

country as a whole. I represent the 13th Congressional District of New York and am proud to have a large and thriving Greek American community in my district. Anyone who visits the remarkable cultural festivals thrown by the Holy Cross Orthodox Church in Bay Ridge, or the Holy Trinity/St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church on the West Shore of Staten Island, can attest to the strength of, and support for, the Greek-American community in Staten Island and Brooklyn.

Greek Independence Day is an opportunity for all Americans to reflect on our nation's own freedom. We must not forget that when the United States was first conceived, many of its ideals and laws were based on those of the Greeks. Just seeing the artwork right here in the United States Capitol or reading through our constitution exemplifies the profound impact the people of Greece have made on our modern society.

It is with great pride that I rise today to honor the independence of a nation that, for centuries, has protected the fundamental rights of liberty and participation in the democratic process. I have seen the positive cultural heritage Greek-Americans bring to local communities firsthand in Staten Island and Brooklyn, and I am sure that the shared bond between our two great nations will remain rock solid for many years to come.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM INTEGRITY ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Medicare Advantage Program Integrity Act. My legislation will make common-sense payment reforms to the Medicare Advantage (MA) program to ensure that taxpayers get the best bang for their buck. The Medicare Advantage Program Integrity Act requires that Medicare Advantage payments more accurately reflect the health status of their enrollees. In addition, the bill ends the ability for Medicare Advantage plans to game the system by retaining investment income from pre-payments. Taken together, these policies will save over \$20 billion over ten years, protecting both taxpayers and beneficiaries.

The MA program has grown substantially in recent years, increasing from \$65.2 billion in plan payments in 2006 to \$116.1 billion in 2010. Today, 25 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in a private health insurance plan through MA. Congress took action through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 to substantially reduce historical excessive base payment rates in MA. However, these plans continue to be overpaid relative to traditional Medicare, both in terms of base rates that exceed the cost of traditional Medicare in many geographic areas and because payments do not accurately reflect the health status of enrolled beneficiaries.

Because plan payments are adjusted for health status such that plan payments are increased as anticipated service use increases, plans have an incentive to "up code" and report less healthy patients. In fact, documented

independent evidence shows that Medicare Advantage plans do tend to report higher patient severity than is supported by medical records. The data also show that reported patient severity in MA plans increased faster than for comparable patients in traditional fee-for-service Medicare (FFS) over the same time period.

In an attempt to address this issue, CMS reduced MA beneficiary risk scores (which are used to adjust base payments) by 3.41 percent when calculating payment rates in 2010 and 2011. However, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, Medicare Advantage: CMS Should Improve the Accuracy of Risk Score Adjustments for Diagnostic Coding Practices (January 12, 2012) found the Medicare program continues to overpay MA plans despite the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) effort to adjust payments to more accurately reflect the health status of plan enrollees. GAO estimated that in 2010, MA beneficiary risk scores were at least 4.8 percent, and perhaps as much as 7.1 percent higher than they would have been if the same beneficiaries had been continuously enrolled in traditional Medicare. GAO recommended that CMS take additional steps to improve the accuracy of these scores and estimated that the recommended methodological improvements would have saved the Medicare program \$1.2 to \$3.1 billion in MA plan payments in 2010 alone.

My legislation implements the GAO recommendations by codifying and phasing in the higher coding intensity adjustment over several years to prevent disruption in the market. The policy in this legislation would culminate in a 7.1 percent downward adjustment by 2019. GAO's findings indicate that a coding adjustment of up to 7.1 percent is warranted now and would yield billions of dollars in federal savings.

Under current law, CMS makes advanced capitated payments to Medicare Advantage plans at the beginning of every month for each beneficiary enrolled in their plan. MA plans often then invest these Medicare funds in interest-bearing accounts until the money is needed to pay for services. Current law does not prohibit Medicare Advantage plans from retaining the investment income on the pre-payments. However, the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) points to the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) as a model, noting that in contrast to Medicare Advantage, insurance companies' ability to earn investment income is limited under FEHBP. The HHS OIG conducted audits in 2000 and 2011 and concluded that if Medicare delayed pre-payments to Medicare Advantage plans by 46 days (similar to FEHBP), the Medicare Part A and B trust funds would have earned \$450 million in interest income in Calendar Year 2007—rather than allowing that interest income to go to private health insurance plans. The Inspector General recommended that the Medicare program follow the FEHBP policy of delaying pre-payments to Medicare Advantage plans.

My legislation implements the Inspector General's recommendations by phasing-in a delay in the payments to Medicare Advantage plans. Taken together, these two policies will save federal taxpayers more than \$20 billion while protecting beneficiary access to Medicare Advantage plans.

