health care system to be. In an emergency, at that critical moment, the EMS unit is that critical link to our health care system that makes the difference between life and death.

Unfortunately, be it ground or air, EMS for communities throughout America is under enormous financial pressure. For many rural communities, EMS is in jeopardy of collapse. Typically, rural EMS is a small one or two unit service, staffed by volunteers, not affiliated with a hospital or medical facility, that responds to 300 to 500 calls per year within a large radius (37 miles average) who's greatest danger to its existence comes from Medicare. In a growing number of instances, unrealistic and unresponsive Medicare reimbursement fee schedules have done more to erode EMS in America than any other threat to medical care in this country. Because Medicare fees fail to accurately define or reflect the rural medical environment, EMS is facing grave danger of being put out of business by fee schedules that fall to recognize and reflect the actual costs confronting rural ambulance/EMS service.

Therefore, I am introducing the ''Medical Rural Ambulance Service Improvement Act of 2001''. This legislation will increase by 20 percent the payment under the Medicare program for ambulance services furnished to Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas, require CMS to define rural areas on population density by postal zip codes, increase mileage rates for the first 50 miles and require the use of most recent data by CMS in determining payment adjustments.

For rural ambulance and EMS, the majority of their revenue comes from Medicare reimbursements. Yet existing Medicare fee schedules are not accurate, nor do they reflect real-world costs confronting rural services. Due to their low-volume of calls and transfers, rural EMS providers will remain the hardest hit under CMS' fee schedules unless decisive and corrective action takes place now.

Timely and accurate reimbursement and fee schedules for ambulance/EMS services will be critical to seeing that rural America continues to receive emergency medical services. Citing financial loss as the number one contributing factor for services closing down, the ''Medical Rural Ambulance Service Improvement Act of 2001'' will level the playing field for rural EMS.

Good health requires an effective and thorough health care system. We all have something to lose by not putting a halt to the erosion of EMS care in rural America. Therefore I am calling on all Members to join with me and sponsor passage of this important and critical piece of health legislation.

HONORING WILLIAMSON BROTHERS BAR–B–Q, MARIETTA AND CANTON, GEORGIA

HON. BOB BARR

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the tragic events of the past few months have brought out the best in the hearts of Americans across the nation. Our citizens have reached out their hands, opened their wallets, and given of their time, energy, and compassion in unprecedented ways. Some have traveled thousands of miles and, sacrificed time they could be spending with their own families, in order to take care of another's.

At the same time, corporate and small town businesses alike have also searched for ways to help the victims of the September 11th attacks; to speed along the search and recovery missions, and to lift the spirits of dedicated workers still at the sites today. At this time I would like to highlight one such business from Marietta and Canton, Georgia.

Williamson Brothers Bar-B-Q is a beloved local landmark that came to Georgia from Talladega, Alabama in 1989. Upon watching and learning of the events of September 11th, the restaurant's owners, Larry and Danny Williamson, asked themselves what they could personally do to help. The answer was to load up two U-Haul trucks and drive up enough food to serve 2,000 Pentagon employees and relief workers for a traditional southern feast—the Williamson Brothers Southern Salute. The trucks carried 300 chickens, 300 pounds of barbecued pork, 2,000 hamburgers and hotdogs, 50 gallons each of Brunswick stew, baked beans, and potato salad, and 500 chocolate chip cookies; enough to truly feed a small army.

The feast was a huge success and a tribute to the majesty of the Pentagon and the men and women who serve there. The Williamson brothers are now considering making the Southern Salute an annual event. I would like to acknowledge Williamson Brothers Bar-B-Q, and its employees, for their unparalleled spirit of community and patriotism, and thank them for a job well done.

HONORING HUNTER HALL

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today to express gratitude and congratulations to one of Colorado's outstanding young citizens, Mr. Hunter Hall, of Greeley, Colorado, who recently traveled to Washington D.C. to sing at the White House.

This is certainly a high honor for him and for Colorado. Hunter, an eighth grader at Brentwood Middle School, performs about 50 times a year with Colorado's Children's Chorale. Hunter Hall is a hard worker and has performed with the highest degree of excellence. Everyone who has been fortunate enough to know Hunter speaks of his deep commitment to performing and the arts. I am glad to say Hunter Hall has been an inspiration not only to other members of the chorale but also to his family and friends.

Hunter and his parents make great sacrifices for him to perform, and his commitment never falters. This is an experience he will look upon with pride. I stand today to honor his persistence and dedication to the performing arts. Hunter Hall has dedicated much of his time to the arts and I hope he will continue to do so in the future. He is truly a fine example for all Americans.

A constituent of Colorado's Fourth Congressional District, Hunter not only makes his community proud, but also of his state and his country. It is a true honor to know such an extraordinary citizen and we owe him a debt of gratitude for his dedication. I ask the House to join me in extending hearty congratulations to Mr. Hunter Hall.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend my colleagues Mr. MILLER and Mr. BOEHNER for their hard work in crafting a bipartisan education bill that provides real reform and real investments to make that reform a reality. I am pleased that in the midst of fighting the war of terrorism, we were able to remain focused on our most pressing domestic priority—the education of our children.

This bill tackles the persistent achievement gap between poor and more affluent school districts. Now more than ever education funding will be targeted at the students who need it most. For students in Providence and Cranston, Rhode Island, the revised Title I funding formula will translate into desperately needed books and supplies, bilingual education, more high-quality afterschool programs, and expanded access to technology. In addition, H.R. 1 authorizes critical funding for school construction and modernization. With three-quarters of our schools in disrepair, this need is overwhelming and cannot wait.

H.R. 1 also expands access to teacher quality programs to give teachers better support, mentoring, and salary incentives. The more support we provide to our teachers the more effective they will be in the classroom and—most importantly—the more students will learn.

While I was disappointed that the conferees were not able to work out a compromise on funding for students with disabilities, I am looking forward to working with my colleagues next year to ensure that IDEA receives the investment it deserves. Schools across the country are bleeding from the cost of educating students with special needs. The federal government made a promise to help ease the financial burden of educating these students, and we owe it to our schools and our children to honor that promise. But despite its lack of full funding for IDEA, H.R. 1 is a strong bill, and I am proud to support it.

DAVID GRAUE, ''ALLEY OOP'' CARTOONIST

HON. CHARLES H. TAYLOR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, America lost a beloved citizen, World War II veteran, artist, and creative talent when David Graue, 75, of Flat Rock, North Carolina, was tragically killed in an early morning traffic accident on December 10th. Dave was a native of Oak Park, Ill., and was a prior resident of Sarasota, Fla., and Brevard before moving to Henderson County in 1987. He was a 1944