

March 15, 2001

REINTRODUCTION OF THE BROKEN  
PROMISES RETIREE HEALTH  
COVERAGE ACT OF 2001

**HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing legislation today, entitled the Broken Promises Retiree Health Coverage Act, which would assist our nation's retirees who face the unexpected loss of health care benefits promised by a former employer.

Thousands of hard-working retirees have been forced to cope with sudden cancellations and reductions of their health coverage over the past several years. In my hometown of Milwaukee, 750 retirees were left high and dry when the Pabst Brewing Company shut down its operations and cancelled retiree health coverage in 1996. Although they went to court and finally won a nominal prescription drug benefit, the loss of promised health coverage was a serious blow to their financial security. This treatment is not what retirees should get in exchange for many years of loyal service to their employer.

More recent events in Milwaukee underscore the pressing need for this legislation. Earlier this month, a bankruptcy court judge's decision left an additional 490 Milwaukee-area retirees plus their spouses and dependents of bankrupt Outboard Marine Corporation without any employer-promised health insurance.

Unfortunately, reports indicate that this problem will only get worse. Last year, the number of large firms with 500 or more employees offering health coverage for pre-Medicare-eligible retirees fell from 35 percent to 31 percent. This alarming statistic proves that coverage loss is not an isolated incident, but part of a disturbing national trend. As I reintroduce this measure in the 107th Congress, I renew my commitment to providing meaningful support to the retired workers and their families across the nation who have or will experience the tremendous loss of retiree health coverage.

My legislation would establish a safety-net for retirees. First, the bill would require employers to give at least six months notice to retirees about their impending loss of health coverage so retirees may be more prepared to handle the coverage loss, and if possible, seek other insurance options. To ensure the cancellations or reductions are lawful, the U.S. Department of Labor must certify that any changes to retiree health benefits meet the requirements of the collective bargaining agreement. Second, the bill ensures that health care options remain for those retirees over 55 by allowing retirees to either buy into the Medicare program or buy into their former employer's current health coverage plan until they turn 65 and become eligible for Medicare. Lastly, the bill would allow retirees, who did not sign up for Medicare or Medigap when they turned 65 years old, to apply for the programs without late-enrollment penalties.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is critical to the retirement security of all American workers. I urge my colleagues to show their support for retired workers and their families by cosponsoring this bill.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF KARL  
JOHNSON

**HON. SCOTT McINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask that we all pause for a moment to remember Karl Johnson, a leader in the community of Grand Junction, Colorado who recently passed away at age 86. Karl spent 32 years of his life protecting the citizens of Grand Junction as a police officer. It is this life of service to his community, state and nation that I would now like to honor.

From 1954 to 1974, Karl served as the chief of police. During his 20 years he closed the door on corrupt activities and brought respect back to his police department. "He ran a tight ship and no scandals and that wasn't true of those before him," said Frank Spieker, a former Mesa County district attorney. It was no easy task to keep the department scandal-free for two decades, but according to Bob Evers, he was the leading force in restoring integrity to his department.

At the time Karl was police chief, there wasn't a Police Academy in the state of Colorado. Karl worked with the FBI to put on training sessions of officers in his department and from surrounding agencies. "He was a bit ahead of his time in that respect," said Vincent Jones, the FBI agent based on Grand Junction at the time.

Chief Johnson's yeoman's work in the Police Department was just one of many ways he served his community, said Terry Farina, who worked with him as a district attorney. After his retirement from the police department, Karl went on to win a seat on the city council and spent a year as mayor.

Mr. Speaker, Karl was a man of great character whose leadership and integrity left an impact on the Grand Junction Police Department that can still be felt today. For that, we are grateful.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that Grand Junction is a better place because of Karl's service. Though he will be missed greatly, Karl will not soon be forgotten.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY RECOGNIZES OFFICER JACK BRYDEN

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Police Officer Jack Bryden of the Ewing Township Police Department, who was recently named Police Officer of the Year by the Kiwanis Club of Ewing. Throughout his nearly three decades of service to the people of Central New Jersey, Officer Bryden has made significant contributions to our community through his professional interaction with its many grateful citizens.

After 6 years of distinguished service in the United States Navy, aboard both the U.S.S. *George Washington* and the U.S.S. *T.A. Edi-*

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son, Jack Bryden was appointed to the Ewing Township Police Department in 1973. During his career in the Ewing Police Department's Patrol Division, Officer Bryden has served as a firearms instructor. He is now assigned as an information officer and often acts as citizens' first contact with the police department.

Officer Bryden's professionalism and valor above and beyond the call of duty have made him the recipient of volumes of commendation letters for outstanding performance. As a result of his willingness to assist the public in all aspects of his interaction with those he protects, Jack has also received a number of letters of appreciation from community members. One of the crowning achievements of Officer Bryden's illustrious career was his aid in rescuing four people from a smoke-filled apartment and extinguishing of the potential blaze within, actions that demonstrate his courage in the line of duty. Jack was awarded the Ewing Police Department's Valor Award for his great bravery in the face of danger.

Clearly, Officer Jack Bryden is a great asset to both Central New Jersey and our nation. I urge all my colleagues to join me today in recognizing his dedication to law enforcement and to the people of my district.

CONGRATULATING BETTY  
GALLINGHOUSE

**HON. MARGE ROUKEMA**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2001

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate our good friend and a distinguished American, Betty Gallinghouse of Oakland, NJ, on receiving the 2001 Distinguished Service Award from West Bergen Mental Healthcare, Inc., a mental health treatment facility in my hometown of Ridgewood, New Jersey. This award is given each year to an "exceptional community leader," and Betty certainly meets that definition.

Betty has been an outstanding and committed volunteer at West Bergen Mental Healthcare since 1990 and is currently a member of the Board of Directors and chairwoman of the Development Committee. She has given selflessly of her time and effort in order to help West Bergen realize its mission of providing counseling and psychiatric services for individuals and families in distress. Known for her unparalleled efforts to help wherever possible, Betty is the No. 1 cheerleader and advocate for West Bergen and its patients.

Last year, Betty undertook her most ambitious project yet—the House and Garden Color Showhouse at the Havemeyer Mansion in Mahwah. This month-long event raised almost \$100,000 for the mental health center and drew more than 10,000 visitors.

In addition to West Bergen, Betty has been actively involved in numerous community organizations, such as the Oakland Library, the Oakland Planning Board, the Oakland Parent-Teachers Organization, the Girl Scouts and many others. She is active at her church, Our Lady of Perpetual Help. She also serves as president of the Bergen County Women's Republican Club.