

rhythms with jazz, mambo, salsa. He created an explosion of inspiration for entire generations of aspiring musicians and for generations of youths who learned by watching that it was possible to make something of yourself if you worked hard.

In commemorating the late "timbalero," Tito Puente, I would also like to honor the countless other Puerto Ricans who have enriched our nation's diverse musical culture and those Puerto Ricans who continue to rise on the world stage.

IN HONOR OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to honor the 20th anniversary of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, a non-profit organization that fulfills the wishes of children fighting life-threatening illnesses.

In 1980, a 7-year-old boy named Chris, from Arizona, who was fighting leukemia wished to be a police officer. Friends of Chris's family worked to fulfill his wish and in April that year, Chris spent a day learning about being a police officer and was even sworn in as the first-ever and only Honorary State Trooper in Arizona history.

Shortly after Chris's wish, the Make-A-Wish Foundation was created to help bring happiness to more children. From this humble start, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has grown and now has 80 chapters in the United States and 20 international affiliates. More than 80,000 children fighting life-threatening illnesses worldwide have had their wishes fulfilled. Popular wishes include visiting Walt Disney theme parks, getting home computer systems, taking family vacations, and meeting celebrities.

Two months ago, one of my constituents had his wish fulfilled by Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic, Inc. Last year, 7-year-old Ryan Davidson of Ashburn, VA, was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. It was devastating to him and his family.

When the Make-A-Wish Foundation asked Ryan what his greatest wish was, it didn't surprise anyone that he wanted to meet NASCAR driver Bobby Labonte. Ryan learned about auto racing while playing video games and became an instant fan. Of all the drivers, Labonte is his favorite. On April 26, Ryan, his father Kirby, his mother Amy and his sister Mallory traveled to California where they visited a NASCAR racetrack, watched the action close up and met Labonte. Ryan came home with loads of memories and souvenirs, including his favorite—an autographed collector's edition of Labonte's car. Ryan's wish was a great success. "This is the best day of my life," he told his parents after meeting Labonte.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation gives children fighting life-threatening illnesses a positive break from a world of doctors, hospitals and medicine. I salute the Make-A-Wish Foundation's volunteers and supporters who work to

make wishes come true not only in Virginia's 10th Congressional District, but literally all over the world. I invite those interested in learning more about the Foundation to contact them at 1-800-722-9474 or on the Internet at www.wish.org.

BETTI LIDSKY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Betti Lidsky on her fiftieth birthday celebration.

Betti Lidsky is an exemplary woman who personifies love and self sacrifice. As the mother of three children who suffer from Retinitis Pigmentosa, an eye degenerative disease which may lead to blindness, she battles valiantly everyday to seek ways in which to increase funding for finding a cure and save the eyesight of her children and others like them. A true heroine, she selflessly devotes her time and energy to her family, to the national Foundation Fighting Blindness where she serves as a board member, and to the South Florida community where she is highly admired and respected.

Betti Lidsky is an advocate whose services and kind spirit have touched the lives of many, and on this very special occasion, I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing Betti Lidsky a very happy fiftieth birthday.

OLDER PEOPLE DO NOT NEED CHAPERONES

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 6, 2000

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, in the May issue of SeniorScope, the newspaper published by the city of New Bedford dealing with issues of particular importance to older people, editor Rona Zable has an excellent column. Ms. Zable effectively refutes those who would interfere with the rights of older people to make their own decisions, specifically in this case with regard to their choice to gamble if they wish in legal establishments. I have been struck by the degree to which people who usually respect the rights of others to make their own choices make an exception for gambling, and for some reason, people seem often ready to use a caricature of older people as an excuse for this. Indeed, some who believe that we should make a radical change in the Social Security system and have people be dependent on their stock picks for retiring income draw an inexplicable line against letting them go to a casino every so often with some of that retirement income.

As Rona Zable trenchantly asks, "are older people perceived to be so witless, so gullible, that we need to be protected from ourselves lest we buy too many lottery tickets or play bingo too often? . . . If Congress is really con-

cerned about senior citizens, they ought to do something about the sky high cost of prescription drugs. Because, chances are, we're more apt to blow the family inheritance at the drug-store counter than we are at the casinos!"

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Zable is exactly right and I submit her very thoughtful essay here.

DO YOU NEED A CHAPERONE AT THE CASINO?

There are folks out there who are quite concerned about you. They worry that one of these days, you might gamble away your kid's inheritance.

"Are Casinos Preying On Our Elders?" was the headline of a recent story in the AARP Bulletin. Noting the popularity of bingo halls, lotteries and casinos, the article asked, "Is it harmless entertainment? Or are older Americans being targeted deliberately by advertising and marketing efforts designed to ensure that they keep pumping large sums of money into the gambling industry."

The focus of the article was a study published in the Law Journal of the University of Illinois College of Law. The author stated that older people are at greater risk than others for problem gambling because of circumstances that make them vulnerable . . . namely, loss of a spouse loneliness and boredom. The study concluded that "the casino industry targets its marketing to older people because they are reliable spenders with leisure time to visit casinos often."

Well, duh! Like—we didn't know that?

Apparently, our legislators also believe that seniors are more at risk than other age groups for problem gambling. Timothy A. Kelly, executive director of a commission appointed by Congress to examine the economic impact of gambling, believes state and federal lawmakers should consider halting the expansion of gambling around the nation pending further research. Kelly, whose National Gambling Impact Study Commission spent two years examining the issues, says, "We heard a lot of stories about elderly parents gambling away the family inheritance."

Aw, come on, guys. Seriously—does any SeniorScope reader know of any elderly parent who gambled away the family inheritance? (Maybe some younger folks have done that, but not the old folks).

To me, this is one more instance of the Dumbing Down of Senior Citizens. Are older people perceived to be so witless, so gullible, that we need to be protected from ourselves lest we buy too many lottery tickets or play Bingo too often? Do we need Big Brother to watch over us at the blackjack tables and slot machines?

If this sounds like I am some kind of a big-time casino player, rest assured I am not. In fact, I have never set foot in Foxwoods or Mohegan Sun. But I defend the right of anyone over age 21 to spend their money where they please—be it a casino, bingo hall, sports arena, vacation resort, ect. It so happens I am a "shopping mall" person . . . and just as some people enjoy the socialization and buffets at Foxwoods, I enjoy the clearance sales and food court at the Galleria Mall.

Nor would I like it one bit if the Senate appointed a Commission to limit the expansion of malls to curtail shopping by senior citizens. Or, for that matter, to limit the expansion of restaurants because older Americans are eating out too much and putting on weight.

If Congress is really concerned about senior citizens, they ought to do something about the sky high cost of prescription drugs. Because, chances are, we're more apt to blow the family inheritance at the drug-store counter than we are at the casinos!