These intergenerational families or “Grandfamilies” live in rural areas, inner cities and suburbs. They come from all races and ethnicities, and live in every state in the nation. Many of these grandparents survive on fixed incomes—social security, a small pension—and face not only the rising cost of prescription drugs but also the cost of diapers, baby formula, toys, and school clothes.

Unfortunately, our nation’s housing policy has not kept up with the unique needs of these families. There is currently only one housing development in the entire country specifically designed for intergenerational families—the Grandfamilies House in Boston, Massachusetts. The House offers apartments with special features for both grandparents and children, including childproof kitchen cabinets and handicapped-accessible bathrooms. There are also activities for seniors and children, an outdoor playground and an on-site computer lab.

I am introducing the LEGACY Act in response to the growing number of communities throughout the nation that have been working to build on the model of the Grandfamilies House in Boston. The title of the legislation was inspired by an Academy-Award nominated documentary film chronicling the life of a grandmother raising her grandchildren and their struggle to move out of a Chicago housing project.

The legislation creates demonstration programs through both the Section 8 Housing Certificate Fund and the Section 202 Elderly Housing program. These demonstration projects will enable housing developers and advocacy groups additional flexibility in securing financing for this housing and providing ongoing services to intergenerational families.

In addition, the LEGACY Act clarifies that grandparents raising their grandchildren are eligible for family unification assistance, allows access to fair housing funds for education and outreach efforts about the legal issues surrounding many of these families. It also directs the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide specialized training for their employees focused on grandparent—and other relative-headed families. Many grandparents do not have access to the services they and their grandchildren need. These training and outreach efforts will help raise the awareness of the unique issues these families face each day.

While this bill is a small step in recognizing the tremendous contributions of these grandparents, it is my hope that it will help bring this issue greater recognition. Affordable housing is only one of the many challenges these courageous grandparents face as they raise the next generation of Americans. Please join me in supporting these families by supporting the LEGACY Act.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. RITA VORPERIAN, 27TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Women’s History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation’s most notable women during the month of March and it is my honor to not only recognize women of the past but to also recognize women who are making a difference in my community. While a month of remembrance is certainly not sufficient, I am honored today to pay homage to such women as Eleanor Roosevelt, Sandra Day O’Connor, Harriet Tubman, Sally Ride and all the women of my Congressional District, whose contributions have made a profound difference in the face and fabric of our nation.

Dr. Rita Vorperian is only one of the many challenges these intergenerational families face. She has been active in the field of journalism, making substantial contributions to AZTAG Dailly of Beirut, ASBAREZ of Los Angeles, and HATRENIK of Boston. She has also contributed essays and short stories to the literary magazine PAKINE of Beirut.

Under the leadership of the Armenian National Relief Society of Western U.S.A. Regional Executive, Dr. Vorperian has provided testimony in support of the APWU position opposing these subsidies for large mailers. Dr. Riley is no advocate for union interests, nor can he be discounted as a businessman, and he has addressed the issue of postal rate making from a sound business perspective. As Dr. Riley has very persuasively argued before the Postal Rate Commission, it makes no business sense—it is unsound business—to give discounts to pre-sort mailers that exceed the costs avoided by the Postal Service when mail is pre-sorted. But that is what the Postal Service is proposing to do. The Postal Service is proposing to set discounts that will, in some cases, be 125 percent of costs avoided. This is wrong. It is a wrong business decision, and it is a wrong policy. When the Postal Service was created, it was set up to be run like a private sector business. Private sector businesses do not give away hundreds of millions of dollars. If this decision were to be based on sound business considerations, pre-sort discounts would be set at an amount below the cost avoided. Sound business practice would require that the discounts be set as