

Medicare, one of the most popular and successful social insurance programs in the history of the United States.

When President Lyndon Johnson signed it into law on July 30, 1965, less than 50 percent of seniors had health insurance and 35 percent lived in poverty.

Now, over 52.4 million Americans are given health care benefits regardless of their condition or income.

This includes over 40 million Americans age 65 or above and 9 million disabled Americans receiving Social Security benefits.

Medicare saves lives and money, and here is why.

Since its creation Medicare has provided comprehensive health care coverage for the senior citizens who cannot afford it.

Without Medicare, most seniors would not have insurance and be unable to afford health care due to high costs or pre-existing conditions.

It provides 37 million seniors prescription drug coverage and offers free preventive health screenings, including mammograms, diabetes, or cancer screenings now thanks to the Affordable Care Act.

Medicare is not welfare. It is a cost-effective social program that works.

In combination with the Affordable Care Act, I believe that Medicare's future is even brighter.

These improved benefits include incentives for doctors and health care providers to coordinate more smoothly, reduce waste and fraud, and lower out of pocket costs for beneficiaries.

Forty-nine years after its inception, the program continues to do its job and I hope that we can continue to support it.

IMMIGRATION

HON. GLENN THOMPSON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the situation on our southern border and the influx of unaccompanied migrant children is both tragic and alarming.

As the House and Senate debate this matter, it's important for us to recognize several areas of discussion that demand our attention.

To start, Mr. Speaker, we know this influx has been building for some time and that over the last several months it has grown at an even faster pace.

Before 2009, the flow of unaccompanied children attempting to cross the border was less than 10,000 per year.

These numbers have increased dramatically over the last few years. While recent estimates over the past month appear to indicate the flow is subsiding, we remain on pace to exceed 90,000 children for 2014.

We also know that more than 90 percent of all these children come from just three countries—El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

While economic conditions in this region have been poor for quite some time, they have not significantly changed in the last few years.

We also know that a law passed in 2008 with the best of intentions—the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthor-

ization—is making it more difficult to return unaccompanied children to their families.

Unlike illegal immigrants from Mexico, who are required by law to be processed and promptly returned home, the 2008 law guarantees minors from these countries a court date and mandates extensive assistance for temporary relocation as they wait out their pending appeal.

We also know that a large number of these individuals evade attending these proceedings, and that ultimately, few minors are sent home. In fact, most are able to stay for years, and a large number remain permanently.

According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement data, only 1,669 children were deported in 2013 despite more than 26,000 apprehensions.

These statistics are stunning, Mr. Speaker. There is no wonder that according to interviews conducted by the Department of Homeland Security that more than 90 percent of these children expect they will be able to stay in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, what's even more concerning is how many of the Obama Administration's policies have not helped the current crisis.

For example, the President's 2012 policy for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals gives these families hope that they might receive some sort of amnesty. This policy not only is detrimental to the rule of law and an overreach of executive authority, but it also sends the wrong signal.

Mr. Speaker, all of this is a stark reminder of just how flawed the President and Senate's immigration reform bill is. Granting amnesty to 11 million illegal immigrants would merely serve to reinforce the perceptions that if you come to the U.S. illegally you will be rewarded—and not only with a hearing, but full legalization. This does not help the current situation, to say the least.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, billions in new spending as the President has requested will not reverse the perceptions of a lenient enforcement environment in the U.S.

Alternatively, what we do know is that this administration—and every administration—must do more to secure the border.

What we do know, Mr. Speaker, is that we must do more to stem this migration influx, which should include changes to the 2008 trafficking law.

What we do know, Mr. Speaker, is that we must do more to leverage our relations with Central America to support the expedited return of these children in a humane fashion.

What we do know Mr. Speaker, is that we need the White House to enforce the laws, better secure our border, and to put aside political games and actually start working with Congress in a bipartisan manner.

HONORING ISAAC PALMER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable person, Mr. Isaac Palmer.

Mr. Isaac Palmer was born on May 23, 1914 in Sharkey County, Mississippi, the oldest of nine children born to the late Reverend

Littleton and Frances Nathaniel Palmer. Mr. Palmer was married to the late Vera Lee Bell Palmer for over 50 years. He has eight children: Betty, Geraldine, Odell, Isaac Lavelle, Nina, Patricia, David (deceased) and Fred (deceased).

