

As a Nation, our children are our greatest and most precious resource. We should measure ourselves by how well we equip them to succeed and lead healthy and fulfilling lives. For young people with mental health disorders, we have an obligation to provide the supports and resources they need to make a healthy transition. This bill is a crucial step toward fulfilling that obligation.

# MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHELE BACHMANN**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 24, 2008*

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I must reluctantly rise in opposition to H.R. 6331, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act. While I applaud the House for taking under consideration a bill to address the impending cut to Medicare physician reimbursement payments, H.R. 6331 contains provisions that would rob America's seniors of crucial health care access in the form of funding cuts to Medicare Advantage.

Indeed, H.R. 6331 contains a provision that would reverse the scheduled 10.6 percent payment cut set to take effect on July 1, 2008, a provision I have supported in the past. That being said, the bill also contains deep cuts to Medicare Advantage plans, which millions of seniors depend on to serve their broad health care needs. These cuts, totaling nearly \$50 billion, would place the burden of leadership's failed Medicare reform policies directly on the backs of America's seniors.

To be sure, Medicare Advantage is popular choice for seniors across the Nation. With nearly 10 million Medicare beneficiaries currently enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans, up nearly 60 percent since 2004, it is clear that America's seniors are seeing the benefits of the competition-driven plans. These plans offer greater choice, lower out-of-pocket costs, and expanded service to America's seniors who seek value and quality in their health care coverage.

Specifically, H.R. 6331 would target those beneficiaries who have chosen Private Fee-for-Service, PFFS, plans through Medicare Advantage by requiring PFFS plans to establish costly provider networks if they wish to continue to operate in areas that already have two or more networked plans. This requirement would apply to 96 percent of all counties in the United States, and, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, CBO, disrupt PFFS plans for more than 2 million seniors by 2013. In my State of Minnesota, each of the nearly 73,000 individual Medicare Advantage PFFS plans would be in jeopardy.

Furthermore, it is unfortunate that rather than considering a bill that will remedy the problem at hand, Democrat leadership chose to bring a bill to the floor that has been given a veto threat from the President. Both providers and patients deserve a bill that can be seriously considered for signature into law. This is not a topic on which we should play political games.

Mr. Speaker, America's physicians need Congress to prevent a devastating cut to their

Medicare reimbursement payments. However, the burden of the solution should not be placed on the shoulders of America's seniors, gambling with access to the health coverage on which they rely.

## A PROCLAMATION HONORING 190TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SCROGGSFIELD UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2008*

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, the dedicated people of Scroggsfield United Presbyterian Church celebrate their 190th anniversary; and

Whereas, Scroggsfield United Presbyterian Church was founded in 1818 under the leadership of Rev. Elijah Newton Scroggs; and

Whereas, Scroggsfield United Presbyterian Church still opens its doors for weekly services today; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend the congregation of Scroggsfield United Presbyterian Church for their unwavering commitment, dedication and contributions to their community.

## MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 24, 2008*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, Congress is once again forsaking an opportunity to begin addressing Medicare's long-term fiscal problems. Instead, the legislation before us today, while not without its merits, exacerbates the problems facing Medicare by giving new authority to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), even though CMS's excessive power is a major reason why so many physicians and patients are dissatisfied with the current Medicare system.

One clear indicator of the lack of seriousness with which this issue is being treated is the fact that this bill is coming before us on suspension, a procedure generally used for noncontroversial legislation, such as bills naming Post Offices. This significant Medicare legislation will receive only 40 minutes of debate, and members will have no opportunity to offer amendments.

I certainly recognize the need to make adjustments in physicians' payments. Many physicians are already losing money treating Medicare patients, thanks to CMS's low reimbursements and the cost of having to comply with CMS's numerous rules and regulations. Unless Congress acts, many physicians will simply refuse to see Medicare patients. I think we all agree that driving physicians out of the Medicare program is not the proper way to reform the system.

Therefore, if H.R. 6331 only contained the provisions dealing with the physicians' rate

cut, I would vote for it. However, H.R. 6331 further endangers Medicare's fiscal situation by giving almost \$20 billion in new funds to CMS, and giving CMS new regulatory authority.

