HIGHLIGHTING COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to community health centers operating in my district which have gone above and beyond just simply being providers of good care but who have also demonstrated a real understanding of the health needs of a community.

Today there are more than 43 million Americans without health insurance. However, despite the staggering numbers of uninsured, a network of health centers in my district have continued to rise to the challenge and provide outstanding care to those uninsured.

Under the tireless leadership of Bill Moorehead, board chairman, and Berneice Mills-Thomas, executive director, the Near North Health Service Corporation provides primary care to women, infants, school age children and their parents who live in medically underserved areas of the City of Chicago.

In addition, Near North operates the Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative. This program seeks out high-risk families via a door-to-door canvass of blighted neighborhoods and the Cabrini Green Housing Development. This program has been credited with reducing the infant mortality rate of the area from 26.6 per 1,000 live births to 12.8 per 1,000 live births.

Healthy Start, Store Smart Moms and Youth Pregnancy Prevention. This program teaches young mothers how to purchase nutritional meals for their children through mobile and satellite clinic programs.

Project Match. This program matches former welfare recipients to real jobs, jobs that provide a real opportunity for families to become totally self-sufficient. Since its inception, Project Match has found jobs for over 800 people who would otherwise still be on public assistance.

Near North Health Services Corporation's record of achievement through its service to the community, City of Chicago, and State of Illinois must be commended for its recent focus on male health.

Another outstanding community health center operating in the City of Chicago is the Erie Family Health Center. Currently undergoing a change in leadership, this community health center is able to serve over 17,000 patients per year in the West Town, Humboldt Park, and Logan Square neighborhoods.

In addition to the excellent primary care services offered at all of the Erie Family sites, Erie Family also administers a wide array of social services to its communities, including the Erie Teen Health Center. This center serves the health needs of at-risk adolescents.

The Erie Integrated Care Program. This is the only bilingual primary care provider serving HIV and HIV/AIDS-infected patients in the City of Chicago.

The Pediatric Care Program in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health. This program services children zero to 21 whose income falls below 180 percent of the Federal poverty line. This program serves those children and young adults who would not otherwise qualify for Medicaid.

Near North and Erie Family represents a small fraction of the good Chicago's community health centers are doing for the city. Daniel Hale Williams Health Center, Mercy Diagnostic, Mount Sinai Family Health Centers, Alivio Medical Center, Mile Square Health Center.

The Sinai Family Health Centers, under the leadership of Michael Savage and many other community health centers in the city and in downstate Illinois provide over 500,000 patients per year with quality cost-effective primary care services. These providers are making a significant difference, and I urge my colleagues to join with me in commending the work of community health centers and to make sure that as we go through the appropriation of monies for the next year that community health centers be high on our list of priorities.

APOLLO EXPLORATION AWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, tonight is a historic night. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that the Apollo 11 lunar landing 30 years ago was one of the most significant events in human history. To me, it is still the most significant single historic event in my lifetime that I recall. In fact, I remember watching it on TV. I was in St. Louis at the time, and it was just a little bit later time than this evening.

The Apollo program not only was and still is one of our most significant technological accomplishments, but also marked the first time that mankind left the planet to explore another celestial body. As Neil Armstrong said just last week, ''The important achievement of Apollo was demonstrating that humanity is not forever chained to this planet. Our visions go rather farther than that, and our opportunities are unlimited.''

The Apollo program demonstrated that it is possible for Americans to accomplish anything if they have a dream and a vision and work to make it come true. Today, as we have more and more technology and ability, we somehow seem to have less and less of that vision that Neil Armstrong talked about. As astronaut Walt Cunningham said, ''Today, we fail not because of our inability to do something; we fail today because of our unwillingness to tackle it in the first place. We are unwilling to take a chance, stick our neck out and go and do some of these things.''

The Apollo astronauts have continued to stand as living monuments to that drive and vision. Many of today's adults were not even born at the time of the Apollo landings, even though they and their children hold the potential to be the generation that first steps foot on Mars. The vision is still a living vision, however, because it is rekindled by the Apollo astronauts who continue to bear witness to the possibility of making even seemingly outlandish dreams come into reality.