Mr. Palmer wanted to attend school badly; but, he had to leave school when he was twelve years old, in the 6th grade, to work on the farm and help provide for his younger sisters and brothers. However, he didn't let this stop him. He learned to read, write and speak more fluently by studying the Holy Bible. Mr. Palmer was a "jack of all trades", doing things like driving tractors, farming, welding and being a mechanic, just to name a few.

At an early age, Mr. Palmer accepted Christ as his Savior. He was an active member of New Hope Baptist Church in Blanton, Mississippi, where he served as Senior Deacon and Superintendent of the Sunday school for many years. During this time, he led many children, friends and acquaintances to Christ. He has been and remains a laborer for Christ for more than 85 years.

Though Mr. Palmer only had a 6th grade education, he remains passionate about helping and encouraging his children and other young people to get as much education as possible. To help out, he would drive his own children to and from Alcorn and Jackson State Universities, as well as their friends who lived in the area (free of charge), after working all day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Isaac Palmer for his dedication to serving and giving back to his family and community.

STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill to amend section 218 of the Social Security Act to allow for the governments of Guam and American Samoa to enter into voluntary agreements for Social Security and Medicare coverage for their local government employees. This bill provides parity to Guam and American Samoa with each of the 50 states and other territories.

Section 218 of the Social Security Act authorizes the Social Security Administration and State governments to enter into voluntary agreements to provide Social Security and Medicare Hospital Insurance (HI) or Medicare HI-only coverage for State and local government employees. Under the current statute, the governments of the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are eligible to enter into these agreements with the Social Security Administration; however the District of Columbia, Guam, and American Samoa are specifically excluded from the definition of "State" for this section of the law. All 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have entered into a Section 218 agreement to cover some or all of their government employees.

Guam and American Samoa's exclusion from this section prevents our local governments from entering into a similar agreement with the Social Security Administration. It prevents government employees in Guam from receiving

Social Security benefits similar to what is provided to private sector employees on Guam who contribute to Social Security. The Guam Legislature unanimously passed a resolution requesting for me to introduce legislation that would remove Guam from the exclusion of the definition of "State" for Section 218. The Guam Legislature wishes to provide the government of Guam with the opportunity to enter into a Section 218 agreement to have their employees covered under Social Security. They have identified a local funding source to begin contributions to the Social Security Trust Fund.

In closing, I urge support for this bill to rectify this inequity and provide government employees in Guam and American Samoa an equal opportunity to contribute into Social Security. I thank Congressman FALCOMA for cosponsoring this bill, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to advance this legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was called away yesterday, July 29, 2014, for an important meeting along with local officials at Southwest Key, a shelter in my district for youth that crossed the border illegally. I would like to submit my votes on the matters considered by the House in my absence.

For rollcall vote No. 458, ordering the previous questions on H. Res. 693—the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4315—21st Century Endangered Species Transparency Act, I would have voted "yea."

For rollcall vote No. 459 on adoption of H. Res. 693—the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4315—21st Century Endangered Species Transparency Act, I would have voted "yea."

For rollcall vote No. 460 on Amendment No. 2 by Rep. DeFAZIO (D-OR) to exclude scientific information published solely in internal Interior Department publications from the definition of "best available science," I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote No. 461 on Amendment No. 3 by Rep. HOLT (D-NJ) to strike a provision which includes all data submitted by State, County or Tribal governments as "best available science," I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote No. 462 on Rep. KIRKPATRICK (D-AZ) Motion to Recommit H.R. 4315 with instructions, I would have voted "nay."

For rollcall vote No. 463 on passage of H.R. 4315—21st Century Endangered Species Transparency Act, I would have voted "yea."

For rollcall vote No. 464 on H.R. 4809 to reauthorize the Defense Production Act, to improve the Defense Production Act Committee, I would have voted "yea."

