

Ranking Member, supported my efforts and joined with me in signing letters to Mr. Everett Alvarez, Chairman of the CARES Commission, requesting the same.

On February 13, 2004, the Commission released its report and I am pleased that our CBOC is included in its final recommendations. I am also pleased that the Commission made a nationwide decision to dismiss the VA priority ratings of 1, 2, and 3 and thereby cleared the way for the establishment of CBOCs in rural areas like American Samoa that have less than 7,000 veterans. Given the Commission's report, I am now hopeful that the Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, will use the recommendations made by the CARES Commission to create better access to health care for American Samoans veterans.

At this time, I want to thank the CARES Commission for undertaking this mission and for seeking the views of veterans and stakeholders across the country. I also want to thank Senators Inouye and Akaka, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Evans, and General John Ma for their support throughout this process.

As I have said many times before, our sons and daughters have served in record numbers in every U.S. military engagement from WWII to present operations in Iraq. We have stood by the United States in good times and bad and I am pleased that the CARES Commission has recognized our service and agreed that it is time to do right by American Samoans veterans.

Once again, I thank the Commission for the opportunity I had to testify and submit supporting documentation for consideration, including a Senate Concurrent Resolution from the American Samoa Legislature dated March 28, 2001 I also thank American Samoans veterans and our active duty service members for their support. I applaud them for their military service and I continue to wish them and their families the very best, the Congressman concluded.

[Press Release, June 22, 2004]

U.S. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROVES FALEOMAVAEGA'S REQUEST TO ESTABLISH VA CLINIC IN AMERICAN SAMOA

Congressman Faleomavaega announced today that the Honorable Anthony J. Principi, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, has approved Faleomavaega's request to establish a VA clinic in American Samoa.

"The Secretary announced his decision on May 7, 2004 and I will be meeting on June 24, 2004 with Dr. Wiebe, Director of VISN 21, which is the Veterans Integrated Service Network responsible for California, Nevada, Hawaii, Guam and American Samoa," Congressman Faleomavaega said.

"On April 26, 2004, I briefed Major General Joseph G. Webb, Jr., Commander of the Pacific Regional Medical Command and the Lead Agent for TRICARE Pacific on my efforts to establish a clinic in American Samoa. Dr. Wiebe was also present for these discussions which took place in American Samoa during the April recess, or district work period."

"I am pleased that I was able to take General Webb and Dr. Wiebe on a tour of the butler building which the 9th Regional Support Command has agreed to turn over for our use, Faleomavaega continued. I am also pleased that General Webb and Dr. Wiebe were able to see first-hand the needs of our local veterans."

"Most of all, I am thankful that Secretary Principi has agreed that a VA community based outpatient clinic (CBOC) should be established in American Samoa. Only 156 new CBOCs will be established and one of those will be for our veterans," Congressman Faleomavaega said.

"Recognizing that resources are not available to open all of these clinics immediately, the VA will establish the new CBOCs by using criteria within the existing approval process. This includes sound business plans and the capacity to manage specialty referrals and inpatient needs of a new population."

"Given our immediate need and the arrangements we have in place with the U.S. Army Reserve, I am hopeful that VISN 21 and Dr. Wiebe will be able to act quickly on the establishment of our clinic, the Congressman said. At this time, I want to thank the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission which included American Samoa in its recommendations to the Secretary."

"The CARES Commission was created by the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an independent assessment of what the VAs needs may be during the next 20 years. One of the main priorities of the Commission is to make sure that underserved veterans will receive the care they deserve."

"On October 1, 2003, I testified before the CARES Commission via live satellite feed from the U.S. House of Representatives to urge the establishment of a VA clinic in American Samoa and to request that our clinic be given the highest priority rating possible, Congressman Faleomavaega said. In my statement, I informed the Commission that I had worked closely with General John Ma, Commanding General of the 9th Regional Support Command, to secure a building at no cost to the VA."

"The building that we agreed should be used for a VA clinic is the butler building which currently houses our PX. The butler building is 3,600 sq. ft., equipped with telehealth lines, and there are separate entrances and parking lots that can be further separated if necessary. The U.S. Army Reserve has agreed to reconfigure the building to VA needs and transfer its operations when our new \$20 million U.S. Army Reserve Center is completed by October of this year."

