

June 10, 1999

IN HONOR OF FATHER McNULTY'S
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINA-
TION

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Father McNulty's 25th Anniversary of his Ordination as a Priest.

Father McNulty was born in October of 1948. He attended Borromeo High School, Borromeo College, Wickliffe and St. Mary's Seminary. Throughout the last 25 years Father McNulty has dedicated himself to helping others in his community. He has been involved in a number of different assignments in the greater Cleveland area. He is currently the pastor at SS. Philip and James in Cleveland as well as the Chaplain for the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and is the Deputy National Chaplain for the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians.

His work has proven time and time again to be a tremendous help to the community and is a very well known and respected priest in the Cleveland area. Through his dedicated efforts the community has grown together. His work should be recognized as having a very influential and positive effect on the people in the greater Cleveland area.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring Father McNulty's 25 years of service to the greater Cleveland community.

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAM

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to a recipient of the distinguished 1998-1999 White House Fellowship Program—Lieutenant Commander Mark Montgomery of Sunapee, New Hampshire.

Established in 1965, the White House Fellowship program honors outstanding citizens across the United States who demonstrate excellence in academics, public service, and leadership. It is the nation's most prestigious fellowship for public service and leadership development. Each year, there are 500-800 applicants nationwide for 11 to 19 fellowships. Past distinguished U.S. Navy White House Fellow alumni have gone on to become exceptional military leaders and I have no doubt Commander Montgomery will be successful in his future endeavors.

This award is well-earned by an individual who carries himself with great professionalism and distinction in the finest traditions of our country's military history. Lieutenant Commander Montgomery was most recently Executive Officer of the destroyer U.S.S. *Elliot*. He was one of only a handful of liberal arts majors to complete the naval nuclear power pro-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

gram. Lieutenant Commander Montgomery has completed two overseas deployments on the nuclear powered cruiser U.S.S. *Bainbridge*. He also led a team of thirty *Bainbridge* sailors to provide disaster relief on the island of St. Croix after Hurricane Hugo. He later was assigned as Operations Officer of U.S.S. *Leftwich* and then to the reactor department of the U.S.S. *Theodore Roosevelt*, where he was deployed to Bosnia during air strikes. Commander Montgomery will be Commissioning Commanding Officer of U.S.S. *McCampbell*. In addition to his military service, Commander Montgomery is involved with the Big Brother organization.

Commander Montgomery's distinguished military career made him a perfect candidate for his current White House Fellowship assignment with the National Security Council. In this capacity, he manages the operation for the Critical Infrastructure Coordination Group, which is responsible for implementing presidential decision directives on critical national infrastructures. He also coordinates the inter-agency development of a National Infrastructure Assurance Plan, which formulates the Administration's efforts to protect our government and private sector infrastructures from terrorist attack. Commander Montgomery was a member of the U.S. delegation that traveled to the United Arab Emirates on a mission regarding security cooperation. Other responsibilities include working on the Counter-Terrorism Security Group and coordinating NSC policy on international Y2K issues.

The people of this nation can feel secure in the knowledge that individuals like Commander Montgomery are working for them. For his efforts, and in recognition of the well-deserved honor of serving as a White House Fellow, I am privileged to commend and pay tribute to Commander Montgomery.

HOSPITAL ACCREDITATION

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, Healthcare facilities must comply with certain conditions in order to participate in the Medicare program. The Health Care Financing Administration relies on accrediting organizations to certify that healthcare facilities provide quality services to Medicare beneficiaries. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) is one such organization. A facility that receives JCAHO accreditation automatically meets the Medicare Conditions of Participation.

I believe that there is a serious conflict of interest between the mission of accrediting agencies and their internal governance. Currently, the majority of members of these governing boards are representatives of the very industries that the agency accredits. While the accrediting agencies are likely to object and claim that the members of their governing boards are beyond reproach, I remain skeptical and wish to establish several basic checks and balances.

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Because accrediting agencies have a prominent role in certifying Medicare facilities, I believe that we have a vested interest to ensure that the accrediting process is as rigorous and quality-oriented as possible. Doing so will help ensure that all citizens may expect high-quality, safe, and effective medical treatment at any medical facility they use.

Others share my skepticism. A July 1996 report from the Public Citizen Health Research Group charged that the JCAHO is "a captive of the industry whose quality of service it purports to measure" and "fails to recognize the often conflicting interests of hospitals and the public".

In my home state of California, 29 JCAHO-approved hospitals had higher-than-expected death rates for heart attack patients. In some cases the rate was as high as 30-40% compared to a state-wide average of approximately 14%. What is particularly troubling is the fact that two of these hospitals received JCAHO's highest rating.

In an analysis of New York hospitals, the non-profit Public Advocate presents strong evidence that hospitals circumvent JCAHO's annual announced survey visits—simply by hiring extra staff to make operations look smoother than they really are. In too many cases, the report finds that JCAHO's accreditation scores mask the truth—some accredited hospitals do not meet basic standards of care. For example, 15 accredited hospitals showed problems ranging from substantial delays in treatment of emergency room patients to outdated and broken equipment to overcrowded, understaffed clinics and unsanitary conditions.

Given the critical role of health care facilities to our society, we must ensure that these facilities and the agencies that certify them are held publicly accountable. For this reason, I am introducing a bill that requires all Medicare-accrediting organizations to hold public meetings and to ensure that half of the governing board consists of members of the public.

The intent of the bill I am introducing today is to ensure the accountability of accrediting boards—to guarantee that the public voice is represented in the organizations responsible for the safety and quality in Medicare's healthcare facilities. With these checks and balances we can assure all patients that they will receive high quality treatment in all Medicare-approved facilities.

This bill has two simple provisions. First it requires that half of the members of an accrediting agency be members of the public who have been approved by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. These individuals are specifically prohibited from having a direct financial interest in the health care organizations that the agency certifies. Second, the legislation would require all meetings of the governing board be open to the public.

Medicare and health care organizations operate in the public trust. Our tax dollars fund all Medicare benefits delivered by health care organizations as well as countless other medical benefits and programs. Therefore, the accreditation and certification of hospitals and other health care organizations must represent the interests of the public.