To the folks whose hard work and forward thinking have made the HIPstore possible:

Thank you for your efforts. It is my pleasure to join you in celebrating this exciting new chapter of My Possibilities' service to the North Texas community. I'm glad to help announce that the HIPstore is “open for business!”

#### RECOGNITION OF IDA MAE BYRD

##### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2012*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and to honor Ms. Ida Mae Byrd. A native of Waycross, Georgia, Ms. Byrd has enjoyed a very active life looking after her family and her community. We celebrate your 100th birthday.

Ms. Byrd was born to Maebelle and Jack Smith in Waycross, Georgia, on March 13,

1912. She is the third of six children. At the young age of 16, Ms. Byrd was looking for more opportunities so she moved to Brooklyn, New York. Once in New York City, Ms. Byrd worked diligently to bring her immediate family with her.

At the age of 19, Ms. Byrd married Wily Byrd, forming a strong union that produced five children. The family was a close knit group held together by her strict control and discipline. She set an example for her siblings on how to properly raise children—supporting a strict environment with a loving and warm personality.

In her younger days, Ms. Byrd loved to dance and one of her favorite places to dance was the Savoy Manor in the Bronx. Along with dancing, Ms. Byrd enjoyed her occasional Miller High Life beer and her beloved New York Mets. As an avid fan, she was rewarded with two World Series championships. Through the years she was an active member of Pilgrim Baptist Church under the leadership of Bishop Roy E. Brown. Ms. Byrd enjoyed these church events most with her family who attempted to make every moment a memorable one.

Ms. Byrd has lived through an incredible century that has witnessed two World Wars, the Jim Crow South, the invention of the television and the computer, and the Civil Rights movement. She has also lived to see apartheid end in South Africa and the election of the first African American President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Ms. Ida Mae Byrd on the celebration of her 100th birthday.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLORA-BAMA AND GULF COAST RESIDENTS SUPPORT OF NEW YORK CITY AND HARLEM AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

##### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 22, 2012*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 10th Anniversary of the Flora-Bama and Gulf Coast support of New York City and Harlem after September 11, 2001.

In 2002, Joe Gilchrist, owner of the Flora-Bama Lounge in Pensacola, Florida brought to New York a group of more than 100 visitors, including musicians and songwriters, to pay respect to the ground zero site and support New York. Gilchrist also encouraged the group to spend money to help uplift New York City's economy and provide moral and spiritual support to the victim's families. The group also toured New York City fire houses, the Empire State Building and Central Park. The visit culminated in a great celebration at the Waldorf Astoria, which included performances by Chuck Jackson, and other musicians and singers who participated in the Frank Brown International Songwriters Festival.

On Saturday February 4, the Harlem community, along with Joe Gilchrist and the Frank Brown Songwriters Festival celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Flora-Bama and Gulf Coast historic visit to New York. Musicians, songwriters, business leaders and residents

from the Flora-Bama and Gulf Coast toured the 911 Memorial site and performed in lower Manhattan and in Harlem. This Cultural Exchange was promoted with the theme of, “Merging Manhattan Music with Southern Sounds.” Kicking off the diverse musical tribute were original songs by “Lil Man,” an eight year old “Hip Hop” artist who writes his own songs; stellar performances by Michael Jackson impersonator, Jesse Valenca; and Urica Rose, an electrifying singer and songwriter, representing the “New Generation of Rock” performers.

The group attended Open House events at the world famous Apollo Theater, including performances by Ballet Hispanico, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Amateur Night winners and was given a tour by Apollo historian Billy Mitchell. The group joined Commander E. Randy Dupree at Harlem's historic Colonel Charles Young American Legion Post 398, where Flora-Bama musicians joined Hammond B3 Organist and Jazz legend Seleno Clark, Percussionist Don Eaton and the Harlem Groove Band for a jam session to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of their visit to New York City.

As Dean of the New York Congressional Delegation, I want to extend my thanks to Joe Gilchrist and the Frank Brown Songwriters Festival for their outstanding economic, moral and spiritual support to Harlem and the great State of New York.

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Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chair, today, the House is considering legislation that would repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAB. To be clear, I am not a big fan of IPAB—I had concerns with this new entity when it was first being discussed, and I remain concerned with it today.

I do find it interesting, however, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are suddenly so troubled about IPAB's effect on Medicare, when their plan to end Medicare is so much worse.

I fear that today's floor action is less about a real concern for seniors, hospitals and physicians in the Medicare program, and more about trying to win a battle in the war against health insurance reform.

They have shown with their words and their actions, even down to their choice of offsets, that this yet another political exercise.

But that is a game that I refuse to play. Our seniors deserve real answers and real solutions, not yet another repeal-but-not-replace attempt.

So even though I don't think that IPAB is the best answer to strengthening Medicare, I can't in good conscience vote for this bill, at