RAISING AWARENESS OF HEPATITIS C AND FORGING A PATH TO ITS ERADICATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize The Second Annual African American Hepatitis C Awareness Action Day which was held on Friday, July 25, 2014. Hepatitis C is a deadly and contagious viral disease that attacks the liver and kills thousands of Americans each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 3.2 million people in the United States have chronic Hepatitis C virus infection, many of them unknowingly in the absence of symptoms. African-Americans have been disproportionately afflicted by the Hepatitis C virus more than any other ethnic group, representing an estimated 22 percent of chronic Hepatitis C cases in the United States.

The National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc. (NBLCA) has played a tremendous role in raising awareness by organizing the African American Hepatitis C Awareness Action Day. HIV infected persons are more susceptible to contracting the Hepatitis C virus, thus it is critical that people at risk are made aware in order to prolong a quality life. NBLCA does the community and its residents an exceptional service, surpassing its mission of educating African-Americans on means to counteract HIV/AIDS and other health disparities across the nation.

NBLCA has serviced thousands of organizations through technical assistance, development, and public policy. Their actions have garnished over \$2 billion in federal funding for HIV/AIDS, formulating the first programs existing in the black community to address the problems caused by the HIV/AIDS virus. Furthermore, NBLCA continues to maintain chief consultant positions on various health related issues in numerous national organizations. They remain partners with the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Association of Black Social Workers, and the National Caucus of Black State Legislators, totaling over 500 black state officials being represented by the organization. NBLCA is also a prominent partner of the National Baptist Ministers' Convention, which represents 8.2 million African Americans. Internationally, this well-accomplished organization has served as an advisor on HIV/AIDS related issues to the United Nations, Gabon, Central African Republic, Uganda, The Bahamas, and others.

During this week, NBLCA has partnered with health care organizations and providers to provide communities with free screening services and information on behaviors associated with contracting the Hepatitis C virus. This initiative will allow many people who are unknowingly infected with the Hepatitis C virus to receive treatment before the virus causes fatal conditions such as liver cancer or cirrhosis. With the establishment of alliances with community leaders, clergy, and public officials across the nation, NBLCA has truly become a remarkable asset inspiring a much needed element of change within our communities.

Fortunately for millions across the world suffering from this chronic disease, an effective and curative treatment for the Hepatitis C

virus, Solvadi, has been developed by the U.S. based pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences, Inc. However, it is disappointing that the high cost of Solvadi, \$84,000 for a 12-week treatment, may leave the drug inaccessible to many Americans reliant on Medicaid. State Governments and health insurers in the U.S. will be challenged as they seek to provide this curative treatment to a large population of beneficiaries who otherwise could not afford it. Solvadi is truly a triumph in modern medicine but if it cannot be made affordable to all those in need of treatment, it would certainly fail to serve its purpose. It is especially disheartening to learn that Gilead has offered to supply its ground breaking drug to foreign countries at up to a 99 percent discount of the price within the United States. Hepatitis C is a contagious chronic disease that often requires decades of treatment and expensive organ transplant procedures. If made affordable, Solvadi could save our country's health care system indefinite costs.

We are in the midst of a golden opportunity to rid the world of a disease that has claimed the lives of countless people. As evolution continues to give rise to new disease that may plague future generations, we must make a fervent national commitment to eliminating disease and ensuring the health of our citizens as we have in the past against diseases such as polio and smallpox. I am glad we have organizations such as the NBLCA, who is fighting the good fight on the grassroots level. It would be a great triumph for humanity and modern medicine to speak of Hepatitis C as a disease of the past.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in raising awareness of such a debilitating disease and support appropriations that grant funding to nonprofit organizations like the NBLCA across our Great Nation. These talented organizations do such a tremendous job saving so many lives.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF KEVIN LEO OSWALD

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding member of the Central Florida community, Mr. Kevin Oswald. Oswald was recently awarded the Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA) Air Traffic Controller of the Year Award.

As a controller, Oswald has seen the Kissimmee Gateway Airport grow and expand from a small non-automated facility to a control tower with Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS) radar, touch screen communications and FAA flight data input/output (FDIO) equipment. He has been an integral player in the success of the Kissimmee Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) in achieving over 2.3 million operations without an operational error.

An excellent example of Mr. Oswald's controller abilities occurred on December 19, 2013, when he was working as controller at the Kissimmee ATCT. He observed a Beechcraft airplane that had been cleared for landing and was over the approach end of runway 15 without the landing gear extended.