The Medicare Advantage Program Integrity Act has been endorsed by the Medicare

Rights Center, the Center for Medicare Advocacy, AFL-CIO, Families USA, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and the Alliance for Retired Americans. This is a commonsense piece of legislation that attacks waste at its source and improves the program without hurting real people. I urge all of my colleagues to support the bill.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF MARINE CORPS CAPTAIN MICHAEL QUIN

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life and service of Marine Corps Captain Michael Quin, who tragically lost his life, along with others, during the final training mission before his unit's scheduled deployment to Afghanistan. Captain Quin is a native of Purcellville, Virginia where his parents, Brad and Betsy still reside.

Captain Quin graduated from Loudoun Valley High School and received an appointment to the United States Naval Academy, where he graduated in 2006. Michael went on to successfully complete flight school and receive his wings in 2008, graduating at the top of his flight school class. Michael rose quickly as a pilot from 2nd Lieutenant to Captain and was in command of a helicopter.

On February 22, Captain Quin was conducting a training mission at the Yuma Training Range Complex in Arizona when his helicopter collided with another, killing six out of the seven pilots in his squadron. Captain Quin was remembered by the commanding officer and gunnery sergeant of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing as "one of those rare young captains" who inspired admiration from all those with whom he served.

Captain Quin's service has been reported on by the Leesburg Today, which I submit for the record, as well as the Loudoun Times Mirror, Purcellville Gazette, and the Blue Ridge Leader. Captain Quin was honored by residents of Purcellville when his body made the return trip from Arizona to Reagan National Airport and finally back home to his family. Marines old and young, police, firefighters, and Boy and Girl Scouts turned out to show their respects for Captain Quin and to show support for his parents, siblings and fiancée.

Captain Quin was an example of leadership and patriotism of which we all can be proud. He chose to serve his country during extremely difficult times and was prepared to wear the uniform of the United States Marine Corps into battle to protect his family and his country. That he lost his life in service to his country is a testament to his bravery.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the thoughts and prayers of the full House of Representatives go out to the Quin family as they honor the exceptional life of their son, Marine Corps Captain Michael Quin.

CAPT. QUIN REMEMBERED: "HE WAS THE BEST"

The tragic impacts of the nation's war effort again are being felt in Loudoun, with the death of U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Michael Quin. The Purcellville resident and 2002 Loudoun Valley High School graduate was

killed last week when two helicopters collided while training in Arizona in advance of a deployment to Afghanistan.

Mourned by his parents, sisters and fiancée, the death of the 28-year-old naval aviator also has hit the Purcellville community, one that just two years ago paid tribute to another fallen serviceman, Army Specialist Stephan Lee Mace, who was killed in Afghanistan in a fierce firefight with the Taliban. Flags in town will fly at half staff until Quin's burial service at Arlington Cemetery. As of Tuesday, plans for services in Purcellville and at Arlington had not yet been finalized.

Michael lost his life, along with six others, in a remote area of the 1.2 million-acre Yuma Training Range Complex in Arizona during the two-week "Scorpion Fire" training mission that was to have been his last before being deployed to Afghanistan in April.

After graduating Loudoun Valley High School, he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2006 and joined the Marine Corps.

The tragedy of Quin's death was compounded in that he was in the last stages of his training before his deployment to Afghanistan. It was the last qualification that he needed to emerge with "top gun" status for helicopters.

Quin had recently become engaged, and had planned to spend a week away with his fiancée before coming home for four or five days with his family before leaving in early April for Afghanistan.

His parents Brad and Betsy Quin had seen the report of the fatal crash and when they didn't get a reassuring phone call from their son that all was well, they began to worry.

When the Marine officers were sent to deliver the news, both parents were at work, his father in Reston, and his mother in Leesburg.

Brad Quin was at lunch, so the officers waited. When he was told there were officers waiting to see him: "I knew," he said.

The town has rallied around the Quins and their daughters, Phoebe and Sarah. Brad Quin is a former president of the Locust Grove Homeowners Association and Betsy Quin serves on the board of the HOA's Architectural Review Board. He has been in the college and university world all his life and in admissions and worked for the College Board. Betsy Quin was in the reference department at Rust Library in Leesburg.

Mayor Bob Lazaro and his wife Carolyn are friends and neighbors of the Quins, whom Lazaro called "pillars of the community." He credited Brad Quin with being "the horse power" behind the Purcellville Volunteer Fire Department's recruitment effort that has led to a doubling of the size of the company.

This week, the support of the 100-strong company, the town and area residents are helping the Quins deal with the loss of their first-born child.

Capt. Quin's squadron will have a memorial service for him Friday, which his parents will attend before returning to Purcellville. Brad Quin said he hopes the Corps will release his son's body soon. He will return home with a Marine Corps escort, flying into Reagan National Airport where the Washington detachment of the Marine Corps will hold an arrival ceremony before the long trip back to Purcellville to Hall Funeral Home.

