Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me today in honoring Mrs. Maranda Phillips Holmes for the incredible service she has provided for the citizens of her community. The world is a better place because of her years of distinguished service, and she has certainly earned the honor this notable award recognizes. The citizens of Charleston County and I congratulate Mrs. Holmes on her outstanding accomplishments and wish her the best in all of her future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE
OF HAWAII
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, July 24, 2001

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on July 23 I was necessarily absent and was not able to vote on three recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:


EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING ANDREW A. ATHENS
HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, July 24, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding American, a humanitarian and a dedicated health provider, Andrew A. Athens.

Mr. Athens has dedicated his life not only to serving his family, his faith, and his nation, but is trying to improve the quality of life for millions of patients in need of health care throughout the world. With the same dedication and work ethic, Andy Athens and his wife, Louise, have reared their children and grandchildren in the best traditions of philanthropy, respect, and goodwill.

Andy was born in Chicago, IL, the son of Greek-American immigrants. He went on to serve as a captain in the U.S. Army during World War II where he distinguished himself in the European and African campaigns for which he was decorated with the Bronze Star. Following the war, he helped rebuild the infrastructure of war-ravaged Europe, which service earned him a citation from the Hungarian Government. Subsequent to his return to America, Andy cofounded Melton Steel Corporation, in which he served as its president for 41 years and during which time it became a major steel service center in the Midwest.

A lifelong activist in the Greek Orthodox Faith, Andy Athens has held leadership roles on the local, Diocesan and national levels. While President of the Archdiocesan Council of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America from 1974–1995, the highest position a layman can hold in the Church’s national administration, Andy helped to establish the charitable arms of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, the International Orthodox Christian Charities, and Leadership 100. For his outstanding humanitarian service, Andy received numerous awards, including the highly regarded Religious Heritage of America Award, the Athenagoras Human Rights Award, the Medal of Saint Paul, and other honors.

Responding to the need for political action, Andy mobilized the Greek American community to petition elected officials and to express their views for global action. In 1974, he founded the United Hellenic American Congress (UHAC), and continues to serve as its chairman. UHAC has helped to bridge the gap between the Greek American communities who govern nationally and globally. It is a voice for human rights violations in the Mediterranean and the Balkans and the need for religious freedom in Turkey. Continuing his international humanitarian service, in 1995, Mr. Athens was elected to serve as the 1st President of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE). Andy’s greatest political and humanitarian achievements have been in his service with the SAE, which represents 7 million Hellenes living outside of Greece. Under Andy’s leadership, the SAE instituted an historic program bringing primary health care and job opportunities to Hellenes and their neighbors living in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The SAE Medical Relief Program has established three health care centers in Georgia, a clinic and visiting nurses program in Ukraine, and a health care clinic in Armenia. Soon, they will begin a full program in Albania. They have managed to help more than 34,000 patients per month throughout these clinics.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join in honoring Andrew A. Athens, a “Greek-American global advocate of all the values that have made our nation so strong.” Mr. Athens has lived the American dream based on honor, duty, faith and respect. He has truly been saintly as a philanthropic global advocate for the values we all embody as Americans.

EUROPEAN INTERESTS ARE NOT ALWAYS THOSE OF THE U.S.

HON. DOUG BEREUTER
OF NEBRASKA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, July 24, 2001

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member wishes to commend to his colleagues the July 22, 2001, editorial from the Omaha World-Herald entitled “Why America Says No.”

Currently, the U.S. is under intense pressure from members of the European Union (EU) to conform to what they deem best for their combined interests. While U.S. economic and security interests often intersect with those of its European allies, such convergence is not always the case. Environmental standards (notably those of the Kyoto Protocol), agriculture subsidy levels, and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are among the issues on which the U.S. and the EU disagree. Participation in the proposed
permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) is yet another issue on which the U.S. national interests and many other countries' national interests diverge.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that choosing not to participate in institutions such as the ICC is not, as some continue to argue, equal to isolationism. Choosing not to engage in conversations with other leaders on difficult issues will not, in my view, change President Bush's position. The United States and much of the international community is standing strong against pressure to pursue international agreements and institutions which would be contrary to American interests, has engaged his European counterparts in dialogue on the tough issues and should be commended for doing so.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, July 22]

WHY AMERICA SAYS NO

One of the irritants in President Bush's current dealings with European nations is his administration's opposition to a permanent International Criminal Court. The 15-member European Union is one of the leading proponents of a United Nations plan to form such a tribunal.

