

Dr. Kercheval is also a member of the American Dental Association, the West Virginia Dental Association, and the Monongahela Dental Association, the IOOF, and is a 32nd degree Mason and Shriner.

Dr. Kercheval resides with his wife of 59 years in Kingwood, WV and enjoys visits with his daughter, Barbara Kercheval, his son Phra E. Kercheval, Jr., as well as from his three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to pay tribute to such an outstanding citizen as Dr. Phra E. Kercheval, who has been an inspiration to so many other Americans, and I am happy to have the opportunity to wish him many more happy years of fruitful life in his beloved state of West Virginia.

THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO CELEBRATES THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, it is my personal honor and privilege to rise today and pay tribute to my State's Capitol, my Congressional district which I have served for the past 20 years, and my home; the City of Sacramento on their 150th anniversary.

In January of 1848, James Marshal reached into the American River near Sacramento and retrieved a small nugget of gold. This discovery gave birth to California's gold rush and provided a prosperous foundation for Sacramento to thrive.

At the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, the City of Sacramento grew quickly, cradled by the fertile land of the Central Valley. On August 1, 1849, Sacramento's City Council convened for the first time and began drafting the City Charter. On March 18, 1850, the City of Sacramento became the first incorporated city in the State of California.

Since that time, Sacramento has developed a national and international reputation for progress and innovation. From its early days as the terminus for the Pony Express and the Transcontinental Railroad, to its current seat of government for the nation's most populous state, Sacramento has embraced its destiny in defining the ever-changing face of California.

Today, instead of Sacramento's riches coming from the surrounding hills of gold, our riches come from the great wealth of people, culture and diversity. As the 7th largest city in California, and the 38th largest city in the Nation, we owe our prosperity to the men and women who have sacrificed and dedicated their lives to the social and economic strength of our City.

Spanish explorer Gabriel Moraga bestowed upon our City the name Sacramento, meaning holy covenant with God. As the City of Sacramento begins its 150th anniversary, I encourage the people of Sacramento to make a personal covenant with each other, to honor our history, respect our diversity, and challenge us all to ensure a prosperous future.

This evening, the City of Sacramento will begin a yearlong celebration of its 150th anni-

versary at a special City Council meeting at City Hall. As a former member of the City Council, I would like to personally congratulate the Mayor and the City Council for achieving such an honorable milestone.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the City of Sacramento on their 150th anniversary. Sacramento's golden history is reflected often throughout the City and is a constant reminder of the wealth of opportunity, which continues to grace the people of Sacramento.

IN HONOR OF THE VERY REVEREND FATHER MIKHAIL EDWARD MIKHAIL, D. MIN

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Very Reverend Father Mikhail E. Mikhail, D. Min who celebrates the Silver Jubilee of the Priestly Ordination for 25 years of service at the Saint Mark Coptic Orthodox Church of Cleveland.

The Very Rev. Fr. Mikhail E. Mikhail began his service to God at a young age as a student of several Coptic Orthodox Church leaders in Cairo, Egypt. He excelled in his studies and was fortunate to enter the Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary in Caro which he came under the patronage of his most influential mentor, H. H. Pope Shenouda III, who was the H.G. Shenouda, Bishop of the Christian Education and Dean of the Seminary.

In 1972, the Very Rev. Fr. Mikhail, then Deacon Mounier, graduated from the Seminary and was assigned to serve at St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church in Masarra Shoubra in Cairo. Shortly after, he became the first consecrated deacon to serve in the United States at the St. Mary & St. Antonius in Queens, New York. Only a year later, in 1974, he was called back to Cairo and on May 11, 1974 Deacon Mounier married Seham Samuel. On August 23, 1974 Deacon Mounier was ordained the Priest Mikhail Edward Mikhail by H. H. Pope Shenouda III at St. Marks Cathedral.

In 1975, Fr. Mikhail and his wife arrived in Cleveland to begin his new ministry as the first resident pastor of the St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church. Here he served a community which was about fifty families large as well as other Coptic communities in Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati in Ohio; and Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

Fr. Mikhail took the lead in the building of a new church in Cleveland in the traditional Coptic style which officially opened in 1988. The Very Rev. Fr. Mikhail has dedicated his life in the past 25 years to the spiritual growth and enhancement of the Coptic community in Cleveland. As a result of his guidance there has been a revived interest in true Coptic Orthodox religious practices that have brought people closer to God. As a father, a teacher, and friend, the Very Rev. Fr. Mikhail has been a blessing to the Coptic community both in Cleveland and abroad.

