

causing rural hospitals to allow beds not needed for a critical access purpose to remain unused. This deprives rural hospitals of a much-needed revenue stream and deprives residents of rural areas of access to needed health care services.

My colleagues may be interested to know that the idea for this bill comes from Marcella Henke, an administrator of Jackson County Hospital, a critical access hospital in my congressional district. Ms. Henke conceived of this idea as a way to meet the increasing demand for assisted living services in rural areas and provide hospitals with a profitable way use beds not being used for critical access purposes. I urge my colleagues to embrace this practical way of strengthening rural health care without increasing federal expenditures by cosponsoring the Enhanced Options for Rural Health Care Act (H.R. 6154).

ON THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

**HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 25, 2006*

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Ms. Leslie Blair and the hundreds of other individuals from Massachusetts who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001. This September 11th, I attended an event at the Massachusetts State House with Ms. Blair and other families who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001 to commemorate and celebrate their lives. The day of remembrance and reflection was filled with heart wrenching testimonials of loss, powerful tributes to inspirational courage, and life affirming stories of love and family. Ms. Blair's testimonial about her sister, Susan Leigh Blair, was truly moving.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to include Ms. Blair's remarks in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Good morning. My name is Leslie Blair. My sister Susan Leigh Blair was one of the beautiful faces you just saw in that extraordinarily moving tribute video. Sue was killed on September 11, 2001, as she went about her normal routine on an exceptionally beautiful Tuesday in the South Tower of the World Trade Center.

That video is such a moving tribute to the beautiful souls we lost on horrible and hateful day. Now I have seen a lot of beautiful memorials to the tragedy of September 11, but in static, granite ways, they tend to honor the memory of a day where nearly 3000 vibrant individuals died. This video montage honors the lives, not the deaths, of our loved ones. In those faces, we see the joy of today. And in those eyes, we see the promise for tomorrow, a tomorrow that never came, and a promise that could not be fulfilled.

My son, Nicolas is three. He and I watched this video together, and he asked me what it was. Looking at the smiles, the celebrations, the graduations and weddings, the sun and the sea, the embraces, the families, he looked at all of these lives, and he said, "It's too much." And as you and I know too well, the loss of one is too much. This video memorializes the loss, not just of individuals, but their lives, their promises, their hopes and their joy, and it's just too much.

I was asked to speak today about the value of one life and what one life means—how powerful and impactful one life can be. And like you, I know what I have lost because Susan isn't here. But magnify that loss by all of the families and friends and factor in thousands of coworkers and clients from a today five years ago, and then somehow add in the tomorrows that will never come, and I mean, our country, our world has truly suffered an amazing blow by not having them here. What have we lost as a society because just one of these beautiful smiling faces is no longer here? That is a big question. Let me tell you how I tried to answer it.

I started off by reading recent commentary by some of today's most intelligent economists, authors, politicians, sociologists. Surely the war on terror, the unease and unrest, the social upheaval can somehow be related to our loss. But that didn't seem to answer my question very well. So I turned to the great philosophers and thinkers from a world before 9/11 to see how they had answered that question. The meaning of life—very academic and metaphysical, but, in fact, not very helpful in answering my question.

Then, I looked through my copy of the Portraits of 9/11 book—a consolidation of many of the NY Times obituaries. Certainly we lost smart, successful people in the prime years of their contributions to the world. We lost bankers, investment brokers, insurance executives, servicemen and women, rescue workers, flight crew, corporate management, consultants, technicians, hockey scouts. To lose the brightest, most productive individuals in a society certainly has an economic impact, a social impact. But that didn't seem to answer the question either.

Then I looked my copy of We Remember, a compilation of tributes from Mass 9/11 Fund members, from us. There I found the heart wrenching loss of children, spouses, siblings, parents, friends, and more photos of life and love. I tried, but I couldn't read it cover to cover. So I flipped around. I landed on Capt. John Ogonowski's tribute, and in there, John's family included a poem by Bessie Anderson Stanley. In 1904, Bessie entered a magazine contest and won \$250—so maybe not a great thinker of her time, but her definition of success started to get at what we lost.

He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction.

And I read the rest of John's pages, and I read Ann's pages, and Ace's pages, and Fred's pages, and Betty's pages, and Robin's pages, and it was easier to read more and more pages of these beautiful people whose lives, by Mrs. Stanley's definition were clearly successful. Their lives inspired others and their memories have been a blessing to those who loved them.

