

June 14, 1999

Mayor of Bedford Heights to the Commissioner of Cuyahoga county. In addition to his service as a dedicated public official, he has devoted much of his time to community initiatives. Some of this activities Commissioner Dimora has been involved with include: a member of the Board of Trustees for the University Hospitals Health System Bedford Medical Center, and leadership rolls in the United Way, Shoes for Kids and the YMCA. Additionally, he has served as chairman of the Cuyahoga Democratic Party since 1994.

Although his work and community service put extraordinary demands on his time, Commissioner Dimora has never limited the time he gives to his most important interest his family especially his lovely wife, Lori.

I ask that my distinguished colleagues join me in commending Commissioner Jimmy Dimora for his lifetime of dedication, service, and leadership in Cuyahoga County. His large circle of family and friends can be proud of this significant contributions he has made. Our community has certainly been rewarded by the true service and uncompromising dedication displayed by Commissioner Jimmy Dimora.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO JIM SELKE

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 14, 1999*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I now recognize Mr. Jim Selke, who after 31 years of dedication to educating the students of District 51 in Grand Junction, Colorado, has decided to retire. In doing so, I would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary career of this remarkable individual, who for so many years, has worked to shape the minds of the youth of Grand Junction, and who has worked to preserve a high standard of education.

Mr. Selke began his career in Grand Junction, Colorado at Central High School in 1968, and for 24 years he served in various capacities, coaching football and baseball, and serving as activities coordinator. After his years of inspiring the students of Central High School, Mr. Selke was ready to return to the classroom.

For the past 7 years, Jim Selke has served as the athletic director for Palisade High School. There is no doubt that his positive attitude and uplifting words of encouragement will be missed. Teachers like Mr. Selke, who give tirelessly to their students and inspire great success, are a rare breed.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I say thank you to Mr. Selke and wish him the best of luck as he begins his much deserved retirement.

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF "MEDICARE HOSPITAL CAPITAL EFFICIENCY PROMOTION ACT OF 1999," 11TH IN A SERIES OF MEDICARE MODERNIZATION BILLS

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 14, 1999*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing the 11th in a series of bills to modernize Medicare, obtain long-term savings, and make the program more efficient, without forcing beneficiaries to make radical changes.

The bill would give Medicare authority to reduce capital payments 25% to hospitals in areas where we have more than an average number of beds and the occupancy rate is below the national average. Exceptions would be made if capital payments to these hospitals were used to merge or downsize or if the Secretary determined that special circumstances required a capital expansion.

Mr. speaker, a major force making American health care the most expensive in the world is that we have way, way too many hospital beds. In California, occupancy has been below 50% for years. Throughout the nation, many hospitals are at 20 to 30% occupied. No one would run a modern factory at these occupancy rates-and certainly no banker would willy-nilly put more capital into such an industry. Yet the taxpayer consistently makes billions of dollars a year in automatic payments for capital to the nation's hospitals.

Dr. John Weinberg of Dartmouth has just published the third in what is called The Dartmouth Atlas. He provides overwhelming documentation that in health, it is not so much demand, as supply that is driving the cost of the health care system. In other words, "build it, and they shall come." Build a hospital, and doctors will find a way to use it. The more hospital beds available in a community, the more likely you will die in a hospital instead of at home, in a hospice, or in a nursing home. Yet we know that the public does not prefer a high-tech, prolonged death. At the moment of death, most people would like to be a familiar setting surrounded by family-not hooked up to a half dozen tubes in a hospital ICU.

Capital payments also are used to proliferate fancy new services-rather than asking that expensive services (such as transplant or open heart surgeries) be concentrated at hospitals which do a large volume of operations and which have better outcomes. The data is overwhelming that the more operations a hospital does, the less likely they are to kill you. In other words, practice makes perfect, or at least very good. Yet in California, for example, we have about 130 hospitals doing open heart surgeries. Setting up an open heart program costs, I am told, about \$10 million. Yet some of these heart centers only do 3 or 5 operations a month! They may be good for a local hospital's prestige, but they are almost a prime facie malpractice waiting for a jury. Medicare and taxpayers, again, should not be paying for this proliferation of local prestige: we are killing people through bad outcomes when we allow every Tom, Dick, and Harry hospital to do sophisticated operations.

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My bill is a simple proposal: where we have too many beds and they are going unoccupied, the taxpayer can save 25% in reduced hospital capital payments.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RAGIN CAJUN AMATEUR BOXING CLUB

**HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 14, 1999*

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special group of young athletes. These young boxers, along with their coach Beau Williford, comprise Lafayette, Louisiana's Ragin Cajun Amateur Boxing Club.

Over the Memorial Day district work period, I had the privilege of visiting their gym and witnessing first-hand the remarkable program that Mr. Williford leads. Everyday after school, Mr. Williford's gym becomes a training ground for the next generation of boxers. He not only provides these youngsters with a place to train, but he also provides the life instruction and guidance that many of these kids so desperately need. My experience at his gym convinced me of just how vital the need for such programs is in communities throughout the United States. In fact, research has shown that students who participate in after-school programs exhibit higher levels of achievement in reading, math, and other subjects. These students also exhibit improved grades, reading ability, attendance levels, homework completion, and increased graduation and enrollment in post secondary education.

In 1982, Beau Williford opened Beau Williford's Boxing Academy and began the Ragin Cajun Amateur Boxing Club. Mr. Williford's Boxing Academy soon became a place where young people could productively spend their after school time under the wing of an inspirational coach. Indeed, nine gold medals were recently won by young athletes who competed at the 1999 Junior Olympics and Under 19 competitions in Natchitoches, LA, on May 14-16, 1999.

Beau Williford deserves special acknowledgement for his devotion to the physical and personal development of the youngsters he takes in. A former boxer and trainer of six boxing champions, Mr. Williford offers these kids a place where they can relieve stress through exercise while socializing with others their age. Several of the young people he trains were troubled youths without motivation, discipline, or direction. Under Mr. Williford's guidance, their lives have been turned around. Those who were once making failing grades in school are now making straight A's. In addition, the parents of these young athletes claim that not only are their children doing great as boxers, but they are doing much better as children. They are more disciplined and have gained a sense of self-respect.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to individually recognize these outstanding youths who have worked hard to earn the title of "champion." Please join me in extending a warm voice of recognition to Jared Hidalgo, a sixteen year-old Carencro High School junior who won the