more proud to say I am a Cardinals fan. Thank you and congratulations Mark McGwire.

FIXING THE YEAR 2000 COMPUTER PROBLEM

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON
OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, August 26, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

FIXING THE YEAR 2000 COMPUTER PROBLEM

Much has been written in recent months about the so-called Year 2000 computer problem. The difficulty arises because the computer software coded to mark the years uses only two digits. If the appropriate adjustments are not made when New Years 2000 rolls around, many of these systems will jump back to the year 1900, causing disruptions in government and private sector operations, here and abroad.

Not many people talk to me about their fears of chaos in the world's computer systems in the year 2000. I suspect that most people don't take those fears too seriously and simply believe that the technicians can solve it. But with the year 2000 now only about five hundred days away, it has become clear that the United States needs to move more quickly to address the problem. Federal and state governments as well as businesses are making progress, but more needs to be done if we are to avoid significant disruptions in our economy.

THE PROBLEM

The Year 2000 problem, also known as Y2K or the Millennium bug, has become an important issue in the past few years. The cause of the concern is that many computers store dates using two-digit numbers rather than four: 98 for 1998 and 00 for 2000. This makes 2000 indistinguishable from 1900, causing date sensitive systems to malfunction or stop working completely. Government agencies, private sector businesses, and individuals all face significant problems if their computer systems are not Y2K compliant. The breakdowns could be minor, but they could also disable air traffic control systems, financial networks, power grids, hospitals, home appliances and many other computer systems.

The Year 2000 problem can be fixed by the time-consuming and costly process of checking each program for potential errors. Millions of lines of software code must be renovated for every computer system. In addition, billions of embedded chips currently in use must be inspected for Y2K compliance, and an estimated 1–5% of those chips will probably have to be replaced. No universal solution can be created to fix each system, and nobody knows how much it will cost to solve the problem. One estimate is that U.S. businesses will spend $50–300 billion and that the U.S. government will have to spend $5–30 billion to fix its computers. The worldwide bill for this massive repair effort may come between $300–600 billion. Correcting the problem will be further complicated by the fact that computer systems are increasingly interconnected—so that even if, for example, a major business fixes its computers, those very systems could break down as they interact with customers, clients and suppliers whose systems have not been fixed.

GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSE

The federal government has taken an active role in Y2K repairs for its own systems.

Federal agencies maintain many computer systems that manage large databases, conduct electronic monetary transactions, and control numerous interactions with other computer systems. The primary focus is to fix all of the 7,300 "mission-critical" systems necessary to continue these activities. A recent report concluded that 55% of the repair work is complete, but progress varies greatly by agency. The Social Security Administration expects to be ready for the year 2000 by January 1999 to ensure that Social Security checks continue to go out on time. Other agencies are expected to be on a tight schedule to meet the year 2000 deadline, and still others will probably not make it.

State and local governments are generally acting more slowly in response to the Y2K problem. Some states have begun planning Y2K conversions, but last year only 19 were beginning to implement the plans. Many localities are not emphasizing Y2K repairs, either for a lack of resources or awareness. Experts warn that state and local computer systems, even if repaired, may not be compatible with federal systems or may contaminate Y2K compliant systems with non-Y2K compliant data. In 1997, state and federal officials met to develop a set of standard practices to minimize risks involved in intergovernmental data exchanges. Several local government associations have also launched an awareness campaign to aid lagging localities.

PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSE

Businesses will also have to become Y2K compliant if they are to avoid disruptions in their operations and transactions with governments and other private entities. The federal government is working actively with certain critical industries, including transportation, communications, health care, and financial institutions, to meet government standards in Y2K compliance. The Federal Reserve Board is preparing for the worst case scenario but is expecting most major banks to be Y2K compliant by the new millennium.

Current estimates suggest that 85% of industrial software will be fixed or replaced by the year 2000, at a total cost of at least $300 billion. Congress is considering several measures to help the private sector address the Y2K problem. One bill seeks to promote open sharing of information about Y2K solutions by protecting those businesses that share information in good faith from lawsuits. Another measure would seek to limit the liability that a company can face if its products are not year 2000 compliant.

EFFECT ON PRIVATE CITIZENS

The Y2K problem also may present difficulties for the average citizen. Many electronic devices, including automobiles, cameras, televisions, and cellular phones, are not expected to cause problems. There may, however, be problems, with fax machines, pagers, telephones, video recorders, and especially personal computers. The Y2K compatibility of personal computer software varies by the program, so consumers are advised to call the manufacturer to find out about specific programs and insist on in-store tests when purchasing new software. Experts also suggest that consumers keep accurate records of finances and investments in the event that a computer error occurs at your bank or the IRS.

