

Gombe State would pass the test of any entrepreneur. I therefore urge you to give us a trial I am sure you will be convinced.

Honourable Members of Congress, this is an exciting time for me and the People of Gombe state. A time that provides me the opportunity to present the investment potentials of this young State to the World's biggest economy. As I count on your assistance, I look forward to a dynamic future with huge investments from the United States of America. I therefore urge you to spare a few minutes and scan through this brochure so as to acquaint yourselves with some of our potentials.

Thank you and God Bless.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GERTRUDE STEIN DEMOCRATIC CLUB

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise, from time to time, to acknowledge the accomplishments and milestones of the citizens and organizations of the District of Columbia, whom I have the honor to represent in Congress. As a life-long advocate for civil rights, I am particularly proud to have within my constituency some of the oldest and most established Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered civil rights organizations in the United States.

These organizations work tirelessly, despite the triple scourges of racism, homophobia, and taxation without representation which belabor the District of Columbia, to extend, without regard to race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation and gender those civil and political rights which are taken for granted by some Americans to all Americans, especially those Americans residing within the four quadrants of the District of Columbia.

Today I take particular pleasure in acknowledging the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, one of America's oldest partisan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered civil rights organizations on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, this Thursday, June 7, 2001.

In 1976, my constituents, Paul Kuntzler, Richard Malsby, and Dr. Franklin E. Kameny, founded the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. Since its founding, the Stein Club has become a powerful and respected participant in the political life of the District of Columbia. The Gertrude Stein Club ceaselessly fights not only for human and civil rights, but for the inclusion and acceptance of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered persons within the political process of the District and the Nation.

The Club's success is reflected among its members who now hold, and have held, responsible government positions. These include: D.C. Councilmember Jim Graham; the Director of the D.C. Office of Boards and Commissions, Ronald Kin; Mayor Anthony Williams's Gay Community Liaison; Philip Pannell, and former White House Counsel Karen Tramontano.

The Gertrude Stein Democratic Club has always been at the forefront of efforts on behalf of human rights, domestic partnership, HIV services, hate crimes, employment non-discrimination,

As part of their 25th anniversary celebration, the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club will honor two outstanding gay leaders: Andrew Tobias,

Treasurer of the Democratic National Committee; and Paul Yandura, Executive Director of the National Stonewall Democratic Federation. Andrew Tobias enjoyed a national reputation for his work in the gay and lesbian community and for the Democratic Party. He is an author and financier who has helped the lives of millions of Americans with his sound financial advice. Mr. Tobias is a true renaissance man and "The Best Little Boy in the World." My constituent, Paul Yandura, despite his youth, is a seasoned veteran of national politics. Mr. Yandura served in the Clinton/Gore Administration, in both political and executive capacities responsible for constituency outreach, public/media relations, event production and he advised the President on a variety of policy issues which included E-Commerce, HIV/AIDS, fair housing and LGBT civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, this week that marks the 25th Anniversary of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, also marks the 20th Anniversary of the discernment of an illness which we now know as AIDS. On Friday, June 5, 1981 the Center for Disease Control published in the Morbidity and Morality Weekly Report an article on five gay angelino men in their late twenties and early thirties who contracted Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia. In the twenty years hence we, both as Americans and as Members of Congress, have been remiss in our duties. While we have passed much legislation, we have failed to enact The Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act; we have not stopped the dizzying spiral of prescription drug costs, and the District of Columbia still has not voting representation in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House both to join me in congratulating the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club on its 25th Anniversary and to join me in re-doubling our efforts to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination and Hate Crimes Prevention Act, to provide affordable access to prescription drugs for all Americans who need them, and to bring some measure of democracy to the citizens of the District of Columbia during this Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRICARE RETIREES OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2001

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the 57th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion of Normandy, to introduce federal legislation that will help military retirees access the health care benefits to which they are entitled. The TRICARE Retirees Opportunity Act will help retirees fully participate in the Department of Defense's (DOD) health care program, TRICARE. Since 1995, DOD has coordinated the medical care efforts of the military branches within TRICARE.

In an effort to fully meet America's promises to the military, last year Congress authorized expanding TRICARE to Medicare-eligible retirees and their dependents. Starting Oct. 1, 2001, all military retirees and their dependents who are age 65, or who are otherwise eligible for Medicare will be able to use TRICARE as a second payer.

In the past, military retirees who reached the age of 65 lost their TRICARE eligibility and were required to purchase supplemental policies, which are often prohibitively expensive, to cover Medicare's deductibles and coinsurance. By expanding TRICARE to the 65 years of age and older population, Congress can ensure that these men and women who served our nation are eligible for the best health care this nation can offer.

I recently became aware of an inequitable situation facing many military retirees. Under current law, seniors who failed to enroll in Medicare Part B when they first became eligible are subject to a premium penalty of 10 percent for every year they did not enroll, effectively increasing the monthly premium for a 70-year-old first-time enrollee from \$50 to \$75 for the rest of his or her life. Because military retirees could not have anticipated how their benefits would change, tens of thousands of retirees are now subject to these late penalties. The legislation I am introducing today would waive the penalty for military retirees who enroll between January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2002.

There is another barrier to full participation facing our military retirees. Current law permits late enrollees to sign up only during Medicare's annual open enrollment period—January 1 through March 31—with benefits beginning on July 1. My legislation will create a continuous open enrollment period through the end of 2002 for military retirees so that these prospective beneficiaries may access their new coverage immediately.

Mr. Speaker, this country has done a good job of meeting the health care needs of our active duty military. The Floyd A. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 was a milestone in our efforts to help the military retirees who devoted years of their lives to defend this nation. My bill takes one more important step to ensure that these retirees, their spouses, and their survivors have full access to the benefits we enacted for them last year. I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of this key legislation so that we may truly fulfill our promise to the nation's military retirees this year.

IN RECOGNITION OF AMTRAK'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Amtrak on its 30th Anniversary. On May 1, 1971, Amtrak began operations at a time when passenger rail service in America seemed to be fading into the past, destined to take its place in American history. But when Amtrak was created thirty years ago, there came an opportunity for passenger rail service to play a role in addressing America's transportation needs.

Today, with congestion dominating our highways and skies, and with airline delays and gas prices reaching record levels, wary travelers have turned to rail service for relief. And Amtrak has succeed in providing travelers with