Instead of simply pretending we can delay the day of reckoning by giving CMS more money and power, we should be looking for ways to shore up Medicare by making cuts in other, lower priority programs, using those savings to ensure the short-term fiscal stability of Federal entitlement programs while transitioning to a more stable means of providing health care for senior citizens. I have been outspoken on the areas I believe should be subject to deep cuts in order to finance serious entitlement reform that protects those relying on these programs. I will not go into detail on these cuts, although I will observe that today the House Committee on Financial Services is planning to authorize billions of new foreign aid spending, perhaps some of those billions might be better spent reforming the Medicare system.

Congress should also reform the Medicare system by providing Medicare patients more control over their health care than is available under either traditional Medicare or the Medicare Advantage program.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6331 may provide some short-term benefit to Medicare providers, however, it does so by further jeopardizing the long-term fiscal soundness of the Medicare program. Thus, passage of this bill will ultimately damage the very Medicare providers and patients the bill aims to help.

## A TRIBUTE TO JAMES ARTHUR JOHNSON

**HON. ROBERT A. BRADY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2008*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor a man who exemplified the ideal husband, father, and human being to all whose lives he touched. James Arthur Johnson was born and raised in Philadelphia, where he lived his entire life. He graduated from Bok Vocational High School and went on to the Marine Corps, where he honorably served our country.

After serving in the Marine Corps, Officer Johnson continued his life's work in public service with the United States Post Office, followed by an appointment to the All Philadelphia Police Department in September 1957. As a police officer, his detail included the Highway Patrol, 19th Police District, and Narcotics Unit. During his career in the Philadelphia Police Department, Officer Johnson earned the respect of all who knew him. His strong moral fiber, wise counsel, fatherly ways made him a pleasure to encounter.

In 1971, Officer Johnson suffered an injury in the line of duty. Yet, he continued to serve our city from within the Mayor's Office of Information and Complaints. With 23 years of service on the Police Force under his belt, Officer Johnson retired in 1980. He then went on to become the housing site manager for the Philadelphia Housing Authority until he retired in 1990. Even though Officer Johnson entered his second round of retirement, he never gave up his cherished role as a public servant. He

was a well-known member of the Cobbs Creek community, where he was a baseball coach for the Cobbs Creek Cubs, as well as a mentor, Scout leader and surrogate father to many of the community's youth.

Madam Speaker, Officer Johnson's light was extinguished on June 13th, but the light he has shared with others burns ever so brightly. His loving family, friends, and community will miss him very much. I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing the condolences of the House to his family. I hope that they find comfort in the knowledge that his time on Earth was well spent and that he left the world a better place than the one he found.

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HONORING THE LIFE OF GENE  
OCHSENREITER

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**HON. HEATH SHULER**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2008*

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Gene Ochsenreiter, a friend, athlete, and community leader. Mr. Ochsenreiter passed away in February of this year, and was honored at the 50th anniversary of the Western North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame Banquet recently.

Western North Carolina lost a sports giant in February. Mr. Ochsenreiter was the captain of the University of Maryland men's basketball team in 1941, and also ran with the University's track team. He was also the 1/2 mile champion in the Southern Conference and Junior National AAU Championships. In Asheville, he won numerous golf championships at the Country Club of Asheville. In 1988, he was inducted into the Western North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame.

Mr. Ochsenreiter was a leader on and off the court. In 1958, Mr. Ochsenreiter founded the Mountain Amateur Athletic Club in Western North Carolina. Twenty years later in 1978 Mr. Ochsenreiter helped to found the Western North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame to honor western North Carolina high school and college athletes and teams. During his tenure with the WNC Hall, Mr. Ochsenreiter expanded the scope of the Hall to include all sports, as well as the Special Olympics and academics. He was a firm believer that students should put their academics before their sports career, and this was reflected during his time with the WNC Hall of Fame.

Serving on the Asheville City Council and as a one-time mayor of Asheville, Mr. Ochsenreiter's contributions to Western North Carolina are endless.