CONCLUSION

The federal government has been slow to recognize the seriousness of the problem. Initial warnings came in 1989 that the world was headed for a computer crisis, but it was not until the mid-1990s, after much prompting from Congress, that many federal agencies began to move, first from an awareness of the problem, then to an assessment of it,

and now to the correction of it. The federal government will not be able to guarantee that every computer can be fixed on time, but it is beginning to manage the risks. The government and industry have many improvements to make before the year 2000. While the task is large and tedious, our computers must be Y2K compliant for the electronics aspects of life to continue as normal.

WHY WE SHOULD QUESTION HOSPITAL HOME HEALTH REFERRALS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 1998

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, on August 6, the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee held a hearing on the problems facing home health agencies because of payment changes made in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

In theory, for good and honest agencies, the BBA should not have created problems. It simply asks home health agencies (HHAs) to practice the type of care they practiced in 1994, before many HHAs greatly increased their number of visits per patient and their costs per visit. The theory assumed, of course, that HHAs are serving the same kind of patients they received in 1994.

But between 1990 and 1996, the number of HHAs owned by hospitals nearly doubled, and today, about half the nation's hospitals own HHAs.

So what, you say? At the August 6 hearing, one independent HHA testified, saying what several HHAs have told me privately:

As a freestanding agency, Great Rivers Home Care receives few referrals from hospitals since most have their own home health agencies. Our experience is that the hospitals refer the short term, less complex cases to their own agencies and the sicker, more costly, long term patients are then cared for by agencies like ours.

I do not know the quality of care provided by Great Rivers, but I do know they dared say what others are only saying privately. Before we casually throw more money at the home health sector, we should ask whether there is a self-referral abuse that is causing serious distortions in this part of Medicare.

TRIBUTE TO THE WOODLAKE GOT-A-JOB SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 1998

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Woodlake Got-A-Job Summer Youth Employment Program for its commitment and dedication to the lives of youth throughout Southeastern Tulare County. The Got-A-Job Summer Youth Employment Program provides a valuable learning experience for youth in developing job skills for their future.

The Got-A-Job Summer Youth Employment Program is funded and directed by Community Services and Employment Training Incorporated. Woodlake Got-A-Job has taken a

leading role in shaping positive values in young people's lives. Many large and small businesses of Southeastern Tulare County have met a vital community need by offering to employ Woodlake Got-A-Job youth in a variety of work opportunity programs. The community of Woodlake participates by donating supplies and money to the Got-A-Job Program in support of their youth.

The Woodlake Got-A-Job Summer Youth Employment Program offers job skills training and confidence building exercises to teenagers. The guidance and teachings offered by this organization improves the economic health of the community and fosters a positive work ethic in tomorrow's leaders.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I pay tribute to the Woodlake Got-A-Job Summer Youth Employment Program. The Got-A-Job Summer Youth Program's commitment and dedication to the youth of Southeastern Tulare County is commendable. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing the Woodlake Got-A-Job Program many more years of success.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES J. MANCINI

HON. JIM SAXTON
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 9, 1998

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great community leader and close friend, James J. Mancini of Long Beach Township. On Friday, September 11, 1998, some of us will "roast" Jim by poking fun at some of his more colorful characteristics. But, make no mistake, when it comes down to representing the people of Ocean County, Jim Mancini is very serious, very sincere, and very successful.

First elected to the Ocean County Board of Freeholders in 1982, Jim has proved to be a strong advocate of senior citizens, veterans and the disabled, and has improved transportation programs and library services.

With the largest senior population in the State, Freeholder Mancini, who also is the long-time Mayor of Long Beach Township, serves as the Chairman of the Ocean County Office of Senior Services. A veteran of World War II, Freeholder Mancini's work with the Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau has resulted in an increase in services to the more than 50,000 veterans living in the County. He has received numerous accolades from veterans service organizations for his work, and is a recipient of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Jim became Mayor of the seaside community of Long Beach Township in 1964, and continues in that capacity today. He served as a State Assemblyman in the 1970s, and was Ocean County's Freeholder-Director in 1985, 1991 and 1994.

He is the Chairman of the Board of Southern Ocean County Hospital in Stafford Township, and is the Vice President of the Long Beach Island St. Francis Community Center Corporation.

