

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1971, the Pharmacy Competition and Consumer Choice Act. This legislation will help level the playing field between neighborhood pharmacies and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) ensuring rural communities will continue to have access to see the providers of their choosing.

The 7th Congressional District of Minnesota, which I represent, is made up of more than 31,000 square miles and many small towns and farms. Small and independent retail pharmacies serve the pharmacy needs of residents in this large rural area. Residents of my district are concerned that they are losing access to their local community pharmacist whom they trust and have built relationships with throughout the years.

These PBMs tend to encourage patients to use their own mail-order-only operations in order to receive discounted co-pays on prescription drugs. Many constituents have expressed how they want to save money but also would like to talk to the pharmacists about their drug regimens and possible drug interactions. They do not like the idea of dealing with faceless employees of a managing company and talking with someone new each time they call. Patients should not have to choose between best price and best care.

Small pharmacies play a vital role in rural communities. Not only are they an employer, but serve as a health care advisor to senior citizens and families. I have heard concerns that such market concentration, like one we will see with Express Scripts and Medco, will likely lead to higher prices for consumers and fewer choices. During this difficult economic time, we cannot afford to lose jobs and the small businesses that serve the very important health-care needs of American consumers. This is especially true in rural areas, where there are already fewer choices.

H.R. 1971, the Pharmacy Competition and Consumer Choice Act, would provide transparency into how PBMs deal with Medicare Part D plans, and would require PBMs to deal more honestly with pharmacies when contacting and conducting audits. By protecting Part D plans and beneficiaries, as well as patient access to local community pharmacies, this legislation will help ensure that rural patients will continue to have access to local pharmacies.

RECOGNIZING DIANA Z. YSRAEL
ON RECEIVING THE 2012 GUAM
BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Mrs. Diana Z. Ysrael on being awarded the 2012 Guam Businesswoman of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award. Diana Ysrael is the owner of Diana's Specialty Shops, which opened in 1960, and she is an advisor for Tanota Part-

ners, a family-owned real estate business that was established in 1970.

Diana was born in Graceville, Minnesota on November 9, 1935 and attended George Washington High School in Mangilao, Guam. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing Education from St. Theresa's College in Winona, Minnesota and went on to work as a registered nurse for the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and the Guam Memorial Hospital. In 1960, Diana decided to start her own business and opened Diana's, Guam's first children's specialty shop. Over the years, Diana expanded her business to five locations with over 50 employees. She also provides guidance and consultative work to her family businesses, Tanota Partners and Dizzy Inc. clothing stores.

In addition to being a local entrepreneur for over 50 years, Diana is an active member of Guam's community. She has dedicated her time to volunteering for Strides for the Cure, a local non-profit organization that raises awareness of cancer and seeks to reduce cancer rates on Guam. Diana also frequently contributes to the American Red Cross and provides financial support to St. John's School athletic program and scholarship fund. Further, through Tanota Partners, Diana has helped provide funding to repair the Agana Pool.

Diana has dedicated her career to building a successful self-owned business, and she serves as a positive role model for businesswomen on Guam. I join the people of Guam in thanking her for her many contributions to our community, and I wish her continued success in the years to come.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED
WAY OF BUCKS COUNTY

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of United Way of Bucks County, an organization that strives to better the lives of countless people in my Congressional District.

United Way was founded shortly after World War II, just as Bucks County began to experience a rapid growth in population. Fearing this new influx of local residents would place too much of a burden on existing charitable agencies, a group of determined citizens began meeting to discuss the struggles that the new community faced. Although small at first, these meetings eventually led to the creation of United Way of Bucks County in 1952.

Over the years, United Way has worked with many different people and organizations in order to identify and resolve pressing neighborhood issues. Since 1952, United Way has worked with various schools, government agencies, businesses and neighborhood associations in an effort to foment public policy and much needed community change.

Today, the organization allocates over \$1 million to 31 different agencies that support 52 local programs in Bucks County. Undoubtedly, United Way of Bucks County has become a vital attribute to our community, and I am honored to speak on behalf of its members and affiliates today.

Thank you for 60 years of public service, and dedication, I am proud to have such an

admirable organization work on behalf of the constituents in my Congressional District.

