

unwed mothers and their infant children, and in wishing her the best as she continues to address the needs of those less fortunate than herself.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, on March 22, 2000, I was unavoidably detained, causing me to miss roll call votes 58, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63.

I ask that the RECORD reflect that had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 58, "nay" on rollcall vote 59, "yea" on rollcall vote 60, "yea" on rollcall vote 61, "nay" on rollcall vote 62, and "yea" on rollcall vote 63.

LIFE UNIVERSITY RUNNING
EAGLES—NAIA CHAMPIONS, AGAIN

HON. BOB BARR

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and admiration I recognize the Life University Running Eagles Men's Basketball Team from Marietta, Georgia. On Monday, March 20, 2000, the NAIA Division I Defending Champion Running Eagles defeated Georgetown College (KY) to win a second NAIA Championship in as many years. This marked the first time in nearly a decade an NAIA team had won back-to-back titles. This was also the third time in four years Life University had captured the NAIA Championship.

Excellence has become the hallmark of Life University sports; but the school excels also in academic pursuits. Life University was founded in 1974 as Life Chiropractic College, and achieved university status in 1997. It has a 26-year history of producing graduates, from a wide variety of degree programs, with the study of Chiropractic remaining its primary focus.

For their achievements, I want to congratulate all of the members of the Men's Running Eagles team, their Coach Roger Kaiser, and the President and Founder of Life University, Dr. Sid E. Williams.

HONORING THE CHAMPION JACKSON COUNTY LADY BLUE DEVILS

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding season of the Jackson County Lady Blue Devils basketball team, which recently captured the 2000 Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Class AA Girls Basketball Tournament championship.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

This is the high school's first championship season since winning the small school tournament way back in 1973. Last year the team lost in the tournament final and used that experience to win this year's tournament.

At 29-7, this year's Lady Blue Devils team displayed a tenacious will to win. This championship season will forever be remembered by each of those talented players who proved that hard work and dedication pay rich dividends.

Members of the championship team are Heather Davidson, Joanna Chaffin, Becca Focer, Jessica Smith, Sarah Jane Breidert, Andrea Davidson, Emily Lane, Lacy Sircy, Ashley Hopkins, Deanna Apple, Alyssa Bowman, Jennifer Harris, and managers Faith Henshaw, Stephanie Clayton and Lucy Anderson. Head coach Jim Brown and assistant coaches Kevin Bray and Barbara Brown, with the support of principal Herbert Leftwich, did a magnificent job preparing the team for this year's stellar season.

Jackson County is proud of its Lady Blue Devils, and I congratulate each of these young ladies for a job well done.

RURAL HEALTH CARE
PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

HON. MATT SALMON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Rural Health Care Protection Act of 2000. Among other things, the bill mandates that Medicare+Choice enrollees cannot be held liable by contracted or non-contracted providers for any claims that are unpaid by a Medicare+Choice plan. It also allows the insurance commissioner of a state to apply to the Secretary of HHS for reimbursement for all valid, unpaid provider claims. And, the legislation establishes HCFA as a creditor for Medicare+Choice Amos that go bankrupt.

The need for this legislation is clear. In Arizona, Premier HMO recently announced it was insolvent. Roughly 20,000 seniors have left Premier to return to traditional Medicare (which provides no prescription drug benefit) or have enrolled in an alternative Medicare HMO. Unfortunately, nine Arizona counties no longer have an HMO option. We need to make sure that Medicare+Choice enrollees are not held responsible when bankrupt HMOs fail to pay providers' claims.

Under current law, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) has the discretion, but is not required, to provide direct reimbursement to health care providers when an HMO fails to make payments for providers' claims. Quite often HCFA makes payments only where Medicare+Choice HMOs continue to operate. If an HMO becomes insolvent, doctors, hospitals, and others are often left unpaid for services already rendered.

In 1997 Congress passed the Balanced Budget Act which included a provision to expand choices for Medicare beneficiaries through the new Medicare+Choice program. It was anticipated that the program would lead to a wider variety of health plan choices for

March 23, 2000

beneficiaries in all areas of the country—particularly in rural counties. Unfortunately, there was never a plan to deal with organizations who could not maintain financial solvency. And HCFA has not recognized the need to protect Medicare beneficiaries from defunct health plans—even though they are the financing arm for Medicare.

Even worse, HCFA's regulations have added to the problem by making it more difficult for HMOs and other like organizations to enter the Medicare+Choice program. They make it tough to get in the program and do little for beneficiaries once the HMOs leave. As of last year, there were only 262 health plans across the Nation that participated in the Medicare+Choice program, 84 less than 1998. According to the American Association of Health Plans, nearly 700,000 beneficiaries have had their Medicare+Choice coverage disrupted since the program's inception.

Seniors shouldn't be left holding the bag when health plans go bankrupt. The Rural Health Care Protection Act would ensure that the government fulfills its promise to those seniors who have chosen to participate in the Medicare+Choice program. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation.

HONORING THE AMERICAN LEGION
JEFFERSON POST 141 2ND SQUAD
CHAPLAIN, HOWARD PHILLIPS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, today I commend the American Legion, Jefferson Post 141, from Mt. Vernon, Illinois and their Squad Chaplain, Mr. Howard Phillips.

For 27 years, Mr. Phillips has been the Squad Chaplain. He has presided over 800 military funerals for our veterans. He never asks for any compensation for his time or services. I wanted to tell him that he makes this soldier very proud. Thank you Howard.

CONGRATULATING JANIE
PFEFFERKORN, OF SIKESTON,
MISSOURI ON HER RECOGNITION
BY THE "DAUGHTERS OF SUNSET"

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday March 25, 2000, Janie Pfefferkorn is being honored by the Sikeston, Missouri "Daughters of Sunset" at their 16th Annual Recognition Program. I would like to extend my congratulations to Janie who is being recognized on this day for her community involvement.

Janie was the valedictorian of her senior class at Chafee High School in Chafee, Missouri. She attended Central Methodist College and Southeast Missouri State University. She is the co-founder of the 1996 Christian block Party which evolved into the Mission Missouri.