

difference in her school and hometown of West Tallahatchie High School, Ms. Alkeira Gooch.

Throughout her life, Alkeira says she has been nothing less than determined to succeed and I quote her, "I was only given one life to live, to not take chances, accomplish the impossible, and take advantage of everything that is available to me." You see, sometimes things that are not so good can be great inspirations. Alkeira lives in a community that is limited in resources and opportunities.

So, let me share with you why Alkeira is a student making a difference. In school she is involved in many organizations that reach out to others. She participates in a group that reads to younger children and donates gifts during Christmas. Alkeira is a member of the Student Government Association, Future Business Leaders of America, and the Senior Beta Club. In her evening hours she makes time to tutor other students and volunteers at the local community center. Alkeira's well rounded participation has given her the experience that will help her become that future leader and pediatrician she wants to be.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Alkeira Gooch for her current active role as a student making a difference.

RECOGNIZING CHRIS WALLS

HON. STEVE STIVERS

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chris Walls, one of my constituents from Wilmington, Ohio. Mr. Walls pulled his community together to help the 33,000 victims from the May 2013 tornadoes in Oklahoma.

Many of those affected by the tornadoes lost their homes and all of their possessions. When Mr. Walls found out about the extensive damage done, it reminded him of the time his home was ruined by a fire. Mr. Walls remembered how much he appreciated the support of his community when he lost so much and felt it was his job to help the tornado victims.

The way Mr. Walls felt he could best help the victims was by starting a drive for needed supplies. He called upon our community in Wilmington and opened up his tattoo shop as a drop-off point for the drive. The Wilmington community donated many supplies including bandages, bottled water and toothpaste. Then, on June 10, 2013, Mr. Walls and his wife drove out to Oklahoma to personally deliver supplies to the tornado victims.

I am very thankful for Chris Walls' hard work in helping the people of Moore, Oklahoma. I ask that all Members of Congress stand with me to recognize Mr. Walls and the people of Wilmington, Ohio, for their acts of selflessness and kindness.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took of-

fice, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,738,580,905,836.39. We've added \$6,111,703,856,923.31 to our debt in 4 and a half years. This is \$6 trillion in debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

RECOGNIZING EVERGREEN ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Evergreen Academy Middle School in Chicago, Illinois, for being named to the list of top performing middle grades schools in the country by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform.

Evergreen Academy represents one of only 103 middle grades schools from around the United States that were recognized as a "School to Watch" by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. To achieve this honor, Evergreen Academy had to prove that they are academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable. They are among the best schools in the country in those regards, and I am glad to see these schools recognized for their excellence.

Achieving such a high level of performance is not easy. Schools must establish an educational culture that creates structures, norms, and organizational support to sustain their improving trend toward excellence. Principal Marian L. Strok has demonstrated a sense of purpose that drives her decision making. Further, this performance could not be possible without teachers who work tirelessly for their students and communities, and administrators who work to provide a professional atmosphere to let teachers do what they do best. This hard work and dedication has created an exemplary learning atmosphere.

This achievement is made possible through the hard work and dedication by the students, and the loving guidance by their parents and guardians. The students' work ethic and the values that their parents have instilled within them made this award attainable.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the outstanding faculty and students at Evergreen Academy Middle School, and congratulating them for being recognized as one of the outstanding middle grades schools in the country. May they continue to exhibit excellence and create one of the best learning environments in the country for our future leaders.

HONORING MAYOR WILLIE JAMES JONES

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable civil servant, Mayor Willie James Jones. The Honorable Mayor Willie J. Jones is a resident of

Coahoma, Mississippi and he is affectionately known to many as Mayor W.J. Jones.

He has devoted his entire adult life providing selfless service, energy and resources to ensure that others fare well. When Mayor Jones initially came to the tiny town of Coahoma, Mississippi, many of its residents lived in two room shacks with no indoor plumbing. As Mayor of the town of Coahoma since 1981, and one of the longest running tenures in the State of Mississippi, he has launched multiple efforts to improve the living conditions of its residents and revitalize the community. Under his leadership and armed with the motto of "Go and Grow", the community began to change. Today, with a cadre consisting of concerned World Vision, Habitat for Humanity, and volunteer residents, over half the town's families now live in HUD approved two, three, or four bedroom homes.