Jim and his wife, Madeline, have nine adult children: Susan, Joseph, Nancy, Annmarie, Jane, Joan, James, Jr., Madeline and Henry, and 12 grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, On September 11, I will share a few laughs with my good friend, Jim Mancini. But, all jokes aside, Jim Mancini is a leader for whom I have the utmost respect and admiration. Our communities thank him for his commitment to improving our quality of life.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BAKERSFIELD SOUTHWEST BASEBALL TEAM

HON. BILL THOMAS
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 9, 1998

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the achievement of a group of young people in my District. On the weekend of August 22, 1998 in Purcellville, Virginia, the Bakersfield Southwest baseball team completed a remarkable season and captured the 16-year-old Babe Ruth World Series championship.

We are thrilled with the great feats accomplished by this Bakersfield Southwest team. In the past four years, the Southwest team posted an amazing 55–4 record in the Babe Ruth league. In this year's World Series, Bakersfield was undefeated in winning the championship, which included a pair of two-hitters and a masterful shutout in the finale. Bakersfield Southwest also became the first team to win back-to-back World Series championships in their age group! All of this was done in a particularly special year for Babe Ruth baseball since 1998 is the 50th anniversary of the Babe's death.

But amidst all of these accomplishments, I am most proud of this team for the dedication and effort that they put into winning this second title. After winning the first, day in and day out, this team worked to correct mistakes and enhance skills. When I think of the way this team worked together, I remember the words of the immortal Babe Ruth: "The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime." Bakersfield Southwest had its collection of individual stars, but the team worked together, maximizing its many strengths. In all their effort and hard work, they epitomized the great American pastime we call baseball; they worked together, played together, and had fun together. I am sure that the skill and determination exhibited by this team will carry over to make them winners in life as well.

I would like to express my appreciation to Manager Dave Hillis for guiding this team, as well as Coaches Bob Soto, Ben Bradford, Mark Parker, and Ken Miller for all their fine work. Most importantly, I would also like to congratulate Spencer Bailey, Brian Bock, Clint Bradford, Tommy Brast, Travis Hamlin, Tony Hillis, Shaine Jensen, Darrin Levinson, Derick Martin, Ryan Mask, Soctt Mawson, Todd Sachs, Sean Sorrow, Ty Soto, Brent Warren, and Josh Wyrick for an outstanding season and a string of masterful years in the Babe Ruth League. Although I did not dye my hair blonde as was the team's trademark, I, like many others from my District, salute Bakersfield Southwest and thank the team for representing Bakersfield with extreme honor, dignity, and sportsmanship.

IN HONOR OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS
OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, September 9, 1998

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to 62 distinguished citizens of the Eleventh District of Virginia, the members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Urban Search and Rescue Team. Called Virginia Task Force One, this brave team of men and women has served as our humanitarian diplomats to cities in crisis.

On August 7, 1998, the world was rocked by twin explosions. The American Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania were destroyed in tragic, unconscionably cruel bombings that took the lives of innocent East Africans and Americans. As we stared in numb disbelief at news reports that overflowed with heart-wrenching images and constantly rising death counts, Virginia Task Force One was already alerted and preparing for their daunting mission.

Within 12 hours of the bombings, Virginia Task Force One was fully mobilized for deployment to Africa. Less than 24 hours after the explosions, as many of us were still grasping to understand this tragedy, the team was en route from Andrews Air Force Base to Nairobi. Search and rescue technicians, cave-in experts, physicians, paramedics, logisticians, and command and control personnel comprised the 62-member Task Force, led by Battalion Chief Michael Tamillow and retired Deputy Chief James Strickland.

Virginia Task Force One worked tirelessly with search and rescue teams from Kenya and Israel, transforming the chaos of Friday into an orderly and systematic search for any survivors, and for key evidence to piece together the cause of the event. For the first several days of the rescue effort, team members ran two twelve-hour shifts to provide round-the-clock operations. The work was especially dangerous during the night, due to the poor light and danger of shifting debris. After they had gone through the entire debris pile, well ahead of schedule, and it was clear that they would find no more survivors, they ceased nighttime operations. Despite the grueling labor, dangerous conditions, and long hours, the members of the Task Force consistently reported that they were "in good spirits and . . . happy to be contributing to the effort."

Chief Strickland, co-commander of the mission, reported feeling a sense of déjà vû as he surveyed the wreckage in Nairobi. He compared it to the devastation he had observed when the Virginia Task Force assisted rescue efforts in Oklahoma City, after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building. Nairobi was not the first or even the second scene of mass destruction heroically attended by the Fairfax County Team. As one of only two search and rescue task forces in the U.S. trained and authorized for overseas disaster deployment, Virginia Task Force One has been deployed to Armenia and the Philippines, as well as Oklahoma City and Kenya.

The men and women of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Urban Search