

worked hard at it." The journalistic legacy of Joe Donnelly lives on in his son and daughters, who continue to run the Gazette even as they raise his four grandchildren. The broader lessons of the importance of hard work, of giving of oneself to church and community, and of humility, are what we can all take from the memory of this unique American.

Joe, we miss you and we thank you. Good-bye, Marine.

INTRODUCTION OF CORRECTED
VERSION OF DEMOCRATIC MEDI-
CARE AND MEDICAID GIVE-
BACKS BILL

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Representative DINGELL and myself, we are re-introducing today the Democratic version of the Medicare and Medicaid give-backs bill, that includes the provisions in the House-passed bill of Thursday, October 26th plus the beneficiary and provider improvements requested by the President and detailed in the Administration's veto letter of October 17th.

Yesterday, a version of this bill was introduced (H.R. 5601), but because of mechanical problems in the electronic transmission of the bill, a number of errors occurred.

When considering the Democratic position on how to improve the Medicare, Medicaid, and S-CHIP programs, please refer to the bill introduced today H.R. 5612, not to H.R. 5601.

IN HONOR OF ELLEN COKINOS ON
THE OCCASION OF HER RECEIV-
ING THE DIRECTOR OF THE FED-
ERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGA-
TION'S COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
AWARD

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ellen Cokinos, Founder and Executive Director of Houston's Children's Assessment Center, on the occasion of her receiving the Director's Community Leadership Award from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Ellen Cokinos, through her leadership and unwavering commitment to protect the most defenseless in our community—children, deserves to be held up as a national role model.

For nearly a decade, Ellen Cokinos and the Children's Assessment Center have conducted a "quite revolution" in the treatment of child sexual abuse. Under Ellen Cokinos' direction, the Children's Assessment Center has set the standard for creating child-friendly intervention systems for sexually abused children by developing a comprehensive, coordinated team approach that draws from both the public and private sector. Ellen Cokinos has led a movement to change the way government agencies deal with sexually abused children by insti-

tuting a multi-disciplinary approach to the prevention, assessment, investigation, and treatment of child sexual abuse.

An internationally-recognized expert in her field, Ellen Cokinos deserves praise for her role in educating the larger community about violence prevention through establishing programs to foster greater awareness of child sexual abuse. I have had the great privilege of working with Ellen Cokinos on initiatives to promote the health and safety of Houston's children. The impact of the Children's Assessment Center, Ellen Cokinos' brainchild, reaches well beyond the more than 38,000 children it has served. This award is recognition of the invaluable contribution Ellen Cokinos has made to bringing about a fundamental change in how abused children are treated.

Mr. Speaker, as one who has worked closely with Ellen Cokinos, I know what she is a child advocate without equal and one of our community's great leaders. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pleasure to honor Ellen Cokinos, on the occasion of her receiving the FBI's Director's Community Leadership Award.

MEDICARE, MEDICAID, AND SCHIP
BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT AND
PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to consider the fate of the tax bill passed by the House of Representatives last week, I would implore the President not to veto this bill. As you know, this package includes the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 that provides much needed relief from the unintended consequences of the Balanced Budget Act of 1977 to a variety of Medicare providers including: hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, hospice services, and Medicare+Choice.

Among the various provisions included in the Medicare relief portion of this package aimed at improving the quality of care our nation's seniors depend on, I would like to call your attention to an important public health issues that is in the Medicare relief portion of this package. We have all heard from our nation's hospitals about the unintended consequences of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and it's effect on their ability to provide a variety of services to their patients. One area that has been hard hit is hospitals' ability to treat patients with state-of-the-art blood products. In testimony before the Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, the American Hospital Association specifically cited the costs associated with blood as one of the reasons that Congress should restore the full market basket index.

Patient access to a safe and adequate blood supply is a national health priority and has been recognized by members of this body, the American public, and the nation's public health leaders. Yet, many of us have

heard from the American Red Cross, America's Blood Centers, and the American Association of Blood Banks over the past year about hospitals having trouble affording new, innovative blood therapies that help to ensure that the nation's blood supply is safe for patients. Additional funding is needed if we are going to remain committed to providing the safest blood supply possible.

The blood banking and transfusion medicine communities are constantly working to assure that safety improvements for blood are implemented as soon as they become available. Two recent initiatives have been introduced to increase the safety of the blood supply—Nucleic Acid Testing and leukoreduction. Nucleic acid testing allows for early detection of infectious diseases (such as HIV and hepatitis C (HCV)) in blood by detecting the genetic material of viruses. Leukoreduction, the removal of leukocytes (white cells) from blood components can reduce the frequency and severity of complications from transfusions. Unfortunately these new screening protocols significantly increase the cost of blood products. Nucleic Acid Testing and Leukoreduction increase the cost of blood products by over 40 percent for both hospitals and blood banks.

Our Nation's nonprofit blood collection centers operate in the same managed care environment as our hospitals. While volunteers freely give the gift of blood, our nonprofit blood centers must recover the cost associated with providing a safe, state-of-the-art product. This includes the cost associated with collecting, testing processing, storing, and distributing blood for patients in need.

Nonprofit blood centers pass these charges onto hospitals, which, in turn, must get timely and adequate reimbursement for these life-saving and life-enhancing products. Unfortunately, the current system by which the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) determined hospital inpatient reimbursement rates does not account for these new and improved safety measures in a timely manner.

The Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act directs HCFA and MedPAC to review how hospitals are reimbursed for blood and to make the necessary changes to provide for fair and timely reimbursement. While those studies will not be complete, nor will the recommendations be acted upon during the current fiscal year, we must act now to ensure that patients are receiving the safest possible blood products.

The American Hospital Association along with the American Red Cross, America's Blood Centers, and the American Association of Blood Banks have all recognized the importance of this legislation. By restoring the full inflationary update to the Market Basket Index for hospitals, Congress is providing the nation's hospitals and blood centers with the means to afford new blood therapies and to ensure that patients are treated with the safest possible products.