Mayor Jones skillfully led a coalition composed of Coahoma Utilities, Coahoma Community Development Corporation, and Coahoma Habitat for Humanity to pull the community together. In addition, through Mayor Jones' lobbying efforts, the Town of Coahoma has been the beneficiary of federal funding for a sewage system to replace open sewers and a well and water tank to improve its drinking supply. Because of these efforts, Mayor Jones has been honored by the Mississippi Conference of Black Mayors.

In addition to improving the living conditions of the town, Mayor Jones has a dedicated interest in the education of all. After graduating Rust College in 1954 and serving two years in the U.S. Army, Mayor Jones and his wife, Vivian Virginia Moore, moved to the Mississippi Delta and worked in the Coahoma County School system for 40 years before retiring in 1996. He has a vested interest in education. In 1956, he was among those fighting for equal salaries for all educators, for equal school funding and for equal treatment in use of public facilities.

While serving as principal of Hull Elementary and Jonestown Middle Schools he saw that all students were clothed and fed in addition to receiving an education. For his contributions toward making the 1966 merger of the National Education Association (NEA) and the Black American Teachers Association a success, Jones was recognized in 2006 at the 40 Year Merger Anniversary Celebration. On the college level he promotes access to higher education for students of all ethnicities. He received the 1990 Rust College Alumnus of the Year and has received annual Outstanding Contribution Appreciation Awards at his alma mater since 1997.

In 1996, as an educator, human and civil rights activist, Jones was among only a dozen veteran educators recognized nationwide and honored by the National Education Association at its annual Human and Civil Rights dinner. He was presented the H. Council Trenholm Memorial Award for his efforts to free the education system of inequities based on race and his leadership in advancing intergroup understanding within the education profession. On the state level the Mississippi Association of Educators (MAE) has presented him with the Lifetime Achievement Award, the MAE Humanized Education Award and the 1996 Member of the Year Award.

Through the years as a community servant, Mayor Jones has served as Chairman of Diversified March of Dimes, Chairman and Member of the Board of Directors of Coahoma Opportunities, Inc., President of Third District Teachers Association and North Delta Uniserv-MAE, and Representative of the Board Scouts of America. He is also affiliated with NAACP; Tri-County Workforce Alliance Board of Directors, Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Workers, Inc., local, state and national education associations, the Mississippi Conference of Black Mayors, the National Conference of Black Mayors, the Mississippi Municipal League, and the Mississippi Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials.

Despite his many achievements, affiliations and recognition, Mayor Jones' focus remains the town of Coahoma. He is currently working on a drainage and street improvement project with federal and state support. He believes that the largest room in the world is the room of improvement and is continuously seeking ways and funds to improve the quality of life for his citizens in all areas—educationally, economically and socially.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mayor W.J. Jones for his dedication to serving others.

ACCURACY IN MEDICARE PHYSICIAN PAYMENT ACT OF 2013

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Accuracy in Medicare Physician Payment Act of 2013. This bill will give the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) important tools and resources to continue alleviating our dire shortage of primary care physicians. As Congress tries to come together around the challenges of how to repeal and replace the broken Sustainable Growth Rate formula, I want to make sure that we do not neglect the Medicare physician fee schedule and the impact it has on our physician workforce.

It is no mystery that relatively depressed salaries are driving new doctors away from primary-care fields like family medicine and pediatrics and into more lucrative specialties and subspecialties like radiology and orthopedic surgery. I don't begrudge anyone for making that choice; when I graduated from medical school 50 years ago I could not have fathomed being loaded down with six figures of medical school debt. And to be sure, we need talented specialists. But we have a stubbornly small proportion of primary care doctors—just over 30 percent, when most experts agree that 50 percent is the “sweet spot” in terms of maximizing quality and minimizing cost.

I am proud that Congress gave primary care a shot in the arm in the Affordable Care Act, under which Medicaid pays higher Medicare rates for primary care through 2015, and Medicare makes quarterly incentive payments to primary care physicians through 2017. The ACA also expanded the National Health Service Corps, which eases the steep cost of medical education for doctors and allied health practitioners willing to practice in an under-

served area after graduation. These are meaningful steps, but to make more enduring progress in this area, I believe that Medicare must repair structural inaccuracies in the Medicare physician fee schedule that have eroded the value of primary care. Simply put, Medicare contributes to this imbalance by underpaying for the critical yet undervalued job of managing complex patients with multiple chronic conditions and keeping them out of the emergency room and hospital.

