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external defibrillators in public buildings. This program is intended to quicken the process of helping heart attack victims. They were also the first agency in the county to give the heart attack clot-busting drug, Retavase, to patients while on the way to the hospital. In addition, the fire-rescue workers transport heart attack and stroke victims to the county hospital that is best equipped patients rather than just the nearest one. Furthermore, the agency began airing fire-safety announcements before films at Muvico theaters.

I would particularly like to honor the men and women of Broward Fire Rescue for their tireless efforts of providing care for the injured and sick. Without these individuals, the accomplishments listed above would not be possible. The agency should be recognized for their hard work and dedication to Broward County and its residents.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ROUND VALLEY INDIAN TRIBES STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIAN WOMEN PROGRAM

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Margaret Hoaglen and the Round Valley Indian Tribe's STOP Violence Against Indian Women Program.

A recipient of the 2000 National Crime Victim Service Award, Special Award for Innovations in Service to Victims in Indian Country, the Round Valley STOP Program is an example of how dedication and collaboration with local resources can make an impact on victims of domestic violence and their children in Indian Country.

The Crime Victim Service Award, the highest award for victim advocacy, honors those that have provided extraordinary service and great commitment to victims.

In existence since May 1998, the Round Valley STOP Program has forged partnerships with local agencies, entering into agreements with the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office and the County Victim Witness Unit.

In addition, they completed a draft Tribal Domestic Violence Ordinance that has generated discussion of issues surrounding domestic violence. The program works closely with the local domestic violence shelter and has provided funding for a Children's Program offering care and support for children living in the shelter.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we acknowledge Margaret Hoaglen and the Round Valley STOP Violence Against Indian Women Program for the dedicated service they provide to victims in Indian Country. Congratulations to them for receiving this very important award.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING T. L. HANNA HIGH SCHOOL IN ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

HON. LINDSEY O. GRAHAM

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I honor T. L. Hanna High School in Anderson, SC. This school has been recently named a 1999-2000 school year "Blue Ribbon School" by Secretary of Education, Richard Riley.

Since its inception in 1982, more than 3,800 of the most successful and challenging schools in the country have been honored by inclusion in the Blue Ribbons Schools Program. The schools chosen for this program must fulfill stringent, research-based criteria for overall academics, excellence. To be eligible to be a Blue Ribbon School, schools are judged in all areas of academics, instruction, professional development, and school curriculum. In addition, honored schools exhibit exceptional levels of community and parental involvement, high student achievement levels and rigorous safety and discipline programs within their schools.

T. L. Hanna High School was one of only four schools in South Carolina honored with this prestigious award this year. In fact, they were one of an elite 198 schools nationwide chosen for this honor for the 1999-2000 school year.

T. L. Hanna High School is an outstanding example of effective public school and is well deserving of this national award. Their parents, students, teachers, administrators, and school officials should all be proud for achieving this special honor. This school is a strong example of excellence in academics in the 3rd District of South Carolina and should serve as a model for schools across the country. I am proud to have this blue ribbon school in my district of South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my fellow colleagues will join me in congratulating T. L. Hanna High School for their commitment to educational excellence.

CONSUMER AUTOMOBILE LEASE ADVERTISING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2000

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2000

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing today legislation to amend current federal law to provide consumers with more relevant, complete and timely information about the terms and costs of automobile leases. My legislation, the "Consumer Automobile Lease Advertising Improvement Act of 2000", seeks to empower consumers by providing them with the information they need to evaluate lease offers, to comparison shop for the best lease deals and to make informed consumer choices.

This legislation has been endorsed by the Consumer Federation of America and the

American Automobile Association. It also incorporates important changes in current law that have been proposed by the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Reserve Board and by numerous State Attorneys General.

My legislation responds to the dramatic increase over the past decade in the role of leasing in the market for new and used automobiles. Leasing has clearly changed the way Americans approach their second most important consumer transaction—the family car. Automobile leases now account for over one in every three new car transactions, over half of all transactions for higher cost luxury automobiles, and also for a large and growing percentage of used car transactions.

While leases can be advantageous for many consumers—offering lower monthly payments, manageable down payments and lower maintenance costs and typical financing arrangements—they can also involve considerable risks and hidden costs. Consumer Reports magazine has consistently warned consumers that a lease is "not the simple transaction it's made out to appear" and can often result with consumers "paying thousands of dollars more" than necessary. The confusing terms and complex calculations in auto leases create numerous opportunities for deception and fraud. According to the National Consumer Law Center, "no area of fraud over the last decade has been more endemic and widespread than that involving auto leases." Last year the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators listed auto leases among the "top ten complaints" expressed by consumers to local consumer protection agencies.

CONSUMERS' RIGHT TO INFORMATION

While government can not, and should not, seek to dictate the way auto leases are structured, calculated or sold to the public, I believe it does have a responsibility to assure that consumers receive relevant and accurate information about lease terms and obligations. The consumers "right to know", as embodied in the Truth In Lending Act and other Federal statutes, clearly requires that consumers have something approaching a level playing field when attempting to compare lease and purchase options and when trying to negotiate the best lease deal. As the Comptroller of the Currency, John D. Hawke, Jr., commented recently, "consumers must have information to make wise choices in today's complex financial world."

Two problems, in particular, need to be addressed. First, under current industry practices and federal disclosure guidelines consumers do not have a right to know some of the most important and necessary information for evaluating a lease offer. They do not have a right to know the applicable lease interest rate, or so-called "money factor." They don't have a right to know what consumer incentives are available from manufacturers, lenders and dealerships. They do not have a right to know the residual value of the vehicle they wish to lease in advance of receiving the actual deal. In short, they have very little basis on which to evaluate or compare lease offers.

This is information that every automobile dealer has at their fingertips, but it's not available to consumers. It is available in industry publications, it is available on computer programs provided by manufacturers, banks and

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