"Mr. David Burge, Director of the Honolulu VA Medical and Regional Office Center (VAMROC), and Dr. Wiebe have estimated that construction costs to renovate the building will be approximately \$1 million. The VA and DoD will assume all costs associated with the renovation and, once converted, the clinic will be used to serve Army Reservists as well as our veterans," Congressman Faleomavaega said.

"As I stated in my testimony before the Commission, more than 5,000 veterans live in American Samoa but only about 800 are enrolled in VA health care. Enrolled veterans are forced to travel more than 2,300 miles from American Samoa to the nearest VA facility in Honolulu, Hawaii to receive the medical care and attention they need."

"As a Vietnam veteran, I am painfully aware of the sacrifices that American Samoans veterans have made in defense of this nation, and I do not believe we are asking for the moon when we ask for a VA clinic to be established in American Samoa. Like every other American who has borne the battle, our veterans deserve access to quality VA care. We deserve to have at least one doctor, one nurse, and a clinic to serve our veterans and I am pleased that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the CARES Commission agrees with me and has made a favorable recommendation for the establishment of a CBOC in American Samoa."

"Although there was some question about whether or not we had enough veterans to qualify for the establishment of a CBOC, the CARES Commission set aside VA claims that we may have as few as 800 veterans and simply stated that it agrees that a CBOC should be established in American Samoa in col-

laboration with the Department of Defense. This news comes after years of hard work, ups and downs, and twists and turns, the Congressman said. For almost two years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has placed a hold on construction of new facilities and every State and Territory is now competing for construction dollars."

"Last year, about 242 VA facilities were listed in the CARES National Draft plan and American Samoans CBOC was among those listed. Initially, we had a priority rating of 3 because we have less than 7,000 veterans. Because of our remote location and lack of VA care, I asked the Commission to raise our rating from priority 3 to priority 1 before publishing its final recommendations."

"I also asked for American Samoans CBOC to be included in the Commissions final report to the Secretary. Senator Inouye, Senator Akaka, the Honorable Chris Smith, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and the Honorable Lane Evans, Ranking Member, supported my efforts and joined with me in signing letters to Mr. Everett Alvarez, Chairman of the CARES Commission, requesting the same."

"On February 13, 2004, the Commission released its report and, as I announced in a press release dated February 14, 2004, our CBOC was included in its final recommendations. The Commission made a nationwide decision to dismiss the VA priority ratings of 1, 2, and 3 and thereby cleared the way for the establishment of CBOCs in rural areas like American Samoa that have less than 7,000 veterans."

"In turn, Secretary Principi included our clinic on his list of 156 and I am hopeful that with his support VISN 21 will now move to improve health care for American Samoans veterans, the Congressman said. As I have said time and time again, our men and women have served in record numbers in every U.S. military engagement from WWII to present operations in Iraq. We have stood by the United States in good times and bad and I am pleased that Secretary Principi has made it clear that it is time to do right by American Samoans veterans."

"I thank Secretary Principi for his support. I also thank the CARES Commission, Senator Inouye, Senator Akaka, Chairman Chris Smith and Ranking Member Lane Evans of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Dave Burge, General Webb, and General John Ma for their support and commitment throughout this process."

"Again, I thank the Commission for the opportunity I had to testify and submit supporting documentation for consideration, including a Senate Concurrent Resolution from the American Samoa Legislature dated March 28, 2001. I also thank American Samoans veterans and our active duty service members for their support. I applaud them for their military service and I continue to wish them and their families the very best," the Congressman concluded.

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS AND THE UNITED STATES

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress we know well, perhaps better than most, how blessed our nation is to

have in reserve such exceptional young men and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said:

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

By this measure, there are several other great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my offices. They may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated and that is why today I rise to pay tribute to four extraordinary young persons for their service to my constituents in the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the American people. They are: Ruby Grace, Chelsea Banks, Adam Kong, Lauren Buchanan, Rachel Foster, Keome Rowe, Jesus Vasquez, Maria Mojica, and Ruth Welland, and finally to Victoria Brayer, to whom today I also wish a very happy birthday.

Mr. Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism these wonderful young people brought to my office and those interning in the offices of my colleagues help keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

Because of persons like them the future of our country is bright and its best days lie ahead. I wish them all well.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that such thoughtful committed young men and women can be found working in my office, those of my colleagues, and in every community in America. Their good works will keep America great, good, and forever young.

