peer mentoring by high school students about alcohol and drug abuse and traffic safety; teen courts to decide appropriate penalties for other teens who abuse alcohol; community-based prevention programs for pregnant women and highrisk populations; and 100 percent drug and alcohol-free clubs. The programs would be implemented through grants from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Ask Congress to explain why a can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a shot of hard liquor which have the same alcohol content, are not taxed equally. The answer is plain—the beer and wine industries want it that way. Expect them to fight to preserve the enormous tax break they enjoy compared to their counterparts in the distilled liquor industry.

The Senate Finance Committee has just proposed substantially raising the taxes on cigarettes to discourage teenage smoking. The very same reasoning applies to beer and wine. Minors consume more than 1 billion beers each year. Teens are price sensitive because they have less disposable income. By taxing beer and wine substantially less than liquor, we bring the price down and encourage teens to make these the drinks of choice.

Because the Federal excise taxes on liquor are substantially higher than taxes on beer, Congress in sending the message to teens that these drinks are OK and are not as dangerous and addictive. Congress therefore bears a heavy part of the responsibility for the fact that alcohol abuse is the leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults.

Here in the District where there are so many low income and teen drinkers, taxing beer and wine fairly would be an important step in reducing alcohol-related traffic fatalities, accidents and disease. The need here is urgent. The District of Columbia death rate from alcohol is almost three times the rate in Maryland and Virginia—14.4 in the District, compared with 5.8 in Maryland, and 5.7 in Virginia (1994). I am pleased that the District is 1 of 39 States that has enacted impaired driving legislation. The bill I introduce today will take, District of Columbia and the entire country closer to the national goal of reducing alcohol-related fatalities to no more than 11,000 by 2005.

Beer is what America, and especially young, the America, drinks. In 1995, 60.3 percent of all alcohol sold was beer and 11.4 percent was wine. Only 28.4 percent was hard liquor. America is getting drunk on beer and wine. It is time for the taxes on beer and wine to reflect their alcohol content. A can of beer, a 5 ounce glass of wine, a wine cooler, and a shot of vodka are the same thing.

In America today, parents rarely give permission to teens to drink, but Congress does. It is time we withdrew that permission. This bill does just that.

RECOGNITION OF NIKOLA TESLA

HON. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 1997

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the vast accomplishments of an often neglected figure in our Nation's history. A man who strived to fulfill the American dream and in doing so aided in the synthesis of some of the most significant scientific advancements of this century. The man I wish to acknowledge is Mr. Nikola Tesla: a student, an inventor, and a hero of the American industrial revolution.

Nikola Tesla was born on the morning of July 10, 1856 in the midst of a tumultuous thunderstorm. The weather conditions surrounding his birth led some to call him the storm child while his mother preferred to assume the positive approach and affectionately referred to her son as the child of the light. Both these names proved to be reflections of Nikola's later life as an ingenious inventor. His innate love for scientific discovery became apparent at an early age and lasted throughout his lifetime.

After completing an advanced degree in the field of engineering, Tesla pursued a career as an electric engineer in the United States. He worked closely with Thomas Edison, the world renowned American inventor, to bring the wonder of electricity to the growing metropolis of New York. Allied with the commercial distribution strength of George Westinghouse, Nikola Tesla began his quest to spread the power of electricity across this great country. In 1893, Tesla was commissioned to generate the thousands of volts of electrical power necessary to light the Chicago World's Fair. In addition to this engineering feat, Tesla was also responsible for the design of the Niagara Mohawk Falls power plant which to this day provides an ecological and economical means of power to the upper portion of New York State and parts of Canada.

At the turn of the century, Nikola Tesla dedicated himself to independent research which led to a series of landmark discoveries. During this period Tesla conceived such innovations as the alternating current generator, the properties of the spinning magnetic field, the Tesla coil, the basic principals of broadcasting, as well as 700 other significant inventions and theories. Many of Tesla's discoveries form the foundation upon which our current technology is based, yet presently he receives little recognition for his contributions to the modern world. It is distressing that this man who transformed science fiction into a tangible reality is not properly credited with his accomplishments.

Nikola Tesla is a man who deserves acknowledgment for his numerous contributions to the advancement of American as well as world technology. It is an undebatable fact that Tesla was an essential component in providing the economical distribution of electricity to this country, an important factor in the industrialization of our Nation. In an age in which technology and scientific advancements are vital to everyday life, we are particularly indebted to the work of this unsung hero. The modern day conveniences of electricity, telecommunications, and broadcasting are reason enough to take time to acknowledge the man who is responsible for the basis of these innovations. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to recognize the achievements of this American citizen before the U.S. House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL A. BRAVETTE

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 1997

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention Michael A. Bravette of Cedar Grove, NJ.