Just last week, however, we had another sad reminder of just how precious these men are with the death of Apollo 12 astronaut Pete Conrad, who was laid to rest yesterday in Arlington National Cemetery. Four of the twelve men to have set foot on the Moon have now passed away. A total of seven of the Apollo astronauts are no longer with us. Just outside this chamber stands the newest addition to Statuary Hall, a statue of Apollo 13 astronaut Jack Swigert of Colorado, who was elected to the House but was never able to serve.

Despite the contemporary accolades given to the Apollo astronauts in the 1960s and 1970s, America has never provided a fitting tribute to these men for their bravery and historical accomplishments on behalf of this Nation. Today, I am introducing a bill which would direct NASA to present an Apollo exploration award to each of the Apollo astronauts or their families, all 32, to commemorate their historic and singular contributions to history and to provide a fitting thanks from a grateful Nation.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON), who represents the space coast of Florida, has introduced this legislation with me. It would contain an authentic Moon rock recovered on the Apollo missions by the work of these men.

In my view, there could be no better recognition for these heroes, nor a better way to rekindle the accomplishments of Apollo in the public imagination. The only fitting commemoration for those who have touched the Moon or made that great achievement possible could be a piece of the Moon itself, and such recognition is long overdue.

Let me point out that NASA has recovered more than 2,000 different samples of the Moon in six landings. So the rocks required for the presentation would be a minuscule portion of our total holdings. My bill also maintains careful control over the lunar rocks, preventing them from being sold or transferred to anyone besides the astronaut, his family, or a museum. The lunar material, 80 percent of which has not been researched yet, could be recalled by NASA if needed for scientific research and then promptly returned.

Mr. Speaker, America was founded on the principle of exploration. We have it in our power to continue this great tradition as a spacefaring Nation. I urge

my colleagues to support this legislation to help stimulate the continuation of the vision of Apollo in modern times.

I would hope that this legislation is something that all of us, Republicans and Democrats, House, Senate and the President can agree upon unanimously, and as soon as possible. It would be a fitting closing tribute to this 30th celebration of the Apollo Moon landing.

DEMOCRATIC COALITION UNVEILS ITS TAX CUT PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today the new Democratic coalition, a group of Democrats who have brought our party into line with the real needs of the business community, unveiled our own tax cut plan, and I rise to compare that plan with the Republican plan that was floated over the last 2 to 3 weeks and which the House is likely to address in the next several days.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I think that we will discover that this should not be a bidding war to see who can offer the American people or who can offer the business community the largest tax cut, but rather that the business and investment community should embrace the tax cut package which keeps our economy strong and, at the same time, provides essential tax relief.

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I have been down this road before, but from a long way away. As a CPA and tax attorney in California, I watched the floor of this House as the ERTA bill, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, was passed. And there was celebration in the business community. Lower taxes on capital gains; huge depreciation write-offs. No thought of fiscal responsibility. And I had to tell my clients, this was not the tax policy they should want. Because what we saw was an explosion of deficits, a stock market that performed not near as well as the stock market has performed of late. What we saw was a tax bill that needed to be corrected in 1986 and then again in the early 1990s and again in 1994. What we saw was a tax bill that undermined the economy. The lowest taxes that Ronald Reagan could possibly promise the business and investment community did not lead to the highest after-tax return. Instead, it led to deficits, inflation, high interest rates and unemployment.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Republican tax plan that has been floated recently is ERTA on steroids. It gives us a plan to undermine the economic vitality that we have built over the last several years at great difficulty. $900 billion in tax cuts over the next 10 years, nearly $3 trillion in tax cuts over the following 10 years, exploding tax cuts. What does that mean? It means that everything that we have done in building this economy is under attack.

