

program is in danger. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, with the baby boomer generation about to retire, if nothing is done to the program, the program will be bankrupt in 10 years.

Instead of making Medicare stronger through transparent and responsible reform, the President has decided to cut more than \$500 billion from the program, money which will then be used to fund his new health care law.

If taking nearly half a trillion dollars from the already crippled program weren't bad enough, the President has handpicked a special panel to slash away at the program even more. He knows our country is facing a budget shortfall. Instead of implementing responsible and transparent reforms, the President wants to take away benefits from Medicare recipients to fund his agenda for new entitlements.

The panel, known as the Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAB, is a group of unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats who will essentially be given power to ration care and even deny seniors lifesaving treatments. Its members are not required to hold public hearings or disclose their meetings. Their salaries will be paid directly out of trust funds used to pay Medicare beneficiaries' health care claims.

Worse yet, doctors and patients can not challenge the IPAB's decision in court. Without a three-fifths majority in both Chambers, Congress has no power to change decisions. While this select group rakes in the perks, it will be the seniors left holding the short end of the stick.

The health care law—and IPAB in particular—will threaten their access to quality care. Medicare is already known for its low reimbursement rates. Physicians receive about 20 percent less from Medicare than private health plans, forcing many to stop accepting patients just to stay in business. Seniors will be left with fewer options, and they may even be told they can no longer see their own doctors.

That's why, when I talk to seniors in my district, they are scared of this law. They're worried about being left with fewer options; they are worried about not being able to see their own doctors; and they are worried about the government cutting even more from the program. It's not just in my district where this concern is prevalent. According to a recent nationwide poll, 60 percent of our Nation's seniors have an unfavorable view of the law.

Access to quality care for seniors should be a top priority and will remain so with me. I believe health care decisions should be made by patients, families, and their doctors, and not by bureaucrats in Washington, who are burdening seniors and future generations with less choice, fewer services, and more debt.

House Republicans remain committed to strengthening and reforming Medicare to protect today's seniors and to make sure the program is still there for the next generation.

MONICA PEARSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, ladies and gentlemen of the Congress, Monica Pearson, with WSB Television in Atlanta, Georgia, is indeed a true pioneer and a trailblazer in television news. She broke barriers as an African American and as a woman news anchor for WSB Television starting in 1975.

The year 1975 was an important turning point, especially in the South. So it is very important for us to understand the significance of Monica often appearing as a nightly anchor, as the first African American and first woman in the South at WSB Television in 1975. Now, 38 years later, Monica is retiring.

Monica Pearson brought a special talent, a sparkling personality, hard work, and a high nobility of purpose that appealed to everybody, to people of all races, and she became endeared to everybody from every walk of life. What a great American story is Monica Pearson.

She paved the way for other African Americans and women to become news anchors and to become television journalists throughout the South. So it is most fitting as she announces her retirement that we gather here today on the part of the United States Congress to give her this special commendation. We also give a special commendation to WSB Television and Cox Enterprises management for making that critical decision at that important time in the history of the United States. Because of her talent, because of her hard work, we in the Congress of the United States recognize with high distinction an outstanding American: Monica Pearson, an outstanding American.

Madam Speaker, Monica Pearson is a familiar face to metro Atlanta's residents, though most know her by her former name—Monica Kaufman. For the past 37 years, Monica has anchored WSB-TV's Channel 2 Action News. The character and amount of trust she has built as Channel 2's nightly newscaster is laudable, but perhaps more important are the barriers she broke as she developed that reputation. Born and brought up in the Civil Rights era, Monica became not only the first African-American, but also the first woman to anchor a daily evening newscast on WSB in 1975.

Throughout her long career, Monica has accumulated an even longer list of awards and achievements. All in all, she has won thirty Local and Southern Regional Emmy awards. When she saw injustice or a story that needed to be heard, she was there reporting on it—first at the 6 pm and 11 pm segments, and later at 4 pm. Her hard-hitting investigative journalism cuts at all different issues. In 1992 she spoke out on behalf of women and girls in Georgia when she found out that the Georgia High School Association's all-male executive committee did not have a state-wide competition for girls' soccer or cheerleading. She was awarded the Women's Sports Journalism Award for Local Television Reporting from the

Women's Sports Foundation and Miller Lite for her report.

