

While the Lifestyles for the Disabled family continues to grow, Richard has maintained a solid connection to his roots. As an alumnus of Wagner College, Mr. Salinardi started a program to have students from his alma mater volunteer their time at Lifestyles, maximizing their college experiences.

Mr. Salinardi continues to volunteer his time with Special Olympics at Wagner College. The Special Olympics program at Wagner started 35 years ago with 10 athletes and has grown to over 500 athletes, training year-round. Since 1975, Richard has served as the Staten Island Area Coordinator and currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of Special Olympics of New York.

Mr. Salinardi is a truly great American and a dedicated community leader. Because of the devotion of Richard Salinardi, I know that disabled individuals on Staten Island and around New York City are in good hands.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending Richard Salinardi for his dynamic leadership and acknowledging the impact he has made on the developmentally disabled of Staten Island.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 7, 2009

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Health Care for America Act will strengthen America and offer greater security to our workers, families, seniors and businesses. It will enhance our Nation's health care system, placing American healthcare consumers where they belong: at the heart of it. H.R. 3962 will improve quality, choice and competition, while cutting down fraud, waste and abuse, and lowering costs over the long term. It will strengthen Medicare, eliminate the Part D "donut hole," improve access for lower income citizens so that Medicare is affordable for ALL seniors, and create new consumer protections for Medicare Advantage Plans. Discrimination for pre-existing conditions, dropped coverage, and yearly or lifetime caps will no longer be tolerated. Co-pays and other cost-sharing for preventative services will be eliminated and annual caps on what an individual or a family pays out-of-pocket will be established.

Since 1987, the cost of the average family health insurance policy has risen from 7 percent of median family income to 17 percent. Family premiums are projected to increase an average of \$1,800 each year and in 2007, 60 percent of bankruptcies were reported to be related to medical costs. With this bill, no American family will go bankrupt because they get sick.

Sixty percent of our Nation's entire uninsured population are small business owners and their employees and families. This equals at least 28 million uninsured Americans. Small business premiums have risen 129 percent since 2000. In 2008, 38 percent of small companies offered health coverage, compared with 41 percent in 2007 and 61 percent in 1993.

For too long, the health of our Nation has dwindled while the pockets of the insurance

giants have thickened. Our seniors have compromised prescription drugs for necessary groceries, while the pharmaceutical industry has made record profits. Hard working families have watched their savings plummet and their homes foreclosed after unexpected illnesses. Women with breast cancer, men with heart disease and children with leukemia or childhood diabetes have been flat-out denied health insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions or reaching insurance policy caps.

Under the House Plan, the Ninth Congressional District of Ohio, the region I represent, will benefit immensely and in very specific ways:

386,000 residents will see improved employer-based coverage

167,000 households would be eligible for credits to help pay for coverage

38,000 uninsured citizens just in our region would be eligible for insurance under a reformed system

14,500 small businesses will be allowed to obtain affordable health care coverage and 12,400 among them will receive tax credits to help reduce the costs of health insurance

102,000 beneficiaries will benefit from an improved Medicare program

7,600 seniors will benefit from closing the prescription drug donut hole, starting with \$500 of cost forgiveness in 2010

1,700 families will be protected from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs

\$120 million in savings will be seen by hospitals and health care providers as a result of reductions in uncompensated care.

Under this bill, immediately, the uninsured and seniors will receive relief through a temporary insurance program. Individuals receiving COBRA will be allowed to keep their coverage until a more customer friendly, one-stop marketplace for health insurance, known as the Exchange, is created. The Exchange will offer affordability credits and tax credits for individuals and businesses that need them. Health plans will be required to allow young people until their 27th birthday to remain on their parents' health insurance policy. Moreover, insurance companies will be subject to public review and disclosure of insurance excessive rate increases.

Much needed investments will be made right away in training programs designed to increase the number of primary care doctors, nurses, and public health professionals. Not-for-Profit purchasing collaboratives, such as the FrontPath Health Coalition from Northwest Ohio, will be strengthened to achieve careful plan management and cost-savings, and encouraged as a central provision of Title I. Community Health Centers will see an increase in funding to allow for a doubling of patients over the next 5 years. A \$10 billion fund will be created to finance a temporary reinsurance program to help offset the costs of expensive health claims for employers that provide health benefits for retirees age 55-64.

