

2001, all military retirees and their dependents who are age 65, or who are otherwise eligible for Medicare will be able to use TRICARE as a second payer.

In the past, military retirees who reached the age of 65 lost their TRICARE eligibility and were required to purchase supplemental policies, which are often prohibitively expensive, to cover Medicare's deductibles and coinsurance. By expanding TRICARE to the 65 years of age and older population, Congress can ensure that these men and women who served our nation are eligible for the best health care this nation can offer.

I recently became aware of an inequitable situation facing many military retirees. Under current law, seniors who failed to enroll in Medicare Part B when they first became eligible are subject to a premium penalty of 10 percent for every year they did not enroll, effectively increasing the monthly premium for a 70-year-old first-time enrollee from \$50 to \$75 for the rest of his or her life. Because military retirees could not have anticipated how their benefits would change, tens of thousands of retirees are now subject to these late penalties. The legislation I am introducing today would waive the penalty for military retirees who enroll between January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2002.

There is another barrier to full participation facing our military retirees. Current law permits late enrollees to sign up only during Medicare's annual open enrollment period—January 1 through March 31—with benefits beginning on July 1. My legislation will create a continuous open enrollment period through the end of 2002 for military retirees so that these prospective beneficiaries may access their new coverage immediately.

Mr. Speaker, this country has done a good job of meeting the health care needs of our active duty military. The Floyd A. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 was a milestone in our efforts to help the military retirees who devoted years of their lives to defend this nation. My bill takes one more important step to ensure that these retirees, their spouses, and their survivors have full access to the benefits we enacted for them last year. I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of this key legislation so that we may truly fulfill our promise to the nation's military retirees this year.

IN RECOGNITION OF AMTRAK'S
30TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Amtrak on its 30th Anniversary. On May 1, 1971, Amtrak began operations at a time when passenger rail service in America seemed to be fading into the past, destined to take its place in American history. But when Amtrak was created thirty years ago, there came an opportunity for passenger rail service to play a role in addressing America's transportation needs.

Today, with congestion dominating our highways and skies, and with airline delays and

gas prices reaching record levels, wary travelers have turned to rail service for relief. And Amtrak has succeed in providing travelers with a quality alternative to every-day transportation headaches.

Amtrak has worked hard to understand the needs of passengers. It understands that people want to travel safely and comfortably, that people want to reach their destinations on time, and that people do not want to pay excessive fares. Because of this understanding, Amtrak is currently experiencing a tremendous growth in ridership: just last year, Amtrak logged a record 22.5 million trips, making Amtrak the ninth largest commercial passenger carrier in the United States.

To meet the demands of increased ridership, Amtrak has been working hard to make improvements to its infrastructure. In New Jersey, as well as throughout the Northeast, Amtrak's Northeast Corridor service provides an essential link between regional businesses and communities. To maintain its commitment to the region, Amtrak is working with the New Jersey Transit Authority (NJTRANSIT) to build and improve rail lines and tunnels. NJ TRANSIT and Amtrak are in the process of completing improvements to Newark Penn Station, and construction of the Newark International Airport Station, which will create a link between the airport and the Nation's busiest rail line. These improvements to local infrastructure will further empower local communities and the region's economy.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Amtrak's commitment to passenger rail service on its 30th Anniversary.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND
LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT
AREND DON LUBBERS

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man whose name is synonymous with higher education in Michigan and across the United States. After 32 years as president of Grand Valley State University, Arend Don Lubbers will retire later this month as the nation's longest-serving state university president. During his tenure, Grand Valley State University has grown from a small college with a few buildings on the main campus in Allendale to an established university with additional campuses in downtown Grand Rapids, Holland, Muskegon, Traverse City, and Petoskey.

When President Lubbers began his presidency at GVSU in January 1969, he was a trailblazer, holding the distinction of being one of the youngest college presidents in the country at the time. Recognized by Life magazine in 1962 for his hard work and his willingness to try new ideas, Lubbers lived up to the billing by building Grand Valley into a university that now boasts more than 42,000 alumni and is recognized as a premier institution in education, research, and technology.

Grand Valley has enjoyed considerable success because President Lubbers has implemented his vision of how to successfully lead

a university. During his farewell address to the campus community in April, he outlined four characteristics of what is required to make a university successful. The four characteristics—ownership, power, commitment, and sense of mission—have been his plan from the very beginning. GVSU is truly a special place today because he acted on the plans and ideas he envisioned for himself and the university community.

When classes resume for the 2001–2002 school year a new era will be underway at GVSU. It will mark the first time since the late 1960's that President Lubbers will be absent from welcoming faculty, staff, returning students, and new students to campus. Some thirty years later, the school year will begin without the man who has worked tirelessly to achieve his vision for higher education in West Michigan. Even though a new chapter will have begun, the legacy of President Lubbers will live on as Grant Valley State University continues to establish itself as a model for other institutions to follow.

Mr. Speaker, I want to personally thank President Lubbers for his ideas, his commitment to people and education, for laying the foundation for faculty, staff, and students to build on in the future and for his personal friendship. His personable and approachable style will be greatly missed by those who have had the pleasure of working alongside and with him over the years. He's truly earned the right to miss the first day of classes this coming school year. Congratulations and best wishes to President Lubbers and his wife Nancy as they begin their new venture!

TRIBUTE TO ELLEN KELLY
FAIRBANKS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. McGOVERN, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dedicated educator and administrator, Ellen Kelly Fairbanks, who has recently retired from her position as Principal of the Floral Street School in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Fairbanks is yet another example of all the hardworking and dedicated educators found in Central Massachusetts today. She inspires us with her love of teaching, which she has carried with her from the time she was a little girl in Iowa playing school with her younger brothers. Mrs. Fairbanks began her thirty years in education, teaching in Wakefield and Newton. Following time off to raise her two daughters Katherine and Martha, she returned to teaching in her new hometown of Shrewsbury as a reading specialist at Shrewsbury Middle School and later as a teacher at the Calvin Coolidge Elementary School.

In 1987, Mrs. Fairbanks became principal at the Beal School Early Childhood Center. Housed in an abandoned building designed as a high school in 1913, this school building experienced a rebirth under the leadership of Mrs. Fairbanks. To many the Beal Early Childhood Center became one of the most beloved institutions in town. In fact, her accomplishments at the Beal Early Childhood Center