Monica has been honored for bringing attention to a wide range of issues—from the "HOT FLASH! The Truth about Menopause" documentary that won local and national awards in 1994 to the "Prejudice and Hate: Georgians and the Holocaust" documentary that lead to win the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust's Humanitarian Award in 1977. Her sense of civic duty, compassion and curiosity has distinguished her from her peers, winning an Emmy Award for Best Feature Program—"Monica Kaufman Closeups", the National Foundation for Women Legislators' "Media Excellence Award" and the Georgia Commission of Women's "2004 Georgia Woman of the Year".

While devoting her life to journalism, she has also deeply involved herself in the community. She remains a passionate supporter of the Metropolitan United Way, the organization that helped her move beyond her poor background to become an award-winning newscaster. Since then, she has served as Chair of Atlanta's United Way board, the first African-American and only the second woman. Her dedication to the organization might be due in no small part to the fact that her daughter was adopted through a United Way agency. In her own words, "United Way literally unites people."

United Way is not the only organization that has touched Monica's heart. For many years, Monica ran in the Susan G. Komen's Race for the Cure. She continued to run in the race and volunteer for the organization until the year she herself was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her reaction to this cancer is a story that truly touched my heart. A very religious woman, Monica did not let fear cripple her—instead she left everything to God. She prayed, "Thy will be done, O Lord, not mine." "If you are really strong in your faith, then you don't worry about the outcome", she said. The outcome is obvious—Monica remains to this day a strong, dedicated woman. She is both an inspiration and a role model. Monica will be retiring in July, but I know her character, personality and spirit will not let her keep still. I wish her the very best in her future endeavors, and may we continue to hear of her excellent work for her community. God Bless.

□ 1020

IN RECOGNITION OF MONICA KAUFMAN PEARSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Speaker, you will notice that Members from Georgia on both sides of the aisle have taken the opportunity this morning during Special Orders time to recognize Monica Kaufman.

We just heard from our colleague, Representative DAVID SCOTT. I want to commend my friend DAVID SCOTT for organizing this tribute on behalf of one great lady.

I rise today, as well, to recognize Monica Kaufman for her historic and outstanding achievements in broadcast journalism. Atlanta is sad to see her resigning from WSB; but we are very, very proud of her.

For the past 37 years, she has brought Atlanta the news, from her coverage of the 1996 Olympics, to her famous "Monica Kaufman's Closeups" of world leaders and celebrities," to her award-winning work on issues such as the Holocaust and domestic abuse.

As the first woman and African American news anchor in Atlanta, Ms. Kaufman broke both race and gender barriers. She has won more than 30 Southern and local Southern Regional Emmy Awards for talent, reporting, and close-up interviews. Ms. Kaufman has already been named University of Georgia's Broadcaster of the Year in 2001 and the Georgia's Association of Broadcaster of the Year in 2001 and the Georgia Association of Broadcasters 1992 Citizens Broadcaster.

Madam Speaker, I will always remember, however, one evening in July 2002—it was actually November of 2002—when I was first running for Congress. That election night was a very, very close race. It went deep in the night; and finally, at about 11 o'clock, it was news time at WSB. Sure enough, I had to go downstairs and get ready to be interviewed by Monica Kaufman in regard to my race for Congress.

At this point, we were behind. All counties except one had reported, and I was behind. Monica was very sweet and kind to me. She could tell that I was a little nervous and worried and scared. She said, Have you picked up your phone yet to congratulate your opponent on your victory? I said, Monica, I won't do that until the last vote is counted. Shortly after that, I got a phone call telling me congratulations. Finally, those precincts came in, and Dr. GINGREY, from the 11th District in Georgia, was elected.

I always remember Monica Kaufman from that night. I ask Members to recognize the accomplishments of the great Monica Kaufman.

MONICA KAUFMAN PEARSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I am honored to join my colleagues in the Georgia delegation in paying tribute to one of our Nation's most tenured and pre-eminent broadcast television news anchors, Monica Kaufman.

For more than 30 years she served as the Channel 2 "Action News Nightbeat" anchor at WSB-TV in Atlanta where she used her superior media talents to educate, inform, and enlighten millions of viewers about current events that impacted our lives and influenced activities all around the world. Prior to becoming one of Atlanta's most watched and influential television journalists, Monica worked as a reporter at the Louisville Times and at WHAS-TV in Kentucky.

