

he was appointed Director of Communications for the New York City Office of Economic Development by Mayor Ed Koch. In 1981, he was appointed Director of Public Information for the New York State Banking Department. He was then named Vice-president and Director of Media Relations for The Chase Manhattan Bank. In 1994 he founded Ken Mills Communications which he continues to operate today.

Ken Mills first joined the Lexington Democratic Club during John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign for President. After serving on the Club's Executive Committee he was elected its president. He then went on to become a District Leader, serving in that position until 1978. In 1995 he began another tenure as Lexington Democratic Club President, a position he held until early this year. Ken, who also serves on Manhattan Community Board 8 is not only an effective leader, but one who has earned the respect and admiration of professional and political colleagues. In recognition of his many outstanding achievements, we pay tribute to Ken Mills today.

Niki Stern has long demonstrated a commitment to social and political causes. A long time community activist, she worked extensively on behalf of the Peace Movement in Westchester County, New York in the 1960's. She remained actively involved upon moving to New York City and in 1979 began working as a Community Liaison for Assemblyman Mark Alan Siegel and for New York City Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin. She was also appointed to Community Board 8.

She also joined the Lexington Democratic Club where she was elected to many offices, culminating in her 1993 election as president. Working with Ken Mills, since 1995, as Executive Vice-president, she initiated the Club's annual mid-winter receptions and dinners and many other innovations which helped restore the Lexington Democratic Club to its position as the largest political organization on Manhattan's East Side. They have made the Lexington Democratic Club an invaluable part of the political landscape of New York City.

Mr. Speaker, I salute Ken Mills and Niki Stern and I ask my fellow Members of Congress to join me in recognizing the great contributions of both of these tremendously dedicated community leaders.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone agrees that we now live in troubled times—times of anxiety, of uncertainty, of struggle. But we also live in a time of incomparable national unity. You could look around the country and easily spot superficial signs of unity, such as the plethora of American flags displayed outside homes and businesses or a crowd at a sports game chanting "U-S-A!" but the real truth is that the river of our national spirit runs much deeper than flag-waving could ever show. And in the fight against the evil that now confronts us, the American people are united like never before.

More than a century ago, an English Literature Professor from Wellesley College

named Katharine Lee Bates penned what has become the theme song for this extraordinary unity. On a trip to Colorado, Bates ascended Pike's Peak and basked in the wonder of the "purple mountain majesties" and "spacious skies" she saw. This scene inspired her to write "America the Beautiful."

Returning to Wellesley, Bates sent the four stanzas of "America the Beautiful" to the Congregationalist, where they first appeared in print, appropriately, on July 4th, 1895. The hymn garnered immediate popularity and was initially set to music by Silas G. Pratt.

But the attention Bates' hymn drew prompted her to rewrite it in 1904, making it more simple and direct. After a few more changes over the next several years, the final version, the one so many Americans know today, was finished in 1913 and set to the tune of Samuel A. Ward's "Materna." In true American spirit, Bates gave countless hundreds of free permissions for the use of "America the Beautiful."

Today we turn to Bates' timeless words for comfort and for a reminder of our nation's strength. These words remind us of the heroism of the firefighters and policemen who responded to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; of the soldiers, sailors and flyers fighting the war on terrorism; and of the cavalcade of heroes who have fought over the years for civil rights, voting rights, and workers' rights—those "heroes prov'd/In liberating strife/Who more than self their country loved." They remind us that the "thoroughfare of freedom" we so often take for granted has been blazed by pioneering pilgrims working even up to today. They remind us of the incredible resolve of New York, one of the "alabaster cities" that "gleam/Undimmed by human tears." But most of all, Bates' words remind us of the indomitable American spirit that stretches high and proud, "from sea to shining sea."

Perhaps the most expressive theme of "America the Beautiful" is that we Americans constantly seek to be uplifted—that we invoke divine help to mend our "ev'ry flaw," that we know even our "golden" characteristics can be further refined. That is a sign of far greater strength than simply waving a flag and chanting "U-S-A!"

Mr. Speaker, in a testament to our national unity, I ask unanimous consent that the complete lyrics of "America the Beautiful" be entered into the RECORD.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

(By Katharine Lee Bates)

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
god mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating
strife.
Who more than self the country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine

till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!
O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the "Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001" reflects a compromise agreement that the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Veterans' Affairs reached on certain provisions of a number of bills considered by the House and Senate during the 107th Congress, including: H.R. 2792, a bill to make service dogs available to disabled veterans and to make various other improvements in health care benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on October 16, 2001, and passed by the House on October 23, 2001 [hereinafter, "House Bill"]; S. 1188, a bill to enhance the authority of the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to recruit and retain qualified nurses for the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes, reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on October 10, 2001, as proposed to be amended by a manager's amendment [hereinafter, "Senate Bill"]; S. 1576, a bill to amend section 1710 of title 38, United States Code, to extend the eligibility for health care of veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War; and, S. 1598, a bill to amend section 1706 of title 38, United States Code, to enhance the management of the provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs of specialized treatment and rehabilitation for disabled veterans, and for other purposes, introduced on October 21, 2001.

The House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs have prepared the following explanation of the compromise bill, H.R. 3447 (hereinafter referred to as the "Compromise Agreement"). Differences between the provisions contained in the Compromise Agreement and the related provisions in the bills listed above are noted in this document, except for clerical corrections and conforming changes made necessary by the Compromise Agreement, and minor drafting, technical, and clarifying changes.

TITLE I—ENHANCEMENT OF NURSE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AUTHORITIES

Subtitle A—Nurse Recruitment Authorities
Current Law

Several VA programs under existing law are designed to aid the Department in recruiting qualified health care professionals in fields where scarcity and high demand produce competition with the private sector.