Michael was born on September 19, 1926 in Newark, NJ to Pasquale and Philomena Bianco Bravette. One of two children, he was raised in the city of Newark and attended the city's Barringen High School. During World War II, at the age of 18, Michael entered the U.S. Navy. He served as an electronic technician's mate, third class aboard the heavy cruiser U.S.S. *Bremerton,* CA–130, flagship of the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific Theater of Operations and earned five medals for his bravery and valor.

In 1949, Michael graduated from the Newark College of Engineering, now known as N.J.I.T., with a bachelor of science in electrical engineering and a master of science in management engineering. He was a founder and an officer in the fraternity, Pi Kappa Phi and earned a Student Council Pendant Award, for his service as a class officer and in other campus activities.

Michael's first professional position was as a material handling sales engineer who sold the largest single contract in the history of the company—overhead traveling cranes for maintenance on the then-new Tappan Zee Bridge.

A retiree since 1989, Michael was employed for over 30 years in marketing with both the Kearfott-Singer Co. and subsequently, the Plessey Co., as manager for advertising and customer relations. While at Kearfott-Singer, he cochaired their first successful motivation program, was the communications chairman for the zero defects program and served as president of the company's Toastmasters Club. During his many invaluable years of service, Michael was listed in Who's Who in America, Finance and Management.

One of the highlights of Michael's career was touring the company's facilities for 2 days with Apollo 13 astronaut, Fred W. Haise, Jr. He also prepared presentations and tours for astronauts Terry Hart and Mark Lee, Senator Bill Bradley, Congressman Jim Courter and Congresswoman MARGE ROUKEMA.

In 1964, Michael was appointed by then New Jersey Governor Richard J. Hughes as a tercentenary toastmaster lecturer for the New Jersey Tercentenary Commission. In this capacity, he was able to speak before several groups and was the guest speaker for the township of Cedar Grove 4th of July celebration held at the Memorial High School stadium. For his services, Michael was awarded by Governor Hughes a New Jersey Tercentenary Medal.

Michael is and always has been an active member of his community. He has been a parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena church since its construction and currently serves as one of the church's neighborhood ambassadors. Michael served as president of the Holy Name Society in 1960 and again in 1966. Under his leadership, membership in the society increased from 40 to 250. Also, Michael served as cochair of the 1965 fundraising drive which doubled the weekly donations to the church.

For several years, Michael was assistant coach and manager for Little League baseball and football in Cedar Grove. He also was a member of Cedar Grove's Democratic County Committee.

Michael remains active in the Cedar Grove Elks Lodge No. 2237 having served as exalted ruler and as chairman of the trustees. He was the public relations district chairman for the New Jersey State Elks Association 1975–76. He actively served on membership, handicapped children, housing, Memorial Day services, Flag Day, Mother's Day services, and investigation committees. He also served as the lodge's justice of the forum.

In 1989, Michael joined the Cedar Grove chapter of UNICO National and served as the chapter's vice-president, and president. Currently serving as publicity chairman, Michael authored special biographical news releases for Michael A. Saltarelli when he was elected auxiliary bishop, Archdiocese of Newark in 1990 and James Troiano who was appointed a superior court judge in 1992. He also promoted the special UNICO Dinner Dance held in 1996, in honor of Bishop Saltarelli who left New Jersey to become bishop for the diocese of Wilmington, DE.

As UNICO's membership chairman for 3 years, Michael nearly doubled the chapter's membership. He was appointed to the UNICO National Editorial Advisory Committee and the Gay Talese Literary Award Committee by the national president. He was honored by the Cedar Grove chapter as ''Man of the Year'' at the chapter' 10th Anniversary Dinner Dance in 1996. Michael is also a member of the Center for Italian and Italian-American Culture.

Michael is married to Florence Beltram whom he first met in high school. They have three children and five grandchildren. Their daughter Robyn is married to Craig Sloboda and the two live in Milford, PA. The couple has two daughters, Randi, 15 and Ashley, 10. Their son Brian is a CitiCorp vice-president and lives in Cedar Grove with his daughter Larisa, 12. Their youngest son, Barry, is a cardiologist and lives in Voorhees, NJ with his wife Cindy and his twin sons, Christopher and Matthew, 7.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, Michael's family and friends and the township of Cedar Grove in recognizing Michael A. Bravette for his outstanding and invaluable service to the community.

PROVIDING FOR CONSOLIDATION OF H.R. 1119, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 1997

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to oppose the rule. I have a great deal of respect for the chairman of the Committee on Rules, but I want those of my colleagues who can hear me, who can hear the sound of my voice to listen to my amendment which was turned down by the Committee on Rules yesterday.

We are talking about the military. We are talking about equipment and we are talking about facilities.

