

It is impossible to find any piece of major legislation that improves public health that does not have FRANK LAUTENBERG's fingerprints on it.

And as the capstone of his career, as the ranking member of the Senate Budget Committee, he co-authored the Balanced Budget Agreement of 1997 that has helped produce the first balanced budget in a generation, and perpetuates an unprecedented era of prosperity.

On a personal note, FRANK LAUTENBERG has always been there for me when I needed him, as a friend and a leader of the New Jersey delegation.

That is why I am honored to be there for FRANK LAUTENBERG. I hope everyone will join me in thanking him for his public service and granting this honor.

IN RECOGNITION OF GARDEN CITY
PARK FIRE DEPARTMENT RES-
CUE SQUAD

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the outstanding work by the Garden City Park Fire Department Rescue Squad on its golden anniversary.

Over the past fifty years, the Garden City Park Fire Department Rescue Squad responded to more than 30,000 emergency calls. This all-volunteer staff, which spends countless hours training to improve their skills, have made a significant difference in the lives of countless Long Islanders.

Come rain, sun, snow, or hail, these talented men and women brave the elements applying their skills and saving lives. It is often a job that does not get the recognition it deserves because many people take their service for granted. But make no mistake, these men and women are often the difference between life and death. Always the first on the scene of an accident, they apply their skills in a professional manner and do an outstanding job treating accident victims.

I, along with those treated by these dedicated men and women, applaud your dedication and service. Residents across Long Island owe you our gratitude and thanks.

ESSENTIAL AND CRITICAL HOS-
PITAL PRESERVATION ACT OF
2000

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of the Essential and Critical Hospital Preservation Act of 2000.

This bill improves previous legislation I have introduced in the 106th Congress by targeting relief to similar regions of the country like Northeastern Pennsylvania. Hospitals in these regions have a disproportionate number of el-

derly patients and have, therefore, been more greatly affected by the drastic cuts made in Medicare from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Furthermore, in these regions, the formula for Medicare as applied to those hospitals returns them an insufficient payment to meet their basic costs.

This bill is designed to assist economically distressed hospitals in regions where the combination of managed care, Medicare, and commercial payments changes have threatened to destroy the entire health care delivery infrastructure. It applies only to hospitals which have more than 40 percent of its patients on Medicare and receive the rural reimbursement rate despite being located in a Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Mr. Speaker, the hospitals in my region of Pennsylvania are in deep distress. Many of them are in severe economic difficulty. My proposal would give hospitals in regions of the country like Northeastern Pennsylvania a minimum of a 5-year, 10-percent increase in Medicare payments while they work through the development of long-range economic recovery programs. It also requires the hospitals to devise a coordinated economic recovery program with the assistance of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Speaker, in a time when the future of Medicare is under strict scrutiny, we must today continue to provide the basic essential care under the Medicare program that are intended some 35 years ago. I urge all Members of Congress to review this critical legislation in the remainder of the 106th Congress and work to enact it into law.

HONORING MELVIN PAGE

HON. ZACH WAMP

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, in some ways Melvin Page and his colleagues in honor and arms may be the bravest Americans. They fought a long and difficult war against a brutal and ferocious enemy. But—unlike the brave Americans who fought all our other wars—Melvin Page and his fellow Vietnam veterans had to fight a war that not all Americans supported. Even if Melvin Page and his comrades were “the bravest of the brave”—and they were—the civilian leadership that got us into Vietnam badly failed the men and women it sent there. Those leaders never gave our brave soldiers the unconditional backing and the clear goals needed to win. But, despite all those impediments, Melvin Page and the others who fought in that conflict can always hold their heads proudly and high because of the extreme sacrifices they made in defense of freedom.

That's why I was especially honored to take part in Melvin Page Day in Harriman, TN, in the Third District on Saturday, September 9, 2000. When you look at the story of Melvin Page's brave service, it's hard to imagine anyone who could more deserve the honors he received from his fellow citizens. Melvin served in the United States Army from 1967 to 1969 when the Vietnam War was at its height.

He showed his true courage and suffered enormously during a battle in which he and 43 other men were ambushed by over 1,000 North Vietnamese Army soldiers. In an attempt to save as many of his comrades as possible, Sgt. Page called in napalm air strikes on his own position. He was hit three times by rifle shots, struck by a grenade and was grievously burned. He was one of the very few people in his command to survive the attack. Rescuers arrived just in time to save his life; and in fact, Melvin Page was so badly injured that the recovery team thought that he had died and placed him in a body bag. It was only when his hand moved that the rescuers realized that he was alive.

He had to undergo numerous operations and extensive rehabilitation to recover from the severe burns and other injuries he suffered. After Melvin Page left the Army, he became a letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service back home in Harriman, where he has worked faithfully for 30 years.

Melvin Page's heroism and sacrifice has been recognized by the numerous medals and awards he has received, including the Bronze Star with V Device, three Purple Hearts, Two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct, National Defense Service, U.S. Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachute Jump Badge, Ranger Tab and Expert Marksman badge for pistol, rifle, and machine gun.

But, as impressive as this list is, it cannot begin to convey the heroism and sacrifice that marked Melvin Page's Army service. Mr. Page, as you complete 33 years of loyal and dedicated services to the United States in war and peace, please accept the congratulations, best wishes and heartfelt thanks of a grateful nation.

OCHSNER FOUNDATION HOSPITAL

HON. DAVID VITTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 20, 2000

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 25, the Ochsner Foundation Hospital will open a spectacular new addition. This \$46 million facility will provide 140 square feet of space over three floors. The first floor will include a world-class emergency and trauma center; the second floor will be home to 10 new operating rooms with the most advanced equipment; and the third floor will include 32 new intensive care unit patient rooms. By placing these improved facilities in new construction, operations of the existing facility are not threatened.

These improvements will improve the quality of care of patients at Ochsner. They also will provide a better learning environment for the more than 200 medical residents that study each year at Ochsner.

The Ochsner Foundation Hospital, at its present location since 1954, is accredited with commendation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, an achievement which places the hospital above 87% of all hospitals in the U.S. The hospital admits over 18,000 patients each year for a