POTENTIAL IMPORT OF THE
MERGER OF EXPRESS SCRIPTS,
INC., AND MEDCO

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the potential impact of the merger of two major pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), Express Scripts, Inc. and Medco. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently decided not to oppose this merger, which combines two of the "Big Three" PBMs. However, the FTC decision was not unanimous; in fact, one FTC Commissioner who opposed the merger called it a "game changer."

The merger of Express Scripts and Medco now means that the top two PBMs will cover approximately 72 percent of the privately insured Americans. This "mega PBM" will have the ability to raise prices for health plans and patients, limit access to pharmacy patient care and force patients to use the PBM's mail order pharmacies rather than their trusted community pharmacies, driving up costs for employers, health plans and other federal and state programs.

Additional concerns resulting from the Express Scripts and Medco merger include increased market concentration in the PBM market, with decreasing competition. The "Big Three" PBMs controlled approximately 80 percent of the national prescription drug plan market for large plans. This merger reduces the options for large plans from three to two. For large health plans that have typically selected one of the "Big Three" PBMs, the merger creates a firm with more than 50 percent market share.

The new mega PBM alone will control over 40 percent of the national prescription drug volume. Approximately 135 million Americans—more than one-third of all Americans—will rely on this new "mega PBM" to manage their prescription benefits. The merger combines two of the three largest suppliers of specialty pharmacy services, consolidating an excessive share of all specialty pharmacy sales. The merger creates the nation's largest mail-order pharmacy accounting for close to 60 percent of all mail-order prescriptions processed in the United States. This is a very troubling situation.

I have actively sought to bring this issue to the forefront, through floor speeches, letters to the FTC, and calls for hearings in the House Energy & Commerce Committee. I am concerned that this "mega PBM" will only exacerbate the problems for community pharmacies and consumers caused by PBMs currently. Already, many PBMs disallow pharmacies the ability to appeal pricing decisions with which they disagree. It is documented that they often mandate that a covered individual use a specific retail pharmacy, mail order pharmacy, specialty pharmacy or other pharmacy or entity. This is exceedingly problematic in places like the First Congressional District, where there are limited options for seniors and the disabled to reach certain pharmacies.

Only a handful of states directly regulate some PBM functions, such as how they conduct audits of pharmacies, and some state

boards of pharmacy regulate them to the extent that their activities can be construed as practicing pharmacy. The vast majority of their remaining functions and activities are unregulated.

We must do more to rein in some of the worst abuses of PBMs against community pharmacies and consumers. In addition to supporting state actions against the Express Scripts/Medco merger, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 4215, the Medicare Pharmacy Transparency and Fair Auditing Act, important legislation that will protect patients and providers from the egregious practices of PBMs. Similar legislation that includes the provisions of H.R. 4215 has been introduced in the Senate. This legislation will help level the playing field between neighborhood pharmacies and PBMs and ensure Americans have access to see the providers of their choice. PBMs are the little-known, but powerful, virtually unregulated middlemen that administer prescription drug benefits for most Americans.

TRIBUTE TO ST. BERNARDINE PARISH ON THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today and ask Congress to recognize the 150th anniversary of the St. Bernardine Parish in San Bernardino, California.

In 1862, Reverend Raho chose a site for the St. Bernardine Parish to be built in the town square in the current city of San Bernardino. Here, Reverend Raho held mass and established the Parish in the name of Bishop Amat. In 1865, the first St. Bernardine Church was completed, only to be destroyed by a fire a year later. The church was rebuilt and expanded between 1867 and 1880 to accommodate a growing population.

The St. Bernardine Parish continued to change and expand with the beginning of the 20th century. In 1907, the Church built a new two story brick school to accommodate 200 students. Three years later, in 1910, the new Church building was completed and dedicated, becoming the fifth Catholic Church in San Bernardino.

During the 1920s, the San Bernardine Parish flourished and helped provide guidance and inspiration to the people of San Bernardino. A decade later, during the Great Depression, the San Bernardine Parish was instrumental in helping the community get through rough times.

I commend the San Bernardine Parish for their tireless work to support our soldiers and their families during and after World War II. Many men and women from the Parish fought bravely to preserve the freedoms of democracy and religion that we hold today.

After the war, St. Bernardine constructed a new convent and built additions onto the existing school building. From the 1960s until the 1990s, Msgr. John Bradley oversaw the period of growth and change for the St. Bernardine Parish, where he is known as the "Preservation Pastor." With Msgr. Bradley's leadership, a new senior citizens housing complex was

completed and dedicated. Msgr. Bradley's legacy has impacted Father Leonard Depasquale, who continues to lead the St. Bernardine Parish in improving the life of the people and community of San Bernardino.

