

of the 509th Bomb Wing flew their B-2 Stealth Bombers into harm's way for the first time during Operation Allied Force. The air crews, maintenance crews, and the bombers performed magnificently. The B-2 bomber demonstrated unparalleled strike capability, dropping nearly 20 percent of the precision ordnance while flying less than 3 percent of the attack sorties. They flew some of the longest combat missions in the history of the Air Force, a non-stop 31-hour sortie from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri to directly over the skies of Yugoslavia and back.

The B-2 bomber not only proved itself in combat operations, but it put teeth in the Air Force's ability to project global power. The B-2 can carry sixteen 2,000-pound bombs or eight 5,000-pound bombs that can be delivered stealthily, with precision, against difficult targets such as "bunker busting" of underground compounds. Because the B-2 flies from and returns to Missouri, its deployment is unaffected by base crowding issues such as those that had to be worked out in Europe. Its maintenance budget is tight, particularly when you look at the number of aircraft and associated maintenance required as an alternative to a B-2 strike.

While the role of the B-2 as a combat system was impressive, the performance of the men and women of Whiteman Air Force was simply stellar. They deserve the gratitude of the American people for their indispensable role in Operation Allied Force. Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the Members of the House will join me in paying tribute to fine men and women of Whiteman Air Force Base.

CONGRATULATING STACEY LEE
BAKER, MICHELLE LEE BAKER
AND TAMARA KARAKASHIAN

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Stacey Lee Baker, Michelle Lee Baker and Tamara Karakashian for being chosen to be presented to the Archbishop of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, at the 28th annual Debutante Ball. To be chosen, these young women must be active members of their community and church.

Stacey Lee Baker, age 19, of Fresno, has taught the pre-kindergarten Sunday School class at St. Paul Armenian Church, for three years, and is actively involved in the Armenian Christian Youth Organization (ACYO) as Assistant Treasurer, and previously as Secretary. In 1991, she was ordained an acolyte by Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian. She attended the Diocesan Armenian Camp from 1990 to 1992. Locally, she has volunteered at the Poverello House, a local homeless shelter. A 1997 graduate of Bullard High School, Stacey is currently attending Fresno City College where she majors in nursing.

Michelle Lee Baker, age 18, Stacey's sister, has taught the pre-kindergarten Sunday School class for two years. Michelle is currently the Corresponding Secretary of the ACYO. She also attended the Armenian Camp for two years. In keeping with family tradition, she has volunteered at the Poverello House.

Michelle is a senior at Bullard High School where she maintains a 3.8 grade point average and is a lifetime member of the California Scholarship Federation. She is an Algebra Lab Assistant and is currently a member of the Math Club and the Junior Larks. Upon graduation, she plans to attend the California State University Fresno, where she will major in accounting.

Tamara Karakashian, age 19, of Visalia, is an active member of the St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Yetttem, where she was a choir member and served as the Easter Luncheon Committee Chair for four years. She was the Chair person of the ACYO, Recording Secretary, and General Assembly Delegate. Tamara has participated in the Armenian Camp for eight years as camper, counselor and Arts and Crafts Coordinator. In her local community, Tamara has been involved in DARE and served as an assistant for the Visalia Police Department Golf Tournament. Tamara participated with Visalians for Sober Graduation both as student representative and board member.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate Stacey and Michelle Lee Baker and Tamara Karakashian on their presentation. Their accomplishments and service are beneficial not only to their churches and communities, but to their own growth as mature, contributing adults. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating these young women, and wishing them a bright future and much continued success.

A TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia. Founded in 1976, the Museum presents educational programs and experiences that preserve, explore and celebrate the history of Jews in America. Telling the story of the Jewish experience in America, the National Museum of American Jewish History has connected Jews closer to their heritage and has inspired in people of all backgrounds a greater appreciation for the diversity of the American experience and the freedoms to which Americans aspire.

As Philadelphia is a melting pot for so many of the Nation's minorities, the Museum's location is ideal for illuminating ethnicity in American life. Philadelphia is the birthplace of American liberty, and the freedoms that are celebrated by the Museum can be traced back to people and events that are a part of Philadelphia history. The "Jewish Window on Independence Mall" demonstrates how one group of Americans used the opportunities of freedom to make important and diverse contributions to American life. In this way, the message of the Museum should be seen as fundamentally American as well as Jewish-American.

Mr. Speaker, the National Museum of American Jewish History has been a benefit to the Philadelphia community not only for its impor-

tant educational value with respect to the history of the Jewish people, but also because it has highlighted the freedoms that are all too often overlooked in everyday life. This institution has brought to the forefront all that makes America great, the freedoms which have made it possible for Jewish-Americans—and all Americans—to succeed.

INTRODUCTION OF MEDICARE
MODERNIZATION NO. 9: MEDI-
CARE FLEXIBLE PURCHASING
AUTHORITY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce the ninth bill in my Medicare modernization series: the "Medicare Purchasing Flexibility Act of 1999."

Medicare, the cornerstone of retirement for Americans, is in need of some improvements. When it was first created in 1965, Medicare was modeled on indemnity health insurance prevalent at the time. Since then, the health and medical fields have undergone significant change; both for the better and for the worse. But Medicare has largely lagged behind these trends. The problem is that Medicare's current administrative structure doesn't encourage testing or adoption of innovative market strategies. Instead, Medicare officials have to ask Congress to approve even the smallest change in administrative function, subjecting what should be common sense business strategies to the most rigid political battles.

While Medicare has successfully provided health insurance to the elderly and disabled for nearly thirty-four years, it faces a financial shortfall due to rapid population growth. By 2035, Medicare will provide health insurance for twice as many retirees as it does today. Additional revenues will be needed in order to provide quality care for 80 million retirees.

In the past, policy makers have focused on two ways to increase Medicare revenues: raising taxes or cutting benefits. Recently, however, Dan Crippen, Director of the Congressional Budget Office, alluded to a possible third way: creating administrative efficiencies. Dr. Crippen believes that substantial savings can be achieved by making Medicare more flexible and efficient. With these changes, Medicare will be able to improve the quality of services, while shoring-up savings for the long run.

The private sector has adopted a number of cost saving mechanisms that have helped control health care inflation. Medicare should be given the same flexibility to keep up with these trends, and improve overall administrative efficiency.

This bill grants the Secretary greater flexibility to administer the Medicare program including the following five provisions:

First, expanded demonstration authority. Promotes high-quality cost-effective delivery of items and services by enabling the Secretary to test innovative purchasing and administrative programs within Medicare. The Secretary may use case management, bundled payments, selective contracting, and other tools she deems necessary to carry out demonstrations. If demonstration projects are successful, the Secretary is authorized to permanently implement programs. This section of the bill