As a member of the WNC Hall of Fame, I thank Mr. Ochsenreiter for his dedication and commitment to the Hall during his fifty years of service. He will be missed. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Gene Ochsenreiter.

REMEMBERING THE KOREAN WAR  
AND THE U.S.-KOREA FREE  
TRADE AGREEMENT

**HON. VITO FOSSELLA**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2008*

Mr. FOSSELLA. Madam Speaker. Today marked the 58th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. Five years after the Second World War ended in the Pacific, a new conflict erupted, the first major engagement of the forces of communism and the forces of freedom in the Cold War period.

By the time the armistice was signed almost 3 years later, millions of Koreans had been killed, wounded or displaced from their homes, whole towns and villages had been destroyed, and the entire peninsula was plunged into poverty. More than 36,000 American soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen who served in the Korean War lost their lives.

It has been my privilege to represent hundreds of Korean War veterans who live in my district in Brooklyn and Staten Island. I have come to know personally many of these brave and heroic constituents.

Although many of these Korean War veterans are reaching old age, they live vibrant lives, contributing to our community in countless ways. The sacrifices they made across an ocean helped form their characters, which guided them through college and careers, as they raised their families and built their businesses, indeed, as many of them became political and community leaders themselves.

In the years since the Korean War came to a close, South Korean soldiers have fought alongside Americans not only in Korea but in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In fact, South Korea sent the third-largest contingent of armed forces to Iraq among all the countries that have participated in that conflict.

Korea has often been described as an "economic miracle." Fifty years ago, South Korea was an impoverished, Third World country perceived as having few prospects for survival, much less potential for affluence. Today it has the world's 11th-largest economy, known for its high-technology industries. It is the 7th-largest trading partner of the United States.

It is no wonder, therefore, that almost exactly a year ago, on June 30, 2007, negotiators for the United States and the Republic of Korea concluded a Free Trade Agreement that now awaits approval by Congress and the South Korean National Assembly before it is fully implemented.

In a recent report, the U.S. International Trade Commission has forecast that the elimination of tariffs on U.S. goods under the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement would increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the United States by over \$10 billion annually. The agreement will also eliminate regulatory and other non-tariff barriers that have historically restricted access by American farmers, manufacturers, and service providers to the South Korean market.

In the past week, the United States and South Korea signed a protocol regarding the importation of U.S.-originating beef to Korean markets. As anyone who reads the newspaper knows, this issue has been politically volatile in South Korea. U.S. and South Korean trade

negotiators deserve a great deal of credit for their delicate handling of this situation. It is my understanding that American beef exports to Korea will recommence within the next few days.

While the beef import issue seemed to be an obstacle to approval of the Free Trade Agreement, the overall advantages to both our countries that will ensue from the agreement have prevailed. And this is a good thing, a healthy thing for American workers and American consumers, and for Koreans, too.

With growing uncertainty about the health of our economy, it is critically important that we make every effort to spur U.S. economic growth and create new American jobs through securing access to markets in which U.S. farmers and businesses can compete and succeed. The proposed U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement stands to further increase U.S. exports to Korea and will generate new jobs for Americans.

Madam Speaker, it has been nearly six decades since the outbreak of the Korean War and we must "never forget" the sacrifices of our Korean War veterans. As we commemorate this somber occasion, let us look forward to the opportunities the future will bring as the U.S.-Korean friendship and economic partnership is broadened, deepened, and strengthened. The U.S.-Korea relationship deserves to be celebrated, and I ask my colleagues to join in offering their own expressions of support.

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SUNSET MEMORIAL

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**HON. TRENT FRANKS**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 25, 2008*

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I stand once again before this House with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is June 25, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand. That's just today, Madam Speaker. That's more than the number of innocent lives lost on September 11 in this country, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,937 days since the tragedy called Roe v. Wade was first handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of its own children. Some of them, Madam Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over the vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common. First, they were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone, and each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each one of their mothers, whether she realizes it or not, will never be quite the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever. Yet even in the glare of such tragedy, this generation still clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims, those yet unborn.

Madam Speaker, perhaps it's time for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves of why we are really all here. Thomas Jefferson