

smoked, they can be denied compensation despite the fact that in the courts this excuse has been repeatedly rejected.

Lastly, the Republican Congress, that so heartily opposes bigger government creates a new federal bureaucracy with this bill. Instead of the 100 asbestos trials a year now moving through the courts, the bill proposes the creation of an entirely new Office of Asbestos Compensation to handle work that is Constitutionally under the purview of the Judiciary system.

We should call this bill what it really is: an Asbestos Industry Preservation and Denial of Victims Act. It is one-sided, pro-defendant, and will throw victims out of court, for the sake of protecting a dangerous industry.

RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE ORDINATION OF THE  
REVEREND JOHN T. KIELB

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2000*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Reverend John T. Kielb, pastor of the Church of the Precious Blood in Monmouth Beach, on the 25th Anniversary of his ordination.

Father Kielb is a native of Bayonne, New Jersey, where the seeds of his vocation were sown as an Altar server at Mt. Carmel Roman Catholic Church.

Father Kielb began his journey at Seton Hall University's Divinity Program, where he remained for two years until he was assigned by the Diocese of Trenton to serve his remaining two years at St. Vincent's Seminary.

He graduated in 1974 with a Masters of Divinity Degree and was ordained a Deacon later that year. He spent the following year working in a Pennsylvania parish. On May 17, 1975, Father Kielb was ordained a Priest at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton.

Father Kielb's first assignment was to the Sacred Heart Church of South Amboy. Subsequently, he was assigned to St. Robert Ballarmine, in Freehold; St. Gabriels, in Marlboro; and Our Lady of Sorrows, in Mercerville. On September 1, 1989, he was named the pastor at the Church of the Precious Blood in Monmouth Beach, where he has served ever since.

Father Kielb is a great asset to Central New Jersey. I urge all my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Father Kielb and his accomplishments.

LOUIS CARDONI HONORED FOR  
COMMUNITY WORK

**HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2000*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Louis Cardoni of Plains Township, Luzerne County, in my district, who will be honored by the Plains Rotarians at a din-

ner May 21 for his role as a community leader.

Lou Cardoni has a long history of community involvement, dating back to the 1940s, when as a youngster, he helped his father develop the Hilldale baseball diamond. Since that time, he has worked hard to make Hilldale and all of Plains Township a showplace for recreation in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

After returning from his service in the Army, Lou resumed his strong involvement in service to the community. He was a charter member of the Hilldale Community Center and is presently a member of the Plans Rotary Club, the Plains American Legion and the ITLO Club. He is a past president of the Plans Rotary and of the Hilldale Community Center and is the current secretary of the ITLO Club.

Mr. Speaker, Lou chaired the Plains Recreation Board for many years, and his accomplishments on the recreation board have been a model for the community. Among his most prominent accomplishments was helping to develop the Hilldale Baseball Park, which sent many boys on to the professional ranks, including Ed Ott, Randy Martz and Jim Farr, the current baseball coach at the College of William and Mary. Lou also spearheaded the development of the Birchwood Complex, one of Luzerne County's showplaces.

Working with other community leaders, Lou also helped to build three playgrounds, secure a grant for one of the first handicapped-accessible parks in Pennsylvania and obtain grants for roads and water lines in Birchwood Municipal Park and for filling a mine pit which has now been replaced with athletic fields.

Lou and his wife, the former Ellen Dooley of Plains, have three children, Louis Jr., Maureen Riley and Kathy Cardoni, and five grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the Plains community in honoring Louis Cardoni for his exceptional service, and I send my best wishes for continued success in all his endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ALTER-  
NATIVE COMMUNICATION DE-  
VICES MEDICARE COVERAGE ACT

**HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2000*

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will help America's seniors take better care of themselves. This legislation will direct the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) to give Medicare beneficiaries coverage of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices ("AAC devices"). AAC devices provide individuals who are unable to speak, use sign language, or write because of cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, stroke or ALS, the ability to communicate—and therefore to lead safer and more productive lives.

I am joined in this effort by my colleagues from California and New York, the Honorable RON PACKARD and JERROLD NADLER, and several other colleagues. In addition, full Medicare coverage of AAC devices is urged by a broad range of the professional medical community,

including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Neurology, and 13 of America's leading disability organizations, including the United Cerebral Palsy Association.

For over a year and a half, I have been working with other Representatives and Senators in hopes of accomplishing administratively through HCFA this goal of AAC device coverage. On Dec. 30, 1999, these 13 leading disability organizations filed a formal request to HCFA for Medicare coverage of AAC devices. On April 26, 2000, the HCFA, after missing its own earlier 90-day deadline for a decision, took only an incomplete and partial step. It withdrew a prior, inexplicable national non-coverage decision of AAC devices, issued in the 1980's, which was an obstacle to granting coverage. However, HCFA failed to take the needed step of granting Medicare beneficiaries coverage of AAC devices.

The legislation we are introducing today will accomplish that goal, and secure AAC device coverage for America's seniors through their Medicare health benefits.

For many of the people who need these devices, the ability to speak and interact with society though a communications device has a profound and positive impact on their lives. One of the most prominent users of these devices is the famed physicist Dr. Stephen Hawking, who suffers from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's disease. Dr. Hawking's story of how his disease forced him to communicate through an augmentative communication device is best told in his own words:

In 1985, I had to have a tracheotomy operation. After this, I had to have 24 hour nursing care. This was made possible by grants from several foundations. Before the operation, my speech had been getting more slurred, so that only a few people who knew me well could understand me. But at least I could communicate. I wrote scientific papers by dictating to a secretary, and I gave seminars through an interpreter, who repeated my words more clearly. However, the tracheotomy operation removed my ability to speak altogether. For a time, the only way I could communicate was to spell out words letter by letter, by raising my eyebrows when someone pointed to the right letter on a spelling card. It is pretty difficult to carry on a conversation like that, let alone write a scientific paper.

However, a computer expert in California, called Walt Woltoz, heard of my plight. He sent me a computer program he had written, called Equalizer. This allowed me to select words from a series of menus on the screen, by pressing a switch in my hand. The program could also be controlled by a switch, operated by head or eye movement. When I have built up what I want to say, I can send it to a speech synthesizer. At first, I just ran the Equalizer program on a desk top computer.

However David Mason, of Cambridge Adaptive Communication, fitted a small portable computer and a speech synthesizer to my wheel chair. This system allowed me to communicate much better than I could before. I can manage up to 15 words a minute. I can either speak what I have written, or save it to disk. I can then print it out, or call it back and speak it sentence by sentence. Using this system, I have written a book, and dozens of scientific papers. I have also given many scientific and popular talks.