IN SUPPORT OF AMERICAN  
EDUCATION WEEK

**HON. DAVID E. PRICE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge American Education Week. This annual celebration was established by the National Education Association and the American Legion in 1921, and it serves as a time to remember the paramount importance of education.

This year's theme, Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility, is a renewed call for all citizens—from parents and teachers, to school staff and education sup-

port professionals, to elected officials and community leaders—to work together to improve our schools.

Public education is the bedrock of our democracy, and we must provide robust support of public schools to ensure our young people can fulfill their potential.

But these days, education programs are on the chopping block. State and federal officials seem to have lost sight of the value of investing in our schools. With that in mind, I cannot imagine a better time to acknowledge the importance of public education and the vital and underappreciated contributions that educators make every day.

Somewhere along the line, we have all been inspired by great teachers who have helped us develop the perspective and good judgment to be active participants in our communities. But the support these teachers need to do their jobs effectively—including a competitive salary and funding for supplies and textbooks—is too often the target of over-eager budget hawks.

We've learned this in our home state of North Carolina, where the Republican majority in the General Assembly has slashed the education budget, even as enrollment has increased. Teacher pay ranks 46th in the nation, having fallen from 20th in the last five years. Overall state funding for our schools has dropped by 8.6 percent since 2008, and believe me when I tell you that our teachers and students are feeling the squeeze.

That trend is hardly unique to North Carolina—a recent report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that 30 states have cut education budgets. Insufficient funding for teachers and public schools has quickly become a national problem.

The picture is even bleaker at the federal level. This year, my Republican colleagues once again plan to oversee major reductions in discretionary spending, including education funding. That will mean new threats to all federal education initiatives, from primary and secondary school support to Pell Grants and other college affordability programs.

As state and federal officials debate budgets, we would be wise to remember that none of our education policies will succeed until committed teachers and administrators, critical school support staff and education support staff, and engaged students all have the support that they need to thrive.

Government should be in the business of recruiting great educators who are willing to dedicate their careers to public education. We must provide them with adequate training, opportunities for professional development, competitive salaries, sufficient classroom resources, and support from effective administrators and staff.

We also have to work to ensure that every American student who works hard can afford to go to college. It is wholly irresponsible to make further cuts to Pell Grants and burden students with additional debt. Instead, we should be doing everything possible to incentivize college for bright students who have a passion for learning.

This American Education Week, students and teachers around the country are calling out for our support. I encourage my colleagues in Congress and friends in the General Assembly to answer the call and restore education funding to sustainable levels. It's the best investment we can make in a future we can be proud of.

ACKNOWLEDGING NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

**HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support and recognition of National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month. Alzheimer's is a disease that now afflicts more than five million people in our nation and one of them is my father, Ignacio. It is a heart-breaking disease that affects every member of the family, community, and country.

As someone whose father suffers from this debilitating illness, I am acutely aware of the pain and hardship that Alzheimer's inflicts not just on my family but on society as well. In 2014, the direct costs of caring for those with Alzheimer's will total \$214 billion, including \$150 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid. Unfortunately, this situation is only going to get worse. The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is projected to grow to sixteen million and the costs of caring for these people will grow to \$1.2 trillion by 2050.

This November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, a time to be mindful of the struggles that families face in caring for loved ones with this disease. It is also a time to raise awareness, support, and outreach for those confronted with Alzheimer's disease and for their families. These efforts will help increase community awareness and understanding to better equip us as a nation to face this disease.

This Thanksgiving break I will visit my father, whose hands never lost their memory, and I will give thanks that those hands helped shape my life. This is why I am committed to finding a cure and calling for increased funding for Alzheimer's research at the National Institute of Health. It is my hope that a commitment to research and improving treatments will one day rid us Alzheimer's disease entirely.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF VIL-  
LAGE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN  
AMERICAN SAMOA

**HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVEGA**

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 20, 2014*

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include, for historical purposes, the legislative history of village road improvements in American Samoa.

[Press Release, Mar. 25, 2004]

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AGREES TO INCREASE HIGHWAY FUNDING FOR TERRITORIES AND INCLUDE \$14 MILLION FOR VILLAGE ROAD AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN AMERICAN SAMOA

Congressman Faleomavaega announced that the House Committee on Transportation agreed yesterday to increase federal highway funding for the Territories and include \$14 million for village road and other improvements in American Samoa.

Although this bill still must pass the House and Senate, I am pleased that my