

nor has it been required of other Alaska Native allotment applicants. This requirement further penalizes our Alaska Native Vietnam veterans and will certainly cause many applications to be rejected. Further, adjudication of use and occupancy issues will take years and will be very costly.

My proposed legislation will increase the available land by authorizing Alaska Native Vietnam veterans to apply for land that is federally owned and vacant. The lack of available land under existing law nullifies the very purpose of granting Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an allotment benefit. This is true because most land in Alaska is not available for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotment applications under existing laws. For example, there is no land available in southeast Alaska because it either is within the Tongass National Forest or has been selected or conveyed to the State of Alaska or ANCSA Native Corporations. In addition, vast areas of land in Alaska were withdrawn before most Alaska Native Vietnam veterans could have made qualifying use of the land. In contrast, federally owned "vacant" land is still available throughout Alaska and should be made available for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotments.

My legislation will also expand the military service dates to the dates that coincide with the entire Vietnam era conflict: beginning August 5, 1964 and ending on May 7, 1975. The expansion of military service dates to include all Alaska Natives Vietnam veterans who served in the military during the Vietnam conflict is consistent with the federal government's policy of providing benefits to all veterans of the Vietnam conflict and not just to some of those veterans. This provision also fulfills the trust obligation to Alaska Natives. The limited military service dates have excluded many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who bravely served during the Vietnam conflict. Never before has the United States given veteran land benefits to only a portion of those who served their country. The federal government has given public land benefits to all veterans (or their widows or heirs) of every war beginning with the Indian Wars of 1790 and ending with the Korean conflict in 1955. As Members will recall, Alaska Native veterans were not eligible for these public land benefits until 1924 because the courts had determined Alaska Natives were not United States citizens.

My legislation will also replace existing use and occupancy requirements with legislative approval of allotment applications. The provision assures the legislative approval process affords due process protections of valid existing interests in the land a veteran claims. The use and occupancy requirements would be replaced with legislative approval for several reasons. First, Congress has made legislative approval available to all other allotment applicants under 43 U.S.C. Section 1634(a)(1)(A)—[Section 905 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) which extends the legislative approval of Native allotments that were pending at the time of passage of ANILCA]. Second, legislative approvals of allotments prevent costly and lengthy adjudication of use and occupancy issues. Legislative approval also prevents lengthy delays that will impede many Alaska Native Vietnam veteran applicants from ever receiving

land during their lifetime. Third, there are many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans that could not meet use and occupancy requirements as a result of their service to their country. One example that illustrates this point is that a deserving Alaska Native Vietnam veteran who was paralyzed during the Vietnam conflict would be rejected if that veteran was unable to complete the five years of use of the claimed land and had not used the land for five years before the Vietnam conflict.

My legislation addresses the formidable barriers that deserving Alaska Native Vietnam veterans face when applying for a Native allotment under P.L. 105-267. For many years, Alaska Natives have had a unique legal relationship with the United States. Because of this unique relationship, Alaska Natives have steadfastly answered a call to duty when the United States called during a conflict or an act of war. Alaska Natives did so in disproportionately high numbers during the Vietnam conflict. Those who answered the call during the entire Vietnam conflict should not be penalized for their service to their country.

My proposed legislation will correct those inequities imposed by the last Administration in allowing all of the Alaska Native Vietnam veterans to apply for their Native allotment under the Native Allotment Act. I urge America's support of this legislation and of the Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who bravely served this great country during the Vietnam conflict. Fulfill our promise to all Alaska Native Vietnam veterans and allow them to obtain their Native allotment under the Native Allotment Act.

IMPORTANCE OF BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today to highlight the importance of Binational Health Week, BHW, as proclaimed by the Fresno California County Board of Supervisors. Binational Health Week takes place this week, October 12-19, and it marks the beginning of the California-Mexico Health Initiative (CMHI) action plan. The CMHI is a cooperative working group between a number of local organizations in the Central Valley, and it works as a cultural bridge between migrants' health needs and available health care services in selected Mexican states as well as selected regions of California.

The Binational Health Week promotes and reinforces healthy behavior among migrant families. It will reinforce California's vaccination campaigns by specifically targeting migrant families, and reinforce Mexican vaccination efforts. BHW will promote flu vaccination among high-risk migrant adults and provide migrant families with information on health resources and services available in selected counties in California. Finally, healthcare providers will be given an updated directory containing information on migrant health resources in California and Mexico and disseminate current research on migrant health issues

by promoting bilateral collaboration among researchers, health care providers and administrators to address service gaps and unmet needs.

This first Binational Health Week in California is conceived as a demonstration project to improve health care for migrants and will serve as the basis for future bilateral efforts. I certainly extend my support for Binational Health Week in California and urge members to become familiar of the cutting edge bilateral working group, the California-Mexico Health Initiative.

DOUGLAS H. PIERSON, RHODE ISLAND'S PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Douglas Pierson, principal of North Kingstown's Hamilton Elementary School who was recently named a National Distinguished Principal by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Mr. Pierson was selected for this honor for his outstanding leadership, and inter-personal and management skills. Throughout his tenure at Hamilton Elementary, Mr. Pierson has created a trusting environment where students, teachers, staff, and parents are encouraged to reflect, learn from their mistakes, and be thoughtful and creative about every aspect of their educational experience.

While Federal officials are just beginning to fully recognize the value of continuous learning for teachers and staff, Mr. Pierson has been encouraging it among his faculty for years. By modeling teaching strategies and disseminating research on innovative education practices, Mr. Pierson has improved instruction for each and every student at Hamilton. It was Mr. Pierson's leadership that led Hamilton Elementary to conduct a study of its effectiveness, and it is his guidance that allows time for each teacher to consider his or her instructional methods in light of the study's conclusions.

In addition to being an outstanding administrator, Mr. Pierson is an extraordinary teacher. From playing the ukulele to demonstrating mime to first-graders to dressing up as "Zero the Hero," complete with tights, a cape and hood, Mr. Pierson shows that he values students above all else.

Mr. Pierson was selected for this honor from among nominees of schools all over the State. U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige will recognize him at a ceremony here in Washington on October 19. I am very much looking forward to welcoming Mr. Pierson to our Nation's Capitol and congratulating him on this impressive honor in person.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the immense challenges associated with true leadership. True leadership inspires people to be their best, to collaborate, and to work together toward long-term and often intangible goals. Mr. Douglas Pierson consistently displays true leadership,