My Fellow colleagues, join me in honoring the Very Rev. Fr. Mikhail, a man who has

dedicated his life to God, freedom and the well-being of all people.

HONORING STEPHEN JOSEPH MASTO, SANTA BARBARA CITY FIREFIGHTER

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the service and pay tribute to Santa Barbara City Firefighter, Stephen Joseph Masto who died in late August while helping battle a wildlife in Los Padres National Forest.

At the young age of 28, Stephen had already devoted his career to public safety. Before serving in the Santa Barbara City Fire Department, he served as an apprentice firefighter in the Brea fire Department in Orange County, as a reserve officer at fire departments in Upland in San Bernardino County, and Los Alamitos in Los Angeles County, and as a volunteer disaster worker in Long Beach, CA. Clearly, Stephen was committed to serving the common good.

In remembering Stephen, we can never repay him for his dedication, hard work, or ultimate sacrifice. Rather, we must honor him by being especially mindful of the brave men and women firefighters he left behind to carry on the selfless work of protecting the lives and safety of their neighbors in times of need. Like Stephen, these are true heroes in every sense of the word.

I know that I speak for the entire community when I extend my most heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones who will miss Stephen terribly. We only hope that their warm memories of this heroic man will sustain them in this moment of grief.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2684, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPEECH OF

**HON. DEBBIE STABENOW**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 5, 1999*

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to oppose the rule for H.R. 2684, a bill making appropriations for the VA-HUD and Independent Agencies for Fiscal Year 2000, which does not allow a vote on the Edwards/Stabenow/Evans amendment.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment would have added \$730 million to Veterans Health Care. The VA estimates that the adoption of our amendment would have allowed an additional 140,000 veterans to receive the health care they need. Instead, this budget continues the under funding of critical medical care for those who have served our country in the armed services.

Today, there are 20,000 fewer VA medical staff than there were just 5 years ago. What does this mean for our veterans? Due to these staffing shortages, a veteran in Tennessee with multiple sclerosis was forced to wait 4 months to be seen by a doctor. Others have been forced to travel over 300 miles just to receive x-rays. And there are more examples of the problems facing the Veterans Health Care System. In my own state of Michigan, a disabled Korean veteran experiencing fainting spells and no appetite was not able to receive treatment at either a VA inpatient or outpatient facility. In less than a week this man collapsed and was pronounced dead of septic shock and pneumonia. These were qualified facilities that did not have the staff to help this man.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you a letter that I received in my office that I feel accurately explains the situation our veterans are facing today. Julianna Smith, the wife of Vietnam veteran John Smith of Milan, MI, told me she continued to have problems getting adequate medical care for her husband who is disabled and requires 24 hour care. She was very upset about the effects that further cuts to the VA medical system would have on her and her husband. She wrote,

My husband fought a war overseas, and was then shunned and spit upon by fellow Americans once he returned stateside. He paid his taxes to the government just like everyone else, and he gave part of his life to that same government that now wants nothing to do with him.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans deserve better. They kept their promises to us. It's time for our country to keep our promises to them. I urge my colleagues to vote no on this rule, and provide the health care our nation's heroes deserve.

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TRIBUTE TO JAMES C. LESTER

**HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor James C. Lester, a pioneer in the health care industry in my district. For the last 32 years, Jim Lester has dedicated himself to providing quality care to the residents of the South Bay. For 27 of those years Jim has been closely associated with the Little Company of Mary Hospital organization.

Jim joined the Little Company of Mary Hospital in 1967. Now, as Jim Lester retires as president and CEO of the Little Company of Mary Health Services, he leaves a first class integrated health care delivery system. What was once a stand-alone facility is now three hospitals, three skilled nursing facilities, three diagnostic centers, four walk-in urgent care centers, a large regional home care service, a chemical dependency recovery center, multiple physician sites, a mobile pediatric care van and three fundraising foundations. It was Jim who had the vision and initiative to make the Little Company of Mary Health Services the organization that it is today.