Bush should stay firm. Not because a world court would be a bad thing as a general principle—indeed, in the abstract the idea has appeal. And not even because the trend of recent years toward some kind of world government is a direct affront to American sovereignty, as it surely is. The U.S. government should continue to be against this proposal because America's potential exposure to the potential misuse of such an entity is greater than that of most other nations.

That is because America is a superpower that is often called upon to be the world's policeman. By tradition and instinct, it has chosen to pursue an active, interventionist foreign policy during many stretches of its history. Acting as a force for good in the world. No nation has single-handedly done more to defend down-trodden people against tyrants or to combat the problems of disease, poverty and deprivation.

Accordingly, America has had far-flung military and civilian operations sometimes in circumstances that either conflict or compete with outcomes efficiently ambiguous as to make it a target for prosecution in an international court if the people who ran that court happened not to like Americans.

The purpose of the proposed entity would be to try and sentence war criminals, violators of human rights and perpetrators of genocide. Administration officials fear that the machinery of an international court could, if it fell into the wrong hands, mean trouble for American troops or their leaders—troubled by someone who tried to paint an American military intervention (Haiti? Panama?) as a violation of human rights or a foreign policy decision (Henry Kissinger on the bombing of Cambodia in 1970) as a war crime. Not everyone sees things through the same eyes. George Bush, the former president, is either a national liberator or a cruel criminal, depending on whether you are Kuwaiti or Iraqi.

The spectacle of Americans, based on foreign policy differences, being hauled before a foreign jury fits the description of tyranny. And it is not contrary to America's interests, or its foreign policy, to combat the problems of disease, poverty and deprivation.

But even an embarrassing physical problem like skin cancer can be a matter of life and death. And though complicated, effective treatment depends on a patient's ability to place absolute trust in his or her doctor. Experience in private practice, I know better than anyone else, that the physician-patient relationship is sacrosanct. Administration officials fear that the ICC's establishment of a "standard unique health care identifier" for all Americans, as well as prohibiting the use of federal funds to develop or implement a database containing personal health information.

It is the judgment of such a medical identifier, especially when combined with HHS's misnamed "federal privacy" regulations, would allow federal bureaucrats to track every citizen's medical history from cradle to grave. Furthermore, it is possible that every medical professional, hospital, and Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) in the country would be able to access an individual citizen's record simply by entering the patient's identifier into a health care database.

When the scheme to assign every American a unique medical identifier became public knowledge in 1998, there was a tremendous outcry from the public. Congress responded to the public outrage by including language forbidding the expenditure of funds to implement or develop a medical identifier in the federal budget for the past three fiscal years. Last year my amendment prohibiting the use of funds to develop or implement a medical identifier unanimously passed the House of Representatives.

It should be clear to every member of Congress that the United States already does not wish to use a uniform medical identifier. Therefore, rather than continuing to extend the prohibition on funding for another year, Congress should simply repeal the authorization of the national medical ID this year.

As an OB/GYN with more than 30 years experience in private practice, I know better than anyone else the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship. Often times, effective treatment depends on a patient's ability to place absolute trust in his or her doctor. Will what happen to that trust when patients know that any and all information given their doctor will be placed in a data base accessible by anyone who knows the patient's "unique personal identifier?"

I ask my colleagues, how comfortable would you be confiding any emotional problem, or even an embarrassing physical problem like impotence, to your doctor if you knew that this information could be easily accessed by friend, foe, possible employers, coworkers, HMOs, and government agents? We must admit that the American people have good reason to fear a government-mandated health ID card, but they will claim such problems can be "fixed" by additional legislation restricting the use of the