I am proud of the way the St. Bernardine Parish has positively impacted the people of San Bernardino for over 150 years. The St. Bernardine Parish has provided spiritual support and assistance to the people of San Bernardino, and I am grateful to their service to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognition of the St. Bernardine Parish as they celebrate their 150th anniversary.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT SHAWN T. HANNON

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of a grateful nation to celebrate the life of Ohio Army National Guard Master Sergeant Shawn T. Hannon—a true American hero who lost his life on April 4, 2012, while deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. A fellow Ohioan and soldier from Grove City, Ohio, Master Sgt. Hannon, 44, gave the final measure of devotion when he was killed in action while serving in the line of duty in the protection of our nation.

Master Sgt. Hannon was a lifelong soldier who served for almost 20 years in the Ohio Army National Guard. Hannon was the kind of soldier who makes the citizens of Ohio's 15th Congressional District so proud. He served in multiple deployments, which included Iraq, RAF Lakenheath, England, Mississippi for Hurricane Katrina, and Florida for Hurricane Andrew. He earned a well-deserved Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Ohio Distinguished Service Medal for his outstanding service. As a father, husband, son, brother, and friend, Master Sgt. Hannon was known for his charisma, love, and loyalty. I consider myself privileged to have had the opportunity to serve with him in the Ohio Army National Guard.

We should thank God every day that heroes like Master Sgt. Hannon exist, because every day he stood ready to protect and fight for our freedom. His bravery, selflessness, and sacrifice will be forever remembered, as will his unwavering commitment to God, country, and his family.

I ask that every Member of Congress join me in paying tribute to the life of Master Sgt. Hannon—his bravery and selflessness are deeply missed and felt. We are able to have freedom and safety today because of the ultimate sacrifice that he has made, and for that we owe a great debt of gratitude.

RECOGNIZING THE 64TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 64th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel.

Today, Israelis and their friends around the world celebrate the renewal of a Jewish State in the land of Israel. Since the U.S. became the first country to recognize Israel, a mere 11 minutes after her founding, the relationship between our two nations has continued to grow and strengthen. That friendship is as important now as it was in 1948, and, after 64 years of cooperation and collaboration, we still subscribe to the same Democratic ideals, face the same global threats, and share the same dreams. As a Jew and a Member of Congress, I am committed to continuously working to grow and strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Israel is not just a strategic ally, but also a friend and partner of the United States. I have traveled to Israel many times in recent years, and I am continuously impressed by the high level of technology, energy, and scientific innovation. Even as Israelis face an uncertain security outlook and the very real possibility of violence from neighboring nations, Israel continues to be a leader in innovation.

Today we celebrate, but yesterday we paused for Israel's Memorial Day to remember the many men and women who have been killed defending the Jewish state. According to the Israeli government, 22,993 men and women have given their lives defending the land of Israel since 1860, and 2,457 people have been killed in terror attacks. In the past year, 126 members of the Israeli security forces have been killed in the line of duty.

After 64 years, Israel continues to be our closest friend and ally in the Middle East, and the United States remains absolutely committed to ensuring a secure future for the Jewish State. For over six decades, the cornerstone of that relationship has been bipartisan agreement recognizing the critical importance of that relationship to both our nations.

As we celebrate the 64th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, this Congress, this Administration, and this country will continue to work together with our Israeli partners to ensure a secure and peaceful future for Israel and the entire Middle East.

IRA FREEMAN

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to my dear friend Ira Freeman, who is being honored by the Valley Community Clinic for his many years of dedicated service and is being named 2012 Pharmacist of the Year by the California Pharmacists Association.

I know firsthand of Mr. Freeman's many outstanding contributions to our community. Ira is a founding member of the Valley Community Clinic (VCC), whose vision is to provide high quality healthcare for all regardless of their ability to pay. Since 1970, Ira has been the Pharmacist of Record for VCC's in-house dispensary, where he oversees the medication processes for all its patients. In addition, he has spent the last four decades volunteering his time in the dispensary every Thursday and Saturday. Along with giving his time to VCC, he also supports many other Valley non-profits including: New Horizons, Ovarian Cancer Coalition, AIDS Walk LA, Executives of the Jewish