The well being of individuals and our nation will benefit from these reforms. From an economic standpoint, healthcare costs have stifled the vitality of American businesses and their ability to compete in the global marketplace. The 129 percent increase since 2000 in small business premiums alone have smothered their potential and destroyed their ability to cover employees, resulting in an astounding 60 percent of our Nation's entire uninsured population.

Affordable health insurance reform is necessary to cut the costs of doing business, reduce the share of government expenditures spent on health care, help our companies to be more competitive in the world market, unleash the entrepreneurial talents of the American people, and give peace of mind to the middle class and our seniors and others that everything they have worked for will not be taken away if they get sick.

As someone who grew up in a small business family, I watched our father forced to sell our small family grocery when he became ill. He needed health insurance for our family and took a job at a local auto assembly plant to obtain it for his wife and children. I promised myself when I was elected to Congress that passing legislation to cover small business would be one of my top priorities. Finally, it has become possible to vote on a bill that will do this for millions of our fellow citizens.

With the mounting economic strain on American families and the rising costs of health insurance to workers, businesses and federal budget, the status quo has proven itself unsustainable, fiscally irresponsible and morally unacceptable. The time has come for this historical change. I stand in support of its promise to the American people.

THANKING RICK KESSLER FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE RIPON SOCIETY

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, as Bill Gates once said, "Great organizations demand a high level of commitment by the people involved."

I rise today to recognize Rick Kessler, whose commitment to one particular organization—the Ripon Society—has not only spanned three decades, but has left a lasting impact on public policy debate in the United States.

In 1962, as a student attending Harvard University, I helped found the Ripon Society. The intent was to provide Republicans with a place where they could debate the issues and discuss the challenges of the day.

Rick's involvement with Ripon dates back to the early 1980s. He had been involved with John Anderson's presidential campaign, where he served as National Finance Director before going on to serve on the Inaugural Committee for President Reagan.

Rick joined the Ripon Society as Executive Director in 1981 and immediately set out to revitalize the organization. Among his accomplishments, Rick created the Congressional Advisory Board; the nonpartisan Ripon Educational Fund Transatlantic Conference; the Congressional Liaison Board; the Rough Rider Awards Dinner; and he oversaw the rejuvenation of The Ripon Forum, the Society's journal of thought and opinion. More than anything, though, Rick carried the organization on his shoulders through good times and bad.

In 2004, Rick was invited to follow in the footsteps of the Honorable Bill Frenzel and become the President of the Ripon Society. He has served in this role with great distinction.

Rick also was busy raising a family. He and his wife Daphne have been married for 21

years, and are the proud parents of two wonderful children, their daughter Sam and son Ryan.

After five years as President, Rick recently announced that he is stepping down and becoming President Emeritus of the Ripon Society. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all that he has done for Ripon. What started out 47 years ago as a seed on the Harvard campus has become a strong and sturdy tree in Washington, DC, today.

It is a tree rooted in ideas, and one whose growth over the past 30 years would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of Rick Kessler.

I thank him for his service.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican Leadership standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 2996, the Interior-Environment Appropriations Act, 2010.

Requesting Member: ROB BISHOP

Bill number: H.R. 2996

Account: Forest Service Land Acquisition

Legal name and address of requesting entity: The Trust for Public Land, 660 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20003

Description of project: The Bonneville Shoreline Trail was initiated in 1990 to complete a trail corridor along the prehistoric shoreline of Lake Bonneville and along the foothills of the Wasatch mountains from Ogden to Provo. This partnership has been so successful that the communities in Cache and Box Elder counties have worked to extend the trail north. The 150-acre North Ogden property is a priority for protection by the U.S. Forest Service. The property serves as an important habitat for deer and elk and as an important buffer for fire protection for the rapidly developing area along the Wasatch Front. The property also provides watershed protection for neighboring areas in addition to key recreational resources.

