

and they'll take care of you." CSM Tention has been taking care of his people for 30 years. Whether it's exceeding recruitment/retention goals, yielding the highest Expert Field Medical Badge graduation rate, or spearheading Dining In's and ethnic recognition programs, CSM Tention's actions reflect the highest respect and honor among seniors, peers, and subordinates alike.

CSM Tention's awards and decorations include two Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, 10 Good Conduct Medals, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), the Expert Field Medical Badge, the Air Assault Badge, and the Recruiter Badge with 3 Gold Stars.

CSM Tention earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia College in 2004 and is working towards a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University.

I am proud to represent all South Carolinians in thanking CSM Tention and his family for their dedication, commitment to country, and service. CSM Tention is a credit to the United States Army and to the United States of America. I wish him all the best as he makes the transition to civilian life.

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COMMENDING MILAN OPACICH

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 23, 2004*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to commend one of Northwest Indiana's most distinguished citizens, Milan Opacich, of Schererville, Indiana. Milan is one of twelve exemplary master folk and traditional artists chosen to receive the 2004 National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts. On Thursday, September 30, 2004, he will be honored by the United States Government for his artistic excellence and his contributions to the art field. Milan's praiseworthy contributions will be recognized in Washington, D.C., at an awards ceremony on Capitol Hill.

Since 1982, the Endowment has awarded more than 282 National Heritage Fellowships. Recipients include bluesman B.B. King, Irish step dancer Michael Flatley, and acclaimed performers Shirley Caesar, Doc Watson, and Bill Monroe. Recipients are nominated, often by members of their own communities, and then judged by a panel on the basis of their continuing artistic accomplishments and contributions as practitioners or teachers. Milan was chosen for his expertise and commitment to passing on his skills and cultural traditions to a new generation. I can truly say that Milan is a dedicated, distinguished and committed citizen. I have known him for many years and consider him a close personal friend.

Milan was born and raised in Gary, Indiana by a Croatian mother and a Serbian father. He became interested in string music at the age of four, and at the age of fourteen he began playing country music. At the age of eighteen he took up tamburitza music. After high school, Milan became a journeyman tool and die maker, honing the skills he used to build

the tamburitza, a stringed instrument resembling the mandolin. He built instruments for himself, family, and friends; he also played in one of several orchestras.

In 1958 Milan joined the Gary Fire Department. He set up a small workshop in the basement of the firehouse to continue making his instruments during down times. When he wasn't fighting fires, Milan was in the basement of the firehouse making instruments. He worked for the Gary Fire Department for 20 years, retiring 26 years ago. Milan now resides in Schererville, Indiana. He has converted his garage into a workshop similar to a museum of musical instruments. He has several pictures highlighting the different bands he has played with over the years, most recently the Drina Tamburitza Orchestra. Today he is recognized as this Nation's premiere tamburitza maker. His instruments have been exhibited at both the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution and at the Roy Acuff Museum. In 2002, he was named to the Tamburitza Association of America Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Milan Opacich for his outstanding contributions to the arts. His family and friends should be proud of his accomplishments. I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Milan Opacich for his lifetime of remarkable accomplishments and enduring service.

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HIGHER EDUCATION  
SUSTAINABILITY ACT OF 2004

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 23, 2004*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2004," which would authorize \$50 million for six Sustainability Education Centers across the country to develop and implement integrated environmental, economic, and social sustainability programs. Each Sustainability Center will focus on multidisciplinary research, education, and outreach at institutions of higher education.

Sustainable development practices are being advanced by hundreds of U.S. cities and companies and through a variety of international agencies including the United Nations and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. As population growth, urban development and extreme weather incidents place great stress on ecosystems around the globe, the need for developing innovative and successful sustainable development practices becomes critical to sustaining our economic competitiveness, improving our environmental health and creating more livable communities.

In my home State of Oregon, we have many great examples of sustainable development and livable communities. Portland State University, located in my hometown, provides an excellent example of how to incorporate sustainability throughout the curriculum. Faculty from the departments of social sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, humanities, as well as the professional schools have been working to incorporate sustainability principles

in their coursework and research. PSU has developed several new initiatives developed, including a Certificate in Sustainability Program focusing on PSU's partnerships with Asia and Europe.

Portland State University's Sustainability Initiative has placed a high priority on Green Buildings that use smart technology to improve operational performance and produce significant energy savings. Their green Stephen Epler Residence Hall, opened this fall, uses harvested rainwater in restrooms and features low-flow water fixtures for showers and toilets. Its integrated energy design is projected to produce an expected \$29,000 a year in annual energy cost savings. PSU will save an additional \$275,000 in energy cost across the campus this year simply by installing energy-efficient equipment and lighting fixtures and adjusting temperature settings. These savings translate into the tuition costs for nearly 80 students—a significant figure, given the rising cost of college today!

These innovations are just a few among many that are already underway in colleges and universities across the nation. This legislation will ensure that we can extend these innovations to all our institutions of higher learning. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill and make a commitment to making our educational communities more sustainable and livable.

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INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4659,  
USERRA HEALTH CARE COVERAGE  
EXTENSION ACT OF 2004

**HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 23, 2004*

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 4659, the "USERRA Health Care Coverage Extension Act of 2004." I introduce this measure jointly with Representative MICHAEL MICHAUD, ranking member of the Benefits Subcommittee.

The bill would increase to 24 months, up from 18 months, the maximum period of employer-provided health care coverage that an employee covered by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) may elect to continue to receive while mobilized as a reservist or Guard member. This legislation would also reinstate reporting requirements for the Department of Labor in consultation with the Office of Special Counsel and the Department of Justice on USERRA cases.

Mr. Speaker, due to the technical nature of this bill, I have kept it in draft form until now. This approach has afforded the Committee on Veterans' Affairs the opportunity to take testimony on the bill, today in fact, as part of a hearing titled, "Protecting the Rights of Those Who Protect Us: Public Sector Compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Improvements to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)." I am grateful to Chairman CHRISTOPHER SMITH and ranking member LANE EVANS for convening today's hearing because America has mobilized 387,986 reserve and Guard members in support of Operation