

HONORING SERGEANT BRIAN D.  
STINGER

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 12, 2006*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor West Deptford, New Jersey resident and United States Marine Corps Sergeant Brian D. Stinger for his outstanding service and heroic action while stationed in Japan.

Sergeant Stinger recently received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for saving the life of a Japanese man who caught fire while filling a generator with gas. At great risk to his personal safety, Sergeant Stinger retrieved a fire extinguisher and put out the fire. His heroic efforts saved this man's life.

Mr. Speaker, the actions of Brian Stinger prove that our military service members perform acts of heroism, on and off the battlefield, every day. I applaud his brave and selfless act, and I thank him for his service to our Nation. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL AREA  
HEALTH EDUCATION CENTERS  
ORGANIZATIONS

**HON. LEE TERRY**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 12, 2006*

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I want to call attention to an important event occurring in my district and recognize the two programs giving rise to this event, which have had a tremendous impact on the health care of underserved populations in our country. Beginning June 10 and continuing through June 14, the Nebraska Area Health Education program and the University of Nebraska Medical Center are sponsoring the National Area Health Education Center Organization's (NAO) annual meeting in my district in Omaha, Nebraska. I want to use the opportunity of the national meeting to illustrate the importance of Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) and Health Education Training Centers (HETCs) through the many services and programs they offer.

Area Health Education Centers, established by Congress in 1971, are academic-community partnerships that train health care providers at sites and in programs that are responsive to state and local needs. AHECs improve the supply, distribution, diversity and quality of the health workforce and increase access to health care in medically underserved areas. Furthermore, AHECs facilitate coordination of the resources of health science centers with local educational and clinical resources, which in turn establishes a network that provides multi-disciplinary educational services to students, faculty, and practitioners.

Health Education Training Centers, established in 1989, provide community health education and health professions training programs in areas of the United States with severely underserved populations, such as border states. Together, AHEC and HETC programs recruit, train, and retain health professionals committed to serving underserved populations and provide community programs for

specific populations with severe unmet health needs. Across the country, there are 61 AHEC/HETC programs and 215 affiliated AHEC centers that collaborate with over 120 medical schools and 600 nursing and allied health schools to improve the health of the underserved.

As reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in a typical year, AHECs alone will train 37,000 health professions students in community-based sites, provide health career enhancement and recruitment activities of 20 hours or more to 42,000 high school students, and provide continuing education to 315,000 health care providers. In FY 2005, nearly 10,000 physicians participated in mentoring and training activities to students in community sites. Also, AHEC/HETCs were credited with providing training in medically underserved communities to over 47,000 health professions students.

Recent studies and reports express serious concern regarding the current and predicted shortage of health care professionals across the country, which further illustrates the important work of AHEC/HETCs. In 2005, AHECs/HETCs were successful in introducing health careers to 300,000 students ranging from kindergarten through college.

Mr. Speaker, AHEC/HETC programs serve many important purposes with respect to the recruitment, retention, education and training of health professionals in underserved areas. Today, I would like to fully recognize, appreciate and honor the efforts and activities of AHEC/HETC programs and centers throughout the United States in addressing the nation's most critical health care and health care access issues. I hope my colleagues will join me in commending all the participants in Omaha on the occasion of their national meeting, and thanking them for their service to our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 12, 2006*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, June 9, 2006, I was unable to cast my floor votes on rollcall numbers 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249 and 250. The votes I missed included eight amendments to H.R. 5522 and the final passage of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall 242, "aye" on rollcall 243, "aye" on rollcall 244, "no" on rollcall 245, "aye" on rollcall 246, "aye" on rollcall 247, "no" on rollcall 248, "aye" on rollcall 249 and "aye" on rollcall 250.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 12, 2006*

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, June 9, 2006, I missed rollcall vote numbers 242 through 250 regarding the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Pro-

grams Appropriations Act of 2007. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall 242, "no" on rollcall 243, "yes" on rollcall 244, "no" on rollcall 245, "no" on rollcall 246, "no" on rollcall 247, "no" on rollcall 248, "no" on rollcall 249, and "yes" on rollcall 250.

THE MINE IMPROVEMENT AND  
NEW EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

**HON. JIM MATHESON**

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 7, 2006*

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased the U.S. House of Representatives is debating much needed legislation to improve mining safety across this nation. S. 2803, the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act of 2006, is a compromise bill that received unanimous support in the U.S. Senate and is endorsed by industry and mining workers alike. While no legislation is perfect, this bill goes a long way to protect the brave workers who help secure America's energy needs.

The MINER Act includes a provision that is of particular importance to my home state of Utah. Section 11 of S. 2803 authorizes the establishment of an independent scientific and engineering review of belt air utilization and the composition and fire retardant properties of belt materials in underground coal mining.

Utah's situation with respect to belt air is unique. Utah's coal mines are under deep cover with greater than 1,500 feet of overburden; for enhanced safety, this requires the use of two-entry gate roads for longwall panels. This means only two tunnels lead to the longwall equipment compared to three or four tunnels leading to the longwall equipment found in most longwall mines in the East. Under such deep overburden, additional tunnels or entries would lead to unstable and unsafe conditions.

In any longwall mining system design, one of the entries must be used for the conveyor belt system to transport coal out of the mine. In Utah, where only two-entry mines are practical, both entries must be used to deliver enough fresh air to the longwall machine to properly control dust and methane to meet ventilation health standards.

Due to the importance of belt air use to Utah's mining industry, it is my hope the panel called for in the MINER Act is expeditiously convened and uses sound science to properly evaluate the use of belt air in underground coal mining.

In addition, Section 14 of S. 2803 establishes the "Brookwood-Sago Mine Safety Grants" program to help provide funding for education and training programs concerning safety and health topics in mines.

In my District, a consortium of local business and education interests recently announced the establishment of the Western Energy Training Center in Price, Utah with the help of a two-year Department of Labor grant. The mission of the Center is to educate and train workers to fill jobs for the mining and energy related industries, workers who are badly needed throughout the West. The Center will educate and train future workers with a focus