

Agriculture Committee, Bill was appointed the Deputy Minority Staff Director.

For the next seven years, Bill was responsible for policy and legislative development for Agriculture Committee Republicans. In 1991, Rep. Madigan became the Secretary of Agriculture and appointed Bill as his Chief of Staff. Bill served in that role through the balance of President George H.W. Bush's administration.

In 1993, Bill returned to the Republican House Agriculture Committee as Policy Director under Rep. Pat Roberts of Kansas. He continued as Policy Director or Staff Director for the remainder of his career working under Rep. Bob Smith of Oregon, Rep. Larry Combest of Texas, Rep. BOB GOODLATTE of Virginia, and Rep. FRANK LUCAS of Oklahoma.

Bill's knowledge and experience made him an essential staffer in the development and implementation of U.S. agriculture policy. He played a key role in the reauthorization of five farm bills. And, he has been regarded as an expert on agriculture policy matters by both Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate members.

One story that highlights the trust Bill earned from members of Congress happened in 2003 when the Agriculture Committee received reconciliation instructions. Rep. Dennis Hastert, then Speaker of the House, called a members meeting to discuss the instructions, which included Bill as staff director of the committee. Prior to starting the meeting, Speaker Hastert announced to the group that he wanted everyone to know that in 1986 Ed Madigan dispatched Bill O'Conner to assist with his first campaign to Congress. Madigan advised him to quote "listen to everything this man tells you." Hastert continued to say that he did then and has done so every day since.

It is fair to say that every Chairman and Ranking Member on the Agriculture Committee for whom Bill has worked was also wise to follow Mr. Madigan's advice. We remain grateful for Bill's dedication and service. His leadership, knowledge, experience, and professionalism will be missed, but we do wish him and his family the very best in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, RECIPIENT OF TWO AWARDS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OPEN WORLD LEADERSHIP CENTER

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the School of Public Policy at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, which has received special recognition from the Open World Leadership Center at the Library of Congress. The Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center in George Mason's School of Public Policy and the Academy for Education Development have demonstrated exceptional support to the Open World Program and the Congress by acting as national grantees.

The Open World program aims to increase U.S.-Eurasian understanding and partnerships. Since its inception in 1999, the program has introduced more than 15,000 current and fu-

ture decision makers from Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union to American political and civic life. In addition to Russia, the program includes the former Soviet states of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

On March 8, 2010, the Open World Leadership Center presented the 2010 Open World National Grantee of Merit Award to the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center and the Open World Award for Service to Congress to the Academy for Education Development.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing George Mason's School of Public Policy for its exceptional service to Congress and the Open World Program. The school's actions have a profound impact on increasing political and civic discourse between the United States and former Soviet states.

RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, March 21, 2010

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4872, the Reconciliation Act of 2010, because this bill is good for seniors, good for women, good for small businesses, and good for all Americans. Today we have the opportunity to take a historic vote that will forever change the face, health, and life of America for the better. H.R. 4872 will provide access to affordable, quality health care for over 30 million Americans and will reign in the ever-escalating costs of health care. Today, history will be made and a legacy left behind for generations to come. 435 Members who represent over 300 million people will be remembered for beginning to fulfill the promise all Americans were pledged, the unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which adequate healthcare embodies.

For the people I represent in the 37th District of California, H.R. 4872 will improve coverage for 299,000 residents who already have insurance. It will give tax credits and other assistance to up to 146,000 families and 15,100 small businesses to help them afford coverage. H.R. 4872 will improve Medicare for 63,000 beneficiaries in my district, including closing the donut hole for them. This legislation will extend coverage to 92,500 uninsured residents of the 37th District and will guarantee that 17,500 residents with preexisting conditions can obtain the health insurance they need. H.R. 4872 will protect 1,100 families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs and will allow 59,000 young adults to obtain coverage on their parents' insurance plans. This bill will provide millions of dollars in new funding for 11 community health centers in my district. And finally, it will reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and other health care providers by \$125 million annually.

H.R. 4872 helps seniors by ensuring that they will not be forced out of Medicare, that their doctors will continue to care for Medicare patients because of increased payment levels, and that the prescription donut hole will be

completely closed by 2020. H.R. 4872 helps women by eliminating the discriminatory gender rating system, making sure that insurance companies do not consider pregnancy grounds for denying coverage, and doing away with all preexisting conditions. H.R. 4872 helps the uninsured by extending coverage to 95% percent of Americans. Furthermore, it increases access and choice for all Americans by providing \$11 billion in new funding for community health centers, of which there are 11 in my district alone. Finally, H.R. 4872 helps small businesses by eliminating price and benefit discrimination, providing tax credits for up to 50 percent of the cost of insuring their employees, and giving them greater control over the spiraling costs of health care coverage.

As I participated in countless debates, caucuses, and meetings over the past year, I knew that each step we took put us one step closer to what Theodore Roosevelt proposed in 1908 over 100 years ago: quality, affordable healthcare for all Americans. Our health care system up until now has not worked for most people, whether it be the physician as provider, the employer as payer, or the patient as recipient.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides American families with stability and peace of mind. Never again will they have to choose between their health and their livelihood. H.R. 4872 provides all American families with the possibility of better healthcare.

It is time for us to move forward. H.R. 4872 is a new direction for this great country. I urge my colleagues to be a part of this historic health care policy change, and to be part of the days ahead in which we will work to further strengthen it.

HONORING EAST LANSING HIGH SCHOOL GIRL'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to East Lansing High School and in particular the East Lansing High School girl's basketball team. On March 20, 2010 the Trojans won the Michigan Class A state championship. This victory capped an outstanding season as the Trojans completed a 27-1 season.

Madam Speaker, these extraordinary young women deserve special recognition not only for their success on the basketball court, but also for their excellent work in the classroom. Congratulations to Head Coach Robert Smith and players Natalie Rose Brogan, Hannah Fitzpatrick, Malika Glover, Zakiya Minifee, Kelsey Deshambo, Kaitlin Lapka, Klarissa Bell, Shayna Allen, Alex Trecha, Alex Green, Libby Meyer, and Gracie Whelan.

I ask that the House of Representatives join me in congratulating the East Lansing Trojan's on their state championship and I wish all of these young ladies luck in their future endeavors.