And I read the little booklet in front where I found pages of scholarships and funds, awards, forums, lectures, and music. These beautiful souls, through the inspiration and blessing of their living, of having been here and made a mark, these people are still con-

tributing to society today. They are no longer corporate executives or technicians or bankers, or hockey scouts but through their memory and in honor of their lives, we are able to perpetuate their success.

My sister's scholarship rewards teachers so that her passionate commitment to children and her unfulfilled dream of teaching can live on. Mark Bavis' foundation provides college funding and leadership training. Todd Hill's scholarship awards sportsmanship and perseverance. The list goes on. Surely the promise of Susan and Mark and Todd has not died.

So at this point in my research, I abandoned my original question, because inspired by these individuals and how much they were loved and how unique they were and how their promises could be fulfilled, I think I found a more important question. If we, as individuals, incorporate the spirit of our loved ones, their vibrancy, their vitality, their potential, their love, can we not change the world? Can we not increase the potential we had before 9/11 by carrying the potential of our loved ones in our hearts and in our lives and in our own successes?

We all know, too well, the devastating impact of a few evil individuals. But we, as individuals, can and are counteracting that evil impact. In honor of those vibrant successful lives, we can make a more significant impact on society, in our communities, our schools, our businesses, by our own individual actions.

And I think back to that video, the smiles of a today that has passed and the hope for a tomorrow that will never come. And I remember the success described by Mrs. Stanley. Surely our loved ones left a mark on the world in their own right. And we, by loving them and remembering them, make their mark deeper. And we, by doing that, make our own mark. Honoring the characteristics that we loved about them and carrying those characteristics into our today's, do we not carry our loved ones into the future? We have the opportunity today to continue their success. And despite our loss, or maybe because of it, we have the opportunity to live our individual lives successfully, as if tomorrow may never come. Individually, yes, together certainly, we can leave the world better than we found it, as they did. And we can give their promise for tomorrow, through our own promise, to those who love us.

SENIOR CITIZENS DEMAND AFFORDABLE DRUG COVERAGE ON DONUT HOLE DAY

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 25, 2006*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of last Friday, September 22, "Donut Hole" Day. Donut Hole Day was not a happy day but a marker to remind policymakers about the problems that the Part D plan is imposing on America's seniors and people with disabilities this year.

September 22 was the day when the average person with Medicare fell into the Part D donut hole—a black hole of coverage for those whose annual drug costs fall between \$2,250 and \$5,100. The donut hole is a \$2,850 gap in coverage when people with private Part D plans continue to pay insurance

premiums even though they receive no coverage. September 22 was also the day that senior citizens and persons with disabilities came together in events across the country to demand an affordable drug benefit in Medicare.

Nearly 7 million senior citizens and people with disabilities are expected to enter the donut hole. A Kaiser Family Foundation study estimates that, of the people who will fall into the donut hole, 1.9 million (28 percent) have incomes less than 150 percent of poverty; 2.9 million (42 percent) are in fair or poor health; and 3.8 million (55 percent) are women.

The donut hole is an unprecedented phenomenon. This type of coverage gap is not found in the Federal Employees Health Benefits plan or in any other private plan. It is an insurance mechanism especially crafted for people with Medicare.

An analysis from an August report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research concludes that if Medicare had been allowed to negotiate drug prices in the same way as the Veterans Administration, the savings would have been more than enough to eliminate the donut hole gap in coverage. In fact, the close to \$50 billion that could be saved in the first full year of the program is more than twice the size of the donut hole.

The real winners in the Part D program are the drug and insurance companies. In a report released this week by the Committee on Government Reform Democratic staff shows that profits grew by over \$8 billion (27 percent) for the ten largest pharmaceutical manufacturers in the first half of this year.

The losers in the Part D program are people with Medicare. The prices charged by the top Part D plans in my Congressional District were 79 percent higher than the prices negotiated by the Federal government. A recent Merrill Lynch analysis found that in 2006 prices for popular brand-name drugs had increased by 8.6 percent over the last year, twice as fast as the overall information rate.

The donut hole puts seniors and people disabilities' health at grave risk. A New England Journal of Medicine study found that seniors' behaviors change when faced with a prescription drug benefit cap after which they have to pay the full costs of their drugs—and the donut hole is a cap. The study found that found that seniors who confront a cap are more likely to skip doses of treatments, less likely to visit hospital emergency departments, and, sadly, sometimes more likely to die sooner. Their annual mortality rate was 22 percent higher than those without such a cap on benefits.