Because of Jim Lester, the Little Company of Mary Health Services is poised to enter the

21st century as a leading member of the health care industry. I commend Jim Lester for his loyalty and dedication to providing such outstanding health care to the residents of the greater South Bay. We are grateful for his contributions to the community.

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IN HONOR OF MARGARET W. WONG

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an exceptional woman, Ms. Margaret W. Wong. Today, Ms. Margaret W. Wong is the recipient of the Belle Sherwin Democracy in Action Award.

The Belle Sherwin Democracy in Action Award is awarded annually by the league of Women Voters of Cleveland, Ohio. Ms. Margaret W. Wong reflects and upholds the goals of the league through her dedication to serving others and furthering the quality of our Cleveland community. She is a civic leader and committed to helping immigrants and those in need through her work in immigration and naturalization law.

Ms. Margaret W. Wong is an admirable member of our community. I ask you to join me in acknowledging her accomplishments and honoring her for receiving the Belle Sherwin Democracy in Action Award.

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TRIBUTE TO JOHN FOLLIT

**HON. RICHARD E. NEAL**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the Second Congressional District of Massachusetts' outstanding and dedicated citizens, Mr. John Follit. John is being honored today by his fellow citizens at the Italian American Veterans Post No. 64 of East Longmeadow, MA. It is an honor for me to join in this recognition of someone who has contributed a great deal to our community.

John Follit has served the East Longmeadow community through his work with the Office of Children and his advocacy for children in the State. He has been active in politics by serving as chairman of East Longmeadow's Democratic Town Committee, and he has helped many political candidates by planning campaign strategies in local, state, and national campaigns. John has also been a union steward and has been a champion of democratic principles in whatever he does.

Beyond his work in the community, John has put so much energy into his family life. He is a loving husband to his wife, Laurie, and a great father to his three children. John and his family have demonstrated their generosity in many ways, including bringing a foster child into their care. John Follit is a leading citizen and is dedicated in everything he does.

My best wishes go out to John Follit and his family as, together, they now face the many

related challenges to his health. My thoughts and prayers are with them all. John Follit has done so much for so many that it is a privilege to honor and pay tribute to him on this special day.

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A TRIBUTE TO TERRENCE STARR

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 8, 1999*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to an outstanding public servant, Mr. Terrence Starr, on the occasion of his retirement as Chief Probation Officer with the Contra Costa County Probation Department.

Mr. Starr began his probation career in San Diego County where he worked for 29 years in various capacities, including superintendent of juvenile hall and superintendent of various camp facilities. He served as Chief Probation Officer of Shasta County from 1990 to 1995, and assumed the position of Chief Probation Officer of Contra Costa County in November of 1995.

Terry Starr's tenure in Contra Costa County has been brief, but incredibly effective. Over the past four years he has successfully led the effort to secure funding for a badly needed new juvenile hall facility which is expected to be completed in 2003. He expanded the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility, the local county-run boys' camp, by 26 beds, and was instrumental in opening the Summit Center.

The 25 bed Summit Center, which is an innovative example of successful interagency coordination and cooperation, is staffed and run by the country's probation, mental health and education departments, and offers treatment and assistance to young male offenders who are struggling with serious emotional difficulties. Mr. Starr has most recently developed a 20 bed specialized treatment facility and program for girls, which is comparable to the Summit Center for boys. The Chris Adams Girls' Center is slated to open in December 1999. Mr. Starr has been instrumental in securing numerous grants from both the state and federal government to place probation officers in high schools through out Contra Costa County and to provide much needed treatment services for girls.

The leadership abilities Mr. Starr possesses are extraordinary. They have been demonstrated by his successful term as President of the California Probation, Parole, and Correctional Association and his appointment by Governor Pete Wilson to serve for several years on the Board of Corrections, representing the Chief Probation Officers of California.

Terry Starr is a hardworking, highly principled individual who is a committed and effective advocate for children. Indeed, he has devoted his life to helping those most in need and has made an immeasurable difference in the lives of so many children and their families. He is well-liked and respected by his staff, friends, and colleagues and will be sorely missed by all.

It is with great pleasure, albeit with a measure of regret, that I congratulate Terry Starr