Yes, they say that these are tax cuts we can afford. But just barely, and just if you believe the most rosy of economic projections. What makes more sense is a fiscally responsible tax cut, for two reasons: First, because by paying down and paying off the debt, we will put ourselves in a position where we can assure the solvency of Social Security and Medicare through the retirement of those of us who are baby boomers. We can turn to today's seniors and tomorrow's seniors and say, ''We have done the fiscally responsible thing in the 1990s and you can be sure Social Security and Medicare will be there.'' Just as importantly, in terms of dealing with the economy for the next 5 and 10 years, we can assure the markets that low interest rates are called for, that the high Dow is justified because we here in Washington continue to have our fiscal house in order.

The tax bill that the New Democrats have put forward is a reasonable one. It is news today that the President has announced that he would be willing to go along with a $290 billion tax cut, $50 billion more than his own proposal. Well, our tax cut comes in at just a little over that, a little over $310 billion. It provides a permanent R&D tax credit. It encompasses the President's plan for aid for school construction. It goes a long way toward eliminating the marriage penalty. It provides for credits for those families that have to deal with the responsibilities of long-term care for those who are elderly and infirm. Finally, it provides for estate tax relief so that only the top 1 percent of Americans will ever have to worry about the estate tax. Finally, the people in my district will not have to prepare long estate planning documents.

Mr. Speaker, we should stand for reasonable and fiscally responsible tax cuts, and that is why I think we should adopt the tax cut plan of the New Democratic Coalition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HUNTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REPUBLICAN BEST AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REYNOLDS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the Republican Conference continues to work on the BEST agenda: B standing for building a strong military; E for excellence in education; S for saving Social Security and Medicare; and T for lowering taxes.

We worked very hard on the military issues this year and we have a strong military. We will be passing this week the military appropriations bills that fund readiness, modernization and quality of life for our troops, including a pay raise.

On education, we have passed the Educational Flexibility Act that takes power away from command-and-control Washington bureaucrats and puts it back to the teacher, puts dollars to the teachers in the classroom and lets teachers realize that it might be a little bit different teaching Johnny how to read in Georgia than it is in Maine or than it is in California. It might be a little bit different in Savannah, Georgia, than it is in Statesboro, Georgia, or Brunswick, Georgia, and it certainly is different there than it is in New York City. This Congress has recognized that difference and said, ''You know what, these teachers are good, they're competent, they're capable, they don't need busybody Washington bureaucrats telling them how to teach their classroom.''

On Social Security, the President of the United States stood where you are, Mr. Speaker, stood in January and said, ''Let's save 62 percent of the Social Security surplus and use it for Social Security.'' Mr. President, my grandmother wants 100 percent of her Social Security surplus and that because of the Republican Congress is what is going to happen and we are going to put that money, Grandma, for you in a lockbox, so that the President and his bureaucrat cronies in Washington cannot spend it on bridges and roads and other things like wars in Kosovo. We are going to save that for your own pension.

And on taxes. I want to talk to you about taxes. Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that just drives me crazy about these people in Washington. They always talk about this money as if it is their money. A couple of weeks ago, I was taking my daughters Betsy and Ann to Kmart because we had to do what lots of middle-class Americans do, we had to make the Kmart shopping run. We bought a bath mat, we bought an ice chest and we bought detergents and we bought a sleeping bag and we bought a new garden hoe. On the way out the door we noticed flip-flops were $2.50 each so we bought a pair of $2.50 flip-flops. The bill came to $32, Mr. Speaker, and I had two 20's in my pocket, I gave it to the cashier and said, ''Here's $40.'' Now, I overpaid $8. Did the cashier say, ''Okay, now I'm going to throw in some magazines and some bubble gums and a couple of more pairs of flip-flops until we take all your money''? No, that is not what happens. They say, you have overpaid for this merchandise, so here is your money back. This is your $8. Put it in your pocket and spend it at another store, save it, do anything you want.

But in Washington, these people say, ''No, no, that's my money.'' That is what has happened. We have overpaid for government, our hard-working 60- and 70-hour-a-week workers have overpaid for their government and these