Looking back on his son's life, "He was the kind of kid who didn't really require much correction from us," his father said, noting Michael Quin seemed to have the ability to naturally make good choices in life. Before 9/11 patriotism welled up in the country, Michael was like other kids of his generation—

dedicated to his family, sisters, studies and his soccer team.

Brad Quin has been in the college world all his career, but was somewhat surprised by his son's choice of the Naval Academy, not the most obvious fun and typical fraternity college opportunity. "But he wanted to express what he wanted to be as a person," he said.

Michael Quin seemed to have this sense of looking at "something else down the road," to his decision to join the Marine Corps, his father said. When Brad Quin asked him why he had applied to join the Corps, his son seemed to appreciate the support system the force represented, the way its members gave each other total support no matter their function or level within the Corps.

At the Naval Academy, it was tough going at first. The curriculum is heavy on science, and students graduate with bachelors of science degrees, even if you're studying history and Spanish, as Michael Quin did. But he sucked it up, did what he was supposed to be as a plebe—invisible.

"I could see he was growing, and he had this sense of something else coming down the road," his father said, noting that perception has been borne out by statements posted on the website set up to collect memories and tributes, www.michaelquin.com.

As a 2nd lieutenant, Michael Quin chose to be a naval aviator. He learned to fly planes first at the naval base at Pensacola, FL, before moving on to helicopters.

Intermittently, during training, he hooked up with a squadron in Atlanta, GA, and there was a mutual adoption. When after two years the young 2nd Lieutenant was "winged" Dec. 2, 2008, they all supported him. His parents' pride in those naval aviator's wings of gold "is more than you can imagine," Brad Quin said.

From there, Capt. Quin immediately went to the West Coast where the Marine Corps were forming new squadrons. He rose through the ranks to 1st Lieutenant in command of his first ship, then to captain. He was No. 1 in the Marine Corps' flight school, where he chose to fly Hueys.

His closeness to and support of others was noticeable during a tough time in which additional training and certifications were needed to join a helicopter "fraternity of very capable guys," his father said.

His commanding officer was a "tough, square-jawed Marine, with a call sign of 'Beast,'" Brad Quin said. When the CO called him last Friday, after introducing himself, he revealed he had lost six of seven pilots from his squadron.

There were 100 Marines working on the aircraft. When the lieutenant colonel said he had asked the crews to tell him about Capt. Quin, the officer himself became choked with emotion. There was enormous support and liking for Michael Quin, whom the crews thought one of "those rare young captains," who didn't denigrate them but lived out the tradition that everyone supports those who do the dirty work.

For Brad and Betsy Quin, it is comforting to know that a wizened gunnery sergeant told his CO that in all his life in the force, "he was the best."

For now, it is the support of the Purcellville community that is a huge comfort. Brad Quin is a volunteer certified firefighter, vice president and chairman of membership for the company.

"How supportive everyone has been, the fire department and the town, just like a big family."

The loss has hit home in Purcellville and in the fire company. To lose your life when you're "training to do what you do is horrific," Purcellville Volunteer Fire Company

Chief Bob Dryden said. To be one of the top students in flight school, as Michael Quin was, and "this is the way you go out after spending all that time—it's not fair."

Dryden has been in constant touch with the Quins. "Once we know the final date [for burial in Arlington], the company will begin its planning in earnest," something along the lines of the plans and ceremony for Mace two years ago.

"We'll welcome him home in the proper way," Dryden said.

Mace was killed Oct. 3, 2009, along with seven other U.S. soldiers, defending the Camp Keating outpost in the Nuristan province of Afghanistan against more than 300 Taliban and other insurgents. Mace was a 2005 Loudoun Valley graduate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARTIN HEINRICH

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. Speaker, on March 19, 2012, I unfortunately missed rollcall vote No. 111. If I had been present, I would have voted in favor of rollcall vote No. 111, Representative BERMAN's (CA–28) bill, H.R. 3992.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

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. PASCRELL. Mr. Chair, I rise today in reluctant, but strong, opposition to this bill. I say reluctant, because I support repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board, as do many Democrats.

Now, make no mistake, I strongly support the Affordable Care Act. This bill will lower costs, strengthen Medicare, and provide 33 million uninsured Americans with health insurance. This is a tremendous accomplishment. But I have concerns with IPAB, including how it will operate and that it gives up important Congressional authority over pricing. Abdicating our responsibility is not the right thing to do for our seniors. I was elected by my constituents to protect Medicare.

I supported this bill in the Ways and Means Committee, and I would love to support it on the floor. That's why it's so disappointing that the majority would abandon any semblance of compromise by attaching this sharply partisan medical malpractice proposal. Capping malpractice settlements limits patient protection. There's no question that we need to protect health care providers from frivolous litigation, and I am willing to work in a bipartisan way to develop those protections. But not at the expense of the vast majority of Americans who have, for too long, lived without access to affordable quality health care, and who should