I had an amendment that said we have to honor our commitment to the men and women who serve in the military. I believe that if we are going to provide certain benefits—such as lifetime medical care—to them when they retire, then they are entitled to them and we ought to keep our promise.

That is the simple amendment. It's straightforward and it's honest. It's about making promises and keeping them.

I tell my colleagues, it does not make any difference how many pieces of equipment we have or what kind of facilities we build. If we do not have good men and women serving in the military it makes no difference how good our equipment or facilities are.

I went before the Committee on Rules to ask them to allow me to bring my amendment to the floor. All I was asking is that we honor the commitment we made to our military retirees and to honor the promises that we made. I was asking us to honor our commitment to them.

The U.S. military makes a commitment to a young person who comes in and signs up. They say, ''We're going to give you health benefits for life when you retire.'' All of us here in the Congress know the military has repeatedly made that promise. We have the casework to prove it over and over.

We also know that we have had problems delivering those benefits and even more problems keeping our word. This amendment would force the military to keep its word.

I am troubled that the Department of Defense doesn't support this amendment. Their legal counsel issued a three-page statement which said my amendment would ''impose undesired inflexibility'' on the Department. According to them, my amendment would be ''unwise.'' It means they don't want to keep their word.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of message are we sending our retired military population when we hide behind our promises rather than honor them? Recently a Federal judge in Florida ruled that retirees over 65 years of age who enlisted in the military prior to 1956 may now sue the Government for breaking its promise of free health care for life.

Are we really supposed to sit here in the 105th Congress and tell the next generation of American military veterans that they may have to sue the Government in order to have adequate health care coverage simply because the Department of Defense is finding it difficult to live up to its word?

Mr. Speaker, we are asking the United States to honor its commitment to our veterans.

WHO WILL CARE FOR THE POOR? NEW DATA SHOWS THE IMPENDING HOSPITAL CRISIS

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, we have just received the June report from our congressional hospital payment advisory panel—the Prospective Payment Assessment Commission—and it carries a dire warning about the future of the Nation's safety net hospitals in the era of managed care.

The report, ''Medicare and the American Health Care System, Report to the Congress, June, 1997,'' contains the following statement and table. It is a matter of life and death to millions of our fellow citizens that we address the problem of the uninsured in these good economic times. When an economic downturn comes, the pressure on these safety net hospitals will be unbearable—and then who will care for the uninsured and poor?

Rising financial pressure has raised concern about the willingness or ability of many hospitals to continue providing uncompensated care in a more competitive marketplace. A previous ProPAC analysis suggested that high managed care enrollment is associated with increased financial pressure from private payers and with greater reductions in the amount of uncompensated care hospitals provide.[43] Between 1992 and 1994, private payer payment to cost ratios declined 4.5 percent for hospitals located in urban areas with high managed care penetration; uncompensated care burdens for these hospitals also fell by 4.5 percent (see Table 3–14). The experience of hospitals located in areas with low managed care penetration was quite different: Their private payer payment to cost ratios rose 4.1 percent, while uncompensated care burdens fell only 0.1 percent.

CHANGE IN HOSPITAL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE, BY MANAGED CARE PENETRATION RATE, 1992–94

[in percent]

Financial performance	Low	Medium	High
Private payment to cost ratio	4.1	3.8	−4.5
Total payment to cost ratio	0.9	−0.8	−2.0
Uncompensated care burden	−0.1	−1.4	−4.5
Cost per adjusted admission	8.2	7.0	7.3

Note: Managed care penetration rates are based on enrollment in health maintenance and preferred provider organizations as a percentage of the total population in the metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Low penetration is less than 41 percent; medium is from 41 percent to less than 50 percent; high is from 50 percent to less than 60 percent. This analysis is limited to 89 of the largest MSAs and excludes those with penetration rates of 60 percent or more.

SOURCE: ProPAC analysis of data from the American Hospital Association Annual Survey of Hospitals and the National Research Corporation.

The situation is particularly tenuous for hospitals that furnish a large amount of indigent care. They often lack the private payer base that can offset uncompensated care losses. Private payers' share of costs in pubic major teaching hospitals, for instance, is less than 15 percent (see Table 3–7). Moreover, compared with other institutions, these hospitals are already getting substantially higher private payments relative to costs, which makes it difficult for them to compete. The private payer payment to cost ratio for these facilities is 154 percent compared with an all-hospital average of 124 percent.

These hospitals are also in much weaker financial condition than other institutions, despite the additional subsidies they receive. Total gains for public major teaching hospitals, for instance, were only 1.5 percent in 1995, far below those for other hospitals. Given that one of their missions is serving the poor, they may not be able to reduce uncompensated care, particularly if other hospitals are doing so. Consequently, any increase in uncompensated care burdens could put such hospitals at serious financial risk.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN COOKSEY

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 1997

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I was not present to record votes on rollcall