A major obstacle to reform is Medicare's continued reliance on a committee of mostly specialist physicians to help set payment rates for the 7,400 services on the Medicare physician fee schedule. Since 1991, Medicare has outsourced its work of appraising the value of these services to the AMA's Relative Value Scale Update Committee (RUC)—a 31-member panel of physicians who decide how services should be valued and updated. Only a handful of the 31 committee members perform primary care. The RUC meets in private and provides limited release of the minutes of its proceedings. In formulating its recommendations, the RUC also relies heavily on anecdotal and self-serving surveys, rather than forensic evidence.

CMS has begun to update misvalued codes in the fee schedule, but it needs more muscle and resources to do the job. This bill would establish a panel of independent experts within CMS that would identify the distortions in the fee schedule and develop evidence to justify more accurate updates. Medicare could continue to request work from the RUC, but the expert panel would both initiate such requests and review RUC's work product. The panel members would not have a direct interest in the fee schedule, and would include beneficiary representatives. It would be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, which requires advisory bodies to hold open meetings and publish the minutes of such meetings.

In addition to payment accuracy and fairness, this is also about reining in a conflict of interest. After looking at this for several years I believe that we give the physician specialty societies, through the RUC, an undue influence on their own payments. In no other area—whether it be hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, or any other setting—does Medicare ask the providers to play such an active role in setting their own reimbursement amounts. Medicare certainly needs clinical expertise to evaluate the resources necessary to perform physician services but should not look to an outside organization whose members directly benefit from the fee schedule to apportion some \$70 billion in annual public spending, without some checks and balances. No matter how well-intentioned, such a system contains structural biases that need safeguards to prevent abuse.

Medicare is not only one of America's most important social insurance programs and a bulwark of the middle class, it also establishes economic incentives that ripple through all of health care and contribute to our shortage of primary care physicians. As we continue to pursue a permanent doc fix, let's also talk about how we will use Medicare to incentivize the appropriate mix of physicians in the workforce to serve beneficiaries and the public health.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district and missed the votes on Tuesday, June 25, 2013 and Wednesday, June 26, 2013.

Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 287, H.R. 2383—To designate the new Interstate Route 70 bridge over the Mississippi River connecting St. Louis, Missouri, and southwestern Illinois as the “Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge”;

“Yea” on rollcall No. 288, H.R. 1092—To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the “Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center”;

“No” on rollcall No. 289, Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 1613, H.R. 2231, and H.R. 2410—Democrats are urged to vote no on the Previous Question so that Mr. HASTINGS of Florida can offer his amendment to the Rule, which allows for Mr. COURTNEY of Connecticut's bill, H.R. 1595—Student Loan Relief Act of 2013, to be considered under an open Rule. H.R. 1595 would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965, extending the freeze on subsidized student loan interest rates for two years, which would prevent rates from doubling from 3.4% to 6.8% on July 1. Immediate action is necessary to protect college students and families, given the short time remaining before rates double. Republicans should not allow the House to go into its 8th full week of recess this year without addressing this critical issue with a bipartisan solution that can become law; and

“No” on rollcall No. 290, H. Res. 274—Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 1613—Outer Continental Shelf Transboundary Hydrocarbon Agreements Authorization Act, H.R. 2231—Offshore Energy and Jobs Act, and H.R. 2410—Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014.

HONORING AURELIO HURTADO OF ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 27, 2013

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Aurelio Hurtado of St. Helena, California, on the occasion of his retirement as the Director of the Farmworker Services Program for California Human Development, after 45 years of advocacy work.

Mr. Hurtado left his small town of Jerez, Mexico in 1955 to work in the agricultural fields of Texas and New Mexico. When he moved to Northern California to work in the vineyards of St. Helena, Mr. Hurtado fell in love with the region and decided to make it his home. It was a conference with farmworker advocate Cesar Chavez that pushed Mr. Hurtado to dedicate his life to improving educational, social, and economic aspects of the Napa Valley community.