

Gerald has always considered patient care to be the most important issue in the medical profession. With changes in policy and technology, Gerald still regards the patient as the "hallmark of medical care."

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer tribute in honor of Dr. Gerald Howe's retirement and thank him for his years of hard work, dedication and service.

**ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER
INTEROPERABILITY AND PORT-
ABILITY ACT**

SPEECH OF

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 31, 2000

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues in support of the electronic Benefit Transfer Interoperability and Portability Act of 1999. This legislation will enable food stamp shoppers to redeem their nutrition benefits electronically in authorized stores located beyond the borders of their states. The need for this legislation is significant.

According to a recent study conducted by Benton International on behalf of the National Automated ClearingHouse Association (NACHA), there were 1,685,857 interstate food stamp transactions during a six-month period. If we assume that interstate food stamp transactions existed nationwide for the entire year of 1999, the projected annual nationwide volume of food stamp interstate transaction would be 5.7 million. Although the vast majority of food stamp recipients spend their benefits at retailers close to home, the Benton study proves that a significant number of shoppers need the flexibility to shop at stores across state lines, which is a program benefit enjoyed without restrictions under the previous coupon redemption system.

When the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) replaced food stamp coupons with "Electronic Benefit Transfer" cards, program participants and retailers experienced enormous difficulty since there was lack of uniformity among state EBT equipment. Furthermore, FNS incurs additional costs to implement its regulation requiring States to equip authorized food retailers, upon request, with EBT-only terminal. For example, using a leasing fee of \$21.50 per month per terminal, the annual cost of the government for EBT-only terminal deployment nationwide may range from \$25,000 to 75,000. Even with the EBT-only terminal, the different designs and procedures in state equipment continued to prevent shopping in other states.

S. 1733 is a practical legislative solution to these problems. First it gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to develop a national uniform standard of interoperability based on the "QUEST" rules which were developed by retailers, State Food Stamp Program Administrators, and the Food and Nutrition Service under the guidance of the NACHA EBT Council. Although the QUEST rules are being used by a majority of the states, this legislation gives the Secretary authority to make the changes needed to fit the goal of the Food Stamp Program.

Also, S. 1733 limits the annual costs of switching and settling fees at \$500,000.00.

This is a positive change from the original draft of this legislation because the federal government should not finance new technology utilized by retailers.

From the outset, the Administration has worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the Food Stamp Program's conversion to electronic benefit delivery, and I offer my continued commitment and support in making sure that this critical nutrition assistance is provided efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, on January 31, 2000, I was unavoidably detained and consequently missed two votes. Had I been here I would have voted: "Yes" on the passage of H. Con. Res. 244, rollcall vote No. 2; "Yes" on the passage of H.R. 2130, rollcall vote No. 3.

**DAVE M. DAVIS, RECIPIENT OF
THE 2000 GOVERNOR'S AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS**

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the winner of the 2000 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, Dave Davis.

Dave was nominated by the Grand Junction Commission of Arts and Culture for his activism as founder of Art on the Corner, a former executive director of the Art Center, a past appointee of former Colorado Governor, Roy Romer, to the Colorado Council on the Arts, and one of the leading artists in the Grand Valley since the late 1970's.

Dave was Executive Director of the Western Colorado Center for the Arts for nine years. During his tenure he created a multitude of innovative programs, quality exhibits, outreach efforts to underserved areas, and expansion of facilities, collections and classes. Dave's belief that the Grand Valley could become a renowned arts community is the foundation of everything he does.

Dave opened an exhibit, Art on the Corner, in downtown Grand Junction in 1984. This unique outdoor sculpture exhibit began as a display of 33 sculptures by Dave and other area artists along Main Street. Every year the exhibit is rotated and has grown to include over 100 works of art.

Dave is a native of Boulder, Colorado who moved with his family to Grand Junction in 1972. He attended Mesa State College. Dave's full-time pursuit of the arts began in 1977. He creates abstract and realistic sculpture. He is adamant in his desire to promote the arts both as a major economic force and as an industry. He is adamant in his desire to promote the arts both as a major economic force and as an industry.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer this tribute to Dave Davis with congratulations on being named the recipient of the 2000 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.

**HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

SPEECH OF

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2000

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions and the importance of education preparation in Catholic schools. For decades, they have enriched the lives of children past and present. I was educated at Holy Family High, a Catholic school in my hometown and I have felt the benefits throughout my life. The importance of education is one value that has remained with me through my years as a parent, an educator, and as a Congresswoman. Education is very significant in the continued success of our great nation. A Catholic institution provides a balance of strong education complimented by the support of a strong moral and spiritual environment to prepare well-balanced young persons for entering our society.

Statistics have shown that the United States has gained immense benefits from the Catholic education system, educating some 2.6 million students at a saving to our nation of more than \$17.2 billion dollars. Further, Catholic education has an impressive graduation rate of 95 percent and more than 83 percent of those graduates go on to college. Catholic schools focus not only upon intellectual encouragement and development but also on the moral and spiritual fiber of each student. These students preserve this enriched relationship with their faith, families and community.

Recognizing Catholic schools for their contributions to the community of the United States shows the respect we have for these institutions and to thank the dedicated faculties and administrators for the care they have taken of the students entrusted to their guardianship. Educating our youth is perhaps our greatest responsibility as a Nation, and I am thankful for the daily contributions made by these institutions toward that aim.

**TRIBUTE TO THE VIRCO
MANUFACTURING CO.**

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Virco Manufacturing Co., an important business within my district. Virco today celebrates its 50th year as the largest manufacturer of educational furniture in the country.

Shortly after World War II, Julian Virtue bought the Stauson Aircraft Co. on February 2, 1950, and converted the war equipment manufacturing company to a firm specializing in the production of educational furniture. It