

the country celebrate Cinco de Mayo—a day that commemorates the past and relishes the present by embracing American culture. So many Mexican-Americans have made positive contributions to our Nation.

One area in particular where Mexican-Americans have made great strides is in the Armed Forces. There are many Mexican-Americans proudly serving and giving back to their country right now. I want to share the story of Daniel from South Gate.

He is the son of Mexican immigrants, who came to this country to make a better life for his family. Growing up, Daniel said he always felt patriotic. When I asked him what he thought patriotism was, he replied, "I think it's working for freedom. I have always felt that I needed to earn my rights and that I had to contribute, even for the right to vote."

He went on to say that serving in the military was his civic duty. So as soon as he was able, Daniel enlisted in the Marines and graduated boot camp at 17. Daniel was one of the first Mexican-Americans that many Iraqis had ever seen. I can think of no better ambassador for our country. While he was shot at, he returned to southern California unharmed.

As you can see by this story, Mexican-Americans share the same goals as other Americans of freedom, opportunity, and a chance to build a better life. On this day, let us salute Daniel, and all other Mexican-American soldiers and veterans for their great service to this great Nation.

RECOGNIZING "COVER THE
UNINSURED WEEK" May 1–8, 2005

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, as our Nation recognizes "Cover the Uninsured Week", I rise today to bring attention to the plight of the 45 million Americans who lack health insurance and access to healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing a health insurance and healthcare crisis in our country. While our Nation spends more per capita than any other country on healthcare, our delivery systems are disjointed and ineffective.

There was a time when it was assumed that having a job meant having health insurance. This is no longer the case. More than 80 percent of uninsured Americans are workers, most with full time jobs. Within my own state of Maryland, 90 percent of the 750,000 citizens lacking health insurance are employed.

Increasingly, more Americans lose health coverage every year, and those who have coverage pay more for it. Healthcare and drug costs are rising, as are premiums. As a result, many small businesses struggling to stay competitive in today's economy cannot afford to offer their employees insurance coverage. As a result, workers with access to employer-based group insurance plans often cannot afford the costs they must bear for insurance premiums.

The inability to obtain medical insurance unduly affects minorities. A staggering 1 in 3 of Hispanics are uninsured, compared to 1 in 10 of the Nation's white population.

Whereas, the African American community is disproportionately affected by diabetes, car-

diovascular disease, and other health problems that require regular access to healthcare, 1 in 5 African Americans unfortunately are also uninsured.

The consequences are severe. Citizens without health insurance are less likely to seek preventative care or help with minor medical problems, leading to major, more costly medical problems. Without insurance, a person's health is compromised, and their lifespan is shortened. In fact, there are 18,000 deaths each year in this country caused by a lack of health insurance—these deaths are preventable.

The increase in the uninsured population affects not only the health of our citizens, but the health of our economy as well. In fact, nearly half of all bankruptcy filings result from medical expenses. Having just one uninsured family member suffer from just one major medical problem or hospital stay can devastate the financial and emotional resources of an entire family.

To stop the drain on our healthcare infrastructure, our society, and our economy, we must provide insurance coverage to all Americans. We must find a way to lower healthcare and drug costs. We must find a way to make premiums more affordable for employees and employers.

Our small businesses should not have to choose between economic success and meeting their employees' healthcare needs. Workers should not have to refuse insurance for themselves and their children because premiums are too high.

Please join me in supporting the goals of Cover the Uninsured Week. Join me and those stalwarts like Congressmen JOHN CONYERS, PETE STARK, CHARLIE RANGEL and FRANK PALLONE, and Congresswomen TAMMY BALDWIN, BARBARA LEE and DONNA CHRISTENSEN—as we continue our commitment to solving our health insurance crisis and to making sure that all Americans have access to healthcare.

Congress must urgently examine ways to transform our healthcare system so that it is comprehensive, universal, and sustainable. I look forward to taking part in that discussion.

GADSDEN HIGH SCHOOL, RECIPIENT OF THE COLLEGE BOARD
2005 INSPIRATION AWARD

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the accomplishments of an extraordinary New Mexico school. Gadsden High School in Anthony, New Mexico is the recipient of the College Board 2005 Inspiration Award. In its tireless pursuit of student success, Gadsden High School has seen a remarkable increase in Advanced Placement course enrollment and those taking the SAT, and record numbers of students are enrolling in and attending college.

Gadsden High School has helped students achieve equitable access to higher education despite social, economic and cultural challenges. It has made significant strides in exposing its students to higher education options and opportunities. One example of the

school's ingenuity in this endeavor is a pre-college program called MESA that focuses on math, engineering and science. Students who achieve core requirements may earn up to \$1,000 in college tuition, which some admitting colleges and universities elect to match.

In addition to the progress Gadsden High School has made in helping its seniors search and apply for scholarship opportunities, the school supports a summer camp for grades 9–12 to address college questions and planning. The staff also plans to develop an Applying to College Handbook to promote greater parental involvement. These efforts have resulted in an exceptional 57 percent matriculation rate, 98 percent of whom are first-generation college attendees.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Gadsden High School on this well-earned distinction and express my gratitude for the leadership and innovation they have demonstrated. I commend Gadsden High School for the hard work they continue to perform, and I am proud to recognize Gadsden High School—a true model of commitment to higher education—today before my colleagues.

Gadsden High School's motto puts it best by saying "Believe, hope and look for miracles." With an unwavering will to overcome adversity and find creative solutions, Gadsden High School is working to create its own "miracles."

INTRODUCTION OF THE GREAT
LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION
PROGRAMS REAUTHORIZATION
ACT

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce comprehensive legislation to protect and restore the Great Lakes. I am pleased to be joined by Rep. MARK KIRK and 17 bipartisan original cosponsors.

The Great Lakes are a national treasure, providing drinking water to millions of people and supporting billions of dollars in trade, fishing, and recreation. While we have taken steps to improve environmental conditions in the basin, the Great Lakes still suffer from pollution from contaminated sediments, storm water and agricultural runoff, and wetlands and coastal habitat loss.

As its name indicates, the Great Lakes Environmental Protection and Restoration Programs Reauthorization Act reauthorizes several federal Great Lakes environmental programs in one comprehensive package. The bill also provides a mechanism for coordinating activities among the various federal agencies that carry out these programs, along with a process for coordination and future planning among federal, state and local program managers and the private sector. Finally, the bill reauthorizes the State Revolving Loan Fund under the Clean Water Act, in order to address wastewater infrastructure needs.

The bill provides about \$4 billion over 6 years by increasing the authorization levels for current major environmental programs operating in the Great Lakes Basin. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the most effective way to undertake a major restoration initiative is to do so