

Mr. John Gabusi is an outstanding member of our community. His life-long commitment to serving his community is commendable. It is the drive of Mr. Gabusi that has kept him hard at work for others and although Mr. Gabusi has been battling cancer, he wishes he could continue his work at Pima Community College. Mr. Gabusi has served his community well, and his efforts have not gone unnoticed.

I would like to personally commend Mr. John Gabusi for his tireless commitment to our community. His life and work is an inspiration to us all.

NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS  
MONTH

**HON. JIM McDERMOTT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 1, 2005*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, November is National Family Caregivers Month. This month we celebrate those who care for America's vulnerable populations. As a physician, child psychiatrist, and the Ranking Member of the Human Resources subcommittee of the House Committee on Ways and Means, I have a particular interest in the way the Federal Government addresses the needs of abused and neglected children. There are abused and neglected children throughout our country. Sometimes we know who they are, but too often we don't. They live in big cities, small towns, rural areas and every suburb in between. There will always be too many abused children, and there will never be enough family caregivers who provide vulnerable children with the safety and stability they need to thrive.

Family caregivers open their hearts and homes to our most vulnerable populations, and they often do so knowing they will not be recognized for their efforts, nor provided Federal support. If the Congress is as committed to promoting family values as Members of Congress often say, then we should fulfill that commitment by really valuing families and providing Federal support to every foster child in family care. When a child is removed from a home because of neglect or abuse, the Federal Government should have an interest in ensuring the safety and well being of those children. But today the Federal Government is primarily interested in vulnerable children who live in the homes of strangers. We should strive to do better, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime let us acknowledge and celebrate family caregivers around the Nation by using this month to draw attention to the many challenges that face them. Let us celebrate the hard work and commitment of those who care every day for vulnerable populations, our Nation's family caregivers.

TRIBUTE TO THE SPINA BIFIDA  
COMMUNITY

**HON. BART STUPAK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 1, 2005*

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the more than 250,000 Ameri-

cans in the Spina Bifida Community. An estimated 70,000 people in the United States currently live with Spina Bifida, the most common permanently disabling birth defect. Each October we recognize these Americans during National Spina Bifida Awareness Month, but we must work year round to advance research and policies to meet the needs of this community.

As co-chair of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus, I've had the honor to work with the Spina Bifida Association of America, SBAA, to advance Spina Bifida awareness, research and public health efforts in Congress. For over 30 years, the SBAA has helped those living with and affected by this debilitating disease. Founded in 1973, the SBAA is the Nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating on behalf of the Spina Bifida community. Through their almost 60 chapters in more than 125 communities, the SBAA brings expectant parents together with those who have a child with Spina Bifida. This interaction helps to answer questions and concerns, but most importantly it lends support and gives people essential information.

Together the SBAA, the West Michigan SBA, the SBA of the Upper Peninsula Michigan, and the SW Michigan SB & Hydrocephalus Association work tirelessly to help the families of those living with Spina Bifida meet the challenges and enjoy the rewards of raising their children. I would like to thank the local chapters of SBAA in my State for their work in Michigan and other areas of the country. Michigan's chapters are partners in the SB Hurricane Emergency Life Support Program to help bring vitally needed supplies to hurricane victims in the Gulf Region and to put families affected by Spina Bifida in touch with others who can help them.

Mr. Speaker, Spina Bifida is a birth defect that can happen to anyone. We do not know the exact cause of Spina Bifida; but research shows that if a woman takes 400 mcg of folic acid every day before she becomes pregnant, she reduces her risk of having a baby with Spina Bifida or another neural tube defect by as much as 70 percent. The exact cause of the rest of the cases is unknown, but it is believed that genetics and environment may play a role. Spina Bifida is a neural tube defect that happens in the first month of pregnancy when the spinal column doesn't close completely. There are 60 million women at risk of having a baby born with Spina Bifida. Every day, an average of eight babies are affected by Spina Bifida or a similar birth defect of the brain and spine. Each year, about 3,000 pregnancies are affected by these birth defects. Spina Bifida is not one condition; it is a multitude of problems that affect the mind, the body and the spirit. No two cases of Spina Bifida are ever the same.

Today, approximately 90 percent of all babies diagnosed with Spina Bifida live into adulthood, approximately 80 percent have normal IQ's, and approximately 75 percent participate in sports and other recreational activities. With proper medical care attention and family care these people can live productive full lives with the help of braces and/or a wheelchair. There are breakthroughs every year that benefit the quality of life for those living with Spina Bifida. One of the keys to a better life for the 70,000 Americans who live with Spina Bifida is research. Our goals are to develop better treatment, better understanding of causes and new ways to prevent Spina Bifida.

I am proud to be the co-chair of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus with Congressman CHRIS SMITH and hope that all of my colleagues will join me to spread awareness about this disease. Together we can improve the quality of life of those living with Spina Bifida. I encourage my colleagues to join the caucus, which now has 52 members from both sides of the aisle.

I again wish to thank the SBAA and its chapters for all of their hard work to prevent and reduce suffering for those 70,000 individuals living with Spina Bifida throughout this Nation. We all owe a great debt to the SBAA for what they have accomplished.

HONORING THE 50TH WEDDING AN-  
NIVERSARY OF ED AND HARRIET  
NIEMIEC

**HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 1, 2005*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ed and Harriet Niemiec on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Ed and Harriet both grew up in the Back of the Yards neighborhood in Chicago. They knew each other as kids, even though they attended different schools. Eventually Ed and Harriet became engaged and then married on November 6, 1955. They had their only child, Ed, Jr. in August of 1956.

Following in his parent's footsteps, Ed, Jr. and his wife Maria have been married for 27 years. They have two children, Mark and Christina.

Besides an active involvement with their family, Ed and Harriet have many hobbies. Ed spends a lot of time taking care of his yard and tending to his flowers. According to his son, one would be hard pressed to find a blade of grass out of place or a visible weed. Harriet is a consummate volunteer and organizer. Her philanthropies started while she was working at Dry Storage where running the football pools spilled over into organizing senior trips, church functions and working at Christ Hospital as a "Pink Lady."

Ed and Harriet are fine examples as parents and are wonderful role models as grandparents. I would like to extend my best wishes to Ed and Harriet as they and their family celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 1, 2005*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 28, 2005, I was unable to cast my floor votes on rollcall Nos. 555 and 556.

The votes I missed included agreeing to the Conference Report on the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Appropriations Act of 2006 and agreeing to the resolution condemning Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's threats against Israel.

Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 555 and "yea" on rollcall No. 556.