Madam Speaker, Monica is an award-winning journalist who has been recognized on numerous occasions for her outstanding professional abilities and

remarkable occupational achievements. However, she is much more than just an accomplished journalist. She is a loving wife, mother, mentor, friend, and role model to me.

I would like to extend our personal congratulations to Monica Pearson and her family as they celebrate and reflect upon her outstanding career as one of our Nation's leading broadcast journalists and admired media personalities. Kentucky may have named her, but Georgia claimed her, and we are all better because she came our way.

Congratulations to you, Monica Kaufman Pearson.

CAPTAIN NICK WHITLOCK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor this morning with great sadness and also with great honor to honor the service of one of Georgia's own, Captain Nick Whitlock. On February 18, 2012, at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, Africa, he gave the ultimate sacrifice while returning from a mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Captain Whitlock was born to the proud parents of Jimmy and Clare Whitlock on December 10, 1982. Even at a young age, Nick showed his maturity and that he was full of integrity. In one of his high school assignments, Nick was asked to define a leader. He wrote:

A leader is a person that is in charge of a group, someone that everyone looks up to and wants to be like. A leader is also someone that is willing to complete their goals and give 100 percent no matter what. A leader is willing to stand up for what he believes in even if he is alone. I want to be a leader because I think that is what God has called me to be.

For the young people that might be watching, we're always looking for a hero, and I think that Nick decided in his life that he would be a hero.

Nick lived by his own words, and to say he was a leader was an understatement. He understood that success is achieved through hard work, faith, and dedication, and he lived every day as an opportunity to improve himself and the lives of others.

□ 1030

Nick graduated from Newnan High School in 2001 as an honor graduate and was recognized for his outstanding achievements in both football and baseball. Nick achieved his Eagle Scout rank and strove to use the skills he learned to influence every aspect of his life.

He attended Mercer University, and he caught for the Mercer Bears baseball team. Most notable of Nick's many campus activities were his leadership roles as Mercer ambassador; president of his fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon; and senator-at-large for the student government association. In 2005, Nick

graduated with a bachelor of business administration degree; and in 2011, he went on to earn his master's degree in business administration from the University of Florida.

While studying at Mercer, Nick earned his private pilot's license and was accepted into the United States Air Force in 2006. Nick trained with the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program. In 2008, he received his wings and was assigned to the Air Force Special Operations. He became a member of the 34th Special Operations Squadron, which we have all heard about in the paper and on the news, and was promoted to captain in November of 2010, where he was assigned to the U-28A aircraft.

November proved to be one to celebrate, as Nick married the love of his life, Ashley, the same month as his promotion. Nick spread the happiness he found in both his marriage and life through his involvement with organizations such as Alaska's Healing Hearts, a nonprofit organization enabling disabled military veterans to participate in outdoor activities.

Nick was serving on his fifth deployment in Djibouti, Africa, when an accident occurred while his aircraft was returning from a mission, taking not only his life but three of his fellow comrades. Nick was laid to rest at Forest Lawn Cemetery in his hometown of Newnan, Georgia, following a heartfelt ceremony at First Baptist Church.

Friends of Nick's say he made them proud to be an American and to want to become a better man of God and a better father, better husband, a better son. His wife, Ashley, described Nick as loving, thoughtful, honest, considerate, and generous. He was a true gentleman and a steadfast man of God. They both prayed for God to shape their lives for His purpose so that their blessings would not stop with them but extend to everyone they met.

His parents' love and pride for Nick's unwavering faith, integrity, and intelligence is never ending. They talk often of how, although he was never the smartest, biggest, or fastest, he used every ounce of what he was given to his highest potential. He was physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. In the eyes of his wife, family, and friends, there was no finer man or leader than Nick Whitlock.

I am both honored and proud that a soldier from my district served with such courage and conviction. Nick embodied all the qualities of an ideal husband, son, brother, and friend. He was an extraordinary captain, and America has truly lost one of its finest. I am proud to stand here and thank him for sacrificing his life so that my family and I, and everyone else across this great Nation, can live free.

Joan and I extend our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Nick Whitlock's, and we will never forget the service and sacrifice that he made for our great country.