

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2420

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that America's schools, libraries, and rural clinics are allowed to capitalize on the newest computer and data communications technology.

In 1996, Congress and the Clinton Administration joined together to establish a program to extend the Internet to all our schools. That effort is underway—at a cost of about \$2.45 billion a year, incidentally. But in this field, just like everywhere else, it is the weakest link in the chain that matters. And, the “weak link” here is the data communications network—or, more accurately, the lack of such a network.

Mr. Speaker, instead of trying to expand these networks by harnessing the power of competition, economic freedom, and individual choice, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) seems to be relying on yesterday's tools—heavy handed and restrictive regulation.

That's not my estimate, it's the considered judgment of two of this country's experts—Congressman JOHN DINGELL and his colleague, the Chairman of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee, Congressman TAUZIN.

Their appraisal of the situation is that we need to modernize and reform FCC regulation—because, otherwise, the data links which this country needs, are just not going to be available. That is the philosophy reflected in their bill, H.R. 2420. And, it is a pro-growth, pro-progress view which I want to embrace.

Mr. Speaker, if we can accomplish reform in this field, all of the experts are predicting that there can be a rapid expansion of our communications networks. That expansion, in turn, will help connect our schools, libraries, and clinics faster. And that will yield substantial public policy dividends.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE TEXAS
REALTOR OF THE YEAR

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to Barbara Russell of Denton, Texas, who this year was named the 1998 Realtor of the Year by the Texas Association of Realtors.

Barbara has served on the Texas Association of Realtors Board of Directors and is a former regional vice president and chairman of the legislative and economic development

committees. She also served two three-year terms on the National Association of Realtors Board of Directors.

In Denton, Barbara has earned many honors, including the Greater Denton/Wise County Association of Realtors President's Award, Women's Council of Realtors Gold Rule Award, Realtor of the Year and Associate of the Year. In addition, she is active in various civic and charitable organizations, including serving as former chairman of the board of the Denton Chamber of Commerce and serving four years on the Denton Planning and Zoning Commission.

Barbara has nearly 30 years of experience in the real estate business, and this recent award is a testament to her professional accomplishments and her hard work. She is married to Benny Russell, and they have two daughters and four grandchildren.

And Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I also did not pay tribute to the late Mary Claude Gay, a prominent realtor in Denton and associate of Barbara's. Mary Claude's contributions to her profession also have been significant, and she, too, was very influential in Denton's community life.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Barbara Russell and Mary Claude Gay for their accomplishments in their profession and for their contributions to their community. The Texas Association of Realtors could not have selected a more giving and devoted Realtor of the Year. Barbara Russell is a class act and is the epitome of the type of leadership and professionalism that bring respect and admiration for her profession.

As we adjourn today, and as we leave the floor of the House of Representatives for the last time this century, let us do so in respect and appreciation for the “Texas Realtor of the Year”—Barbara Russell.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2116, VETERANS MILLENNIUM HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2116. This bill makes a number of important changes to veteran's health care programs.

H.R. 2116—Veterans Millennium Health Care Act makes comprehensive reforms to improve access to, as well as the timeliness and quality of the Veterans Administration health care system. Reforms to improve veterans' access to care include requiring the VA to increase home and community based options for veterans needing extended care; requiring the VA to provide nursing home care to cer-

tain veterans through 2003; establishing means to enhance revenues for the VA; lifting the six-month limit on VA adult day health care; authorizing the VA to enhance mental health care services; and establishing a pilot program to make contract arrangements for assisted living services.

Although the calendar year indicates that we honor these men and women on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, I believe that we should pause everyday to thank them for their sacrifice. The collective experience of our 25 million living veterans encompasses the turbulence and progress America has experienced throughout the twentieth century. This nation's veterans have written much of the history of the last hundred years. They have served this nation without reservation or hesitation during its darker moments.

Their unwavering devotion to duty and country has brought this nation through two World Wars and numerous costly struggles against aggression. From World War I to the Gulf War, America's veterans have been leading this nation against those who have threatened the values and interests of our nation.

Only today are the accomplishments and sacrifices of our veterans being fully appreciated by historians and the public. These genuine heroes have often been ignored and denied their proper place in America's melting pot. We need to remember that America owes these men and women the best it can offer because they have given us the best they could when America was in need.

Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate to have The Houston Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in my congressional district. Having just celebrated fifty years of service to the veterans in the Houston community. Some 1,646,700 veterans live in the State of Texas alone. The House VA Medical Center expects to receive and serve over 50,000 veterans in this year alone. I expect this measure to improve the quality of life for all our veterans who so proudly served our nation.

Mr. Speaker this bill is important not only because it provides for the needs of our veterans today but because it sends an important signal to the men and women serving our nation in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, Germany, Korea, Japan and other far off places around the world. That message is simple, that when you serve our nation we will answer the plea of President Lincoln “to care for him who shall have borne the battle.”

I urge my colleague to vote “yes” on H.R. 2116 and care for the men and women who have borne the battle.

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