Representatives MARION BERRY of Arkansas, TOM ALLEN of Maine and I introduced H.R. 752, the Prescription Drug Savings and Choice Act, which would take Medicare in a new direction by siding with senior citizens and people with disabilities—not the drug companies. This bill would give people with Medicare the choice of enrolling in a Medicare-administered drug benefit and we would force drug companies to lower their prices by requiring Medicare to negotiate for deep discounts. The savings could be used to fill the donut hole.

Ms. Pauline Metzger-Aronson wrote to me earlier this year to tell me that she fell into the

donut hole in June. She will pay a monthly premium for the rest of the year, although she will not receive any benefits because she will not climb out of the donut hole. She told me that the saying, "As you amble through life, whatever be your goal: Keep your eye on the donut and not upon the hole" had new meaning because "some of us seniors have reached the point where the donut is gone and we are now forced to look into the hole." H.R. 752 would help Ms. Metzger-Aronson and many others. It is a step in the right direction which will put America's seniors and people with disabilities first. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

#### HONORING GEORGIA HOUSING WEEK

#### HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 25, 2006*

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, today marks the end of Public Housing Week in the State of Georgia. I would like to commend those who work hard every day to ensure that our fellow Georgians have safe and affordable housing. The following proclamation was issued at the Capitol building in Atlanta, Georgia last week, and I would like to submit it for the RECORD.

#### PROCLAMATION

The Federal Public Housing Program was initiated under the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 as part of the Nation's New Deal Initiative, and has provided housing for millions of Americans since the outset of this program.

Georgia, being the first State in the Nation to construct Public Housing for its citizens under the Federal Public Housing Program, continues to be a leader of this industry and recognized across the country for its excellence in providing decent, safe, and affordable housing for Georgia's citizens.

The Georgia Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development work in partnership to provide public housing for over 110,000 families in the State of Georgia, as well as local jobs, economic opportunity, family services, and neighborhood revitalization for the majority of Georgia cities through their local housing authorities.

Governor Sonny Perdue of the State of Georgia proclaims September 19th through the 26th as Public Housing Week in Georgia. I encourage all citizens to express their appreciation for the commitment and the service of those in the Public Housing Industry within the State of Georgia.

#### CONGRATULATING ARAGON HIGH SCHOOL ON THE COMPLETION OF ITS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

#### HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 25, 2006*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the passage of an important

bond issue, Measure D, and the improvements it has made in the San Mateo Union High School District. Voters in my district saw a great opportunity to advance our community and overwhelmingly approved a \$137.5 million bond measure. Combining this bond measure with other resources the district undertook a \$234.5 million capital improvement program. Some of these funds were dedicated for new construction and modernization of Aragon High School. The community will be celebrating the completion of this project with a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 28, 2006.

Aragon High School has been a California Distinguished School since 1988 and has many accomplishments. It is one of only three high schools in the County to have earned and improved an 800 Academic Performance Index Score (API) on the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) tests. Soon after the passage of the bond issue, Aragon High School was the first in the district to provide Advanced Placement (AP) courses that have challenged students dedicated to academics and has encouraged the professional development of California AP teachers.

Aragon High School's developments have encouraged others outside the County as well. The school's demonstration of a commitment to reform necessary for academic success has led to Aragon's participation in the New American High School initiative for school reform, receiving a \$40,000 grant tied to middle and elementary feeder schools. The capital improvement program and the school's dedication to academic success have helped to ensure students' acceptance into the most prestigious colleges and universities in America with 57% of the Class of 2006 accepted to four year colleges. These graduates earn nearly \$2 million annually through scholarships and grants.

Beyond academics, Aragon High School can boast of extra-curricular programs that have been improved with the passage of Measure D. Students of Aragon High School participate in award winning vocal and instrumental music programs, including performances of the band at Carnegie Hall in New York, an invitation with the Boston Pops Symphony, and the honor to represent California and the United States at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

The Measure D modernization and new construction program at Aragon High School is made possible by the Board of Trustees, joined by community leaders, elected officials, parents, school staff, and the public at large that volunteered and helped pass this bond issue and do what is best for the youth attending schools in the community.

The San Mateo Union School District has been and is devoted to its academics and voters within the County. The people of the community have contributed to these successes by voting on Measure D and by dedicating themselves in the classrooms. I commend them for their efforts that have provided a safe and modern teaching and learning facility in San Mateo County.