HON. BARBARA LEE
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002
Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable event that will be taking place this week in Afghanistan. For the first time in five years, Afghan girls will be allowed to enroll in school without fear of the Taliban. The collapse of the Taliban regime has enabled the Afghan citizens to enjoy new personal freedoms that were once forbidden.

Under the Taliban regime, women and girls were not allowed to go to school to attain a basic education. Many illegal schools were set up in private homes during the repressive regime because women and girls did not want to give up their education. During this time, if any of these underground schools were discovered, these women and girls wound up in jail, were severely beaten, or sometimes even killed.

This week marks a time for celebration. Women and girls will no longer be threatened and harmed from pursuing their right to an education. I celebrate with the Afghan women and girls on their return to school and join my colleagues in celebrating this momentous event in empowering women around the world.

THE HOSPITALIZED VETERANS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2002
HON. SUSAN DAVIS
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002
Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, today I have the pleasure to introduce the Hospitalized Veterans Financial Assistance Act of 2002 and thank my Veterans Affairs Committee colleagues, Committee Ranking Member LANE EVANS, Benefits Subcommittee Ranking Member SILVESTRE REYES, and fellow Benefits Subcommittee member CORRINE BROWN who have joined me on this important legislation. I would also like to thank the authors of the Independent Budget who brought this critical issue to our attention. In short, current law subjects many hospitalized veterans to a financial hardship. Let me explain further.

An inequity exists in current law controlling the beginning date for payment of increased compensation based on periods of incapacity due to hospitalization or convalescence. Hospitalization in excess of 21 days for a service-connected disability entitles the veteran to a temporary total disability rating. This rating is effective the first day of hospitalization and continues to the last day of the month of hospital discharge. Similarly, where surgery for a service-connected disability necessitates at least 1-month’s convalescence or causes complications, or where immobilization of a major joint by cast is necessary, a temporary total rating is awarded effective the date of hospital admission or outpatient visit.

While the effective date of the temporary total disability rating corresponds to the beginning date of hospitalization or treatment, under current law (38 U.S.C. §5111) the effective date for payment purposes is delayed until the first day of the month following the effective date of the increased rating. This provision deprives veterans of any increase in compensation to offset the total disability due to a condition which temporary total disability occurs. This deprivation and consequent delay in the payment of increased compensation often jeopardizes disabled veterans’ financial security and unfairly causes them hardships.

The Hospitalized Veterans Financial Assistance Act of 2002 would allow for payment of benefits in all hospitalization and convalescent claims to begin effective the first day of the month in which hospitalization or treatment begins.

Mr. Chairman, once again the nation’s soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are on foreign soil either engaged directly with an enemy or on alert to respond as necessary to assure our citizens’ right to live in freedom. Let us in Congress assure these dedicated men and women that we will provide for those who bear today’s and tomorrow’s battles and not force them to endure a financial hardship. President Abraham Lincoln said it best, “. . . what is fairly due from us here, in the dispensing of patronage, towards the men who have done so much in the past, and are with us by saving our country . . . is that, other claims and qualifications being equal, they have the better right; and this is especially applicable to the disabled soldier.”

TRIBUTE TO MR. CLIFFORD C. LAPLANTE
HON. NORMAN D. DICKS
OF WASHINGTON
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002
Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a longtime friend and a great American, Mr. Clifford C. LaPlante. Cliff is about to retire after more than 50 years of dedicated service to our country and to the defense and aerospace community.

Born and raised in upstate New York, Cliff was at the very center of the major defense programs and during his career. Cliff continued to build on the legislative work he began during his time as a liaison with the Air Force and Boeing and was at the center of the major defense issues of the day. Cliff distinguished himself with his role in the KC-135 re-engining program.

In 1979, Cliff began the General Electric Company chapter of his career, which has lasted twenty-three years. Cliff continued to build on the legislative work he began during his time as a liaison with the Air Force and Boeing and was at the center of the major defense issues of the day. Cliff distinguished himself with his role in the KC-135 re-engining program.

Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for all my colleagues in the House who have known and worked with Cliff over the years when I say we will miss him but wish him well in the next chapter of his fascinating career.

HONORING OTTERBEIN COLLEGE, NCAA MEN’S DIVISION III NATIONAL CHAMPIONS
HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, March 20, 2002
Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, while the big school college basketball championship is still to be decided, we in Central Ohio are already celebrating the Otterbein College Cardinals’ victory in the NCAA Men’s Division III championship game. The Cardinals came from 11 points behind in the second half to crush Elizabethtown 102–83 and bring the national title home to Westerville, Ohio.

The victory topped a spectacular season for Coach Dick Reynolds and his squad. The Cardinals finished first in the tough Ohio Athletic Conference during the regular season, then won the conference tournament en route to an overall 30–3 record. It’s a homegrown success story too, with every player coming from the Buckeye State and 11 of them from the Central Ohio area.

Otterbein is no stranger to basketball success. The Cardinals’ title came in their third trip to the Final Four in Reynolds’ 30 years with the program.

Their games weren’t on ESPN and you won’t find them on your tournament bracket sheet. But some of the best basketball in the