The North Ogden program is a partnership effort to fill in the boundaries of the national forest along the BST in North Ogden and Pleasant View. In 2005, a five-mile stretch of the BST along North Ogden and Pleasant View was secured through a trail easement along an existing utility corridor granted to the nonprofit Weber Pathways. The property available for protection this year is critical to the North Ogden program because it will bring Forest Service ownership to this stretch of the BST and add critical trail access to the citizens in this area of the state. Protection of this property will also protect beautiful views of the foothills of the Wasatch Front and Ben Lomond Peak, one of Weber County's most important landmarks, while conserving important wildlife habitat and winter range along this rapid growth area.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF CHARLES HILDEBRAND FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Charles Hildebrand, a community leader and public servant who is retiring from over thirty-five years of service with the Social Security Administration. Charles spent his career serving others, and I am proud to honor this dedication and service.

After graduating from South Carolina State College, Charles started his federal career in 1970 as a program specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He moved to the Social Security Administration in 1973 as a claim representative in Newark, New Jersey. From 1974 to 1977, Charles also served as the vice president of American Federation of Government Employees Local 2389.

Over the course of his career with the Social Security Administration, Charles worked as an operations supervisor, a level 2 manager, an analyst for the Georgia and North Florida area office staffs, and a level 1 manager. He graduated from the Atlanta Leadership Development Program in 1991. The SSA twice awarded him the agency's highest honor, the Commissioner's Citation.

Charles is also a community service leader. He serves as the 2009–2010 Chairman for the EscaRosa Combined Federal Campaign local agency application review committee and the non-military agencies committee. He is also chair of the North Florida E-service and Integrity/Anti Fraud cadres. As chairman of the board of the Beach Institute Historic Association, Charles oversaw the development of a low-income rehabilitation project to serve the underprivileged in our area.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am honored to recognize Charles Hildebrand for his service to the people of Northwest Florida. He has been a dedicated public servant for forty years. My wife Vicki and I wish all the best for Charles, his wife, Iris, and his children, Nikki and Amii, as they embark on this next endeavor in their lives.

CONGRATULATING PROFESSOR PANNING

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN LEE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. LEE of New York. Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate SUNY Brockport Professor Anne Panning on being named the 2009 New York Professor of the Year. This is a tremendous accomplishment and the western New York community is proud to have Professor Panning as a member of our community.

After receiving her undergraduate degree from Augsburg College, Anne went on to receive her master of fine arts degree from Bowling Green State University and then her doctorate from the University of Hawaii.

She has received much praise from her students and fellow literary scholars alike. In a review for her 2007 work *Super America*, the *New York Times* wrote that it "radiates infectious optimism."

In addition to teaching several classes at SUNY Brockport, Anne also co-directs the Brockport Writers Forum, one of the foremost reading series in the country. The Forum has had a significant impact on the direction of Brockport's English department on both the undergraduate and graduate level, and Anne has played an integral part in the Forum's continued success along with her co-director, poet Ralph Black.

Anne has won several awards for her fiction and nonfiction writing and also for her teaching, including the Flannery O'Connor Award for short fiction, the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Lillian Fairchild Award, and now, the New York Professor of the Year.

Madam Speaker, I again wish to congratulate Professor Panning on being named the New York State Professor of the Year, and wish her much continued success.

FIRE GRANTS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3791) to amend sections 33 and 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, and for other purposes:

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support for H.R. 3791, the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2009, introduced by my good friend Representative HARRY MITCHELL.

H.R. 3791 will reauthorize the FIRE Grants programs—comprised of the Assistance to Firefighter Grant, AFG, program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, SAFER, grant program—to ensure that our local firefighters have the tools and resources they need to keep us safe and secure.

Since 2001, the Fire Grants Programs have provided more than \$5 billion in support to local fire departments across the Nation, \$190 million of which has gone to support Texas fire departments. H.R. 3791 provides a 5-year reauthorization of \$1 billion per year for the AFG and \$1.194 billion for the SAFER programs.

The AFG program was created to address concerns that local budgets were unable to handle the mounting responsibilities allocated to the fire service by providing funds to local fire departments to purchase equipment, vehicles, and training. The SAFER program assists fire departments in hiring quality personnel and ensuring that volunteers meet the required safety standards. Funding through these programs has been a valuable tool in helping local fire departments provide emergency response services to their communities.