

Congressional Medal of Honor. This is more than any other ethnic group of veterans. Among the recipients is Private Jose P. Martinez who sacrificed his life by leaping forward and leading his platoon in attack after Japanese soldiers pinned down his unit during World War II.

Another honoree is Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez, who after recovering from a wound during his first tour of duty in Vietnam, returned to the war and earned his way into the elite Army Special Forces. Upon his return, Benavidez assisted in the rescue of 12 men from his unit, and destroyed classified documents so that they would not fall into enemy hands.

These soldiers are the epitome of the valor and service that is found within every soldier. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in honoring our Hispanic-American military heroes and to recognize the tremendous contributions Hispanic-American veterans have made in defense of liberty and democracy.

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY REFORM ACT OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES B. LONGLEY, JR.

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 30, 1996

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3118, the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act.

It has become extremely clear that the question of health care eligibility has become extremely clouded as the result of a very complex and difficult to understand process of determining eligibility. In fact, as a country, we probably spend more time and money determining who is eligible, as compared to providing needed care. This must change.

I think that H.R. 3118 is a giant first step in the direction of positive changes in the provision of Veterans Administration health care.

At the same time, I want to commend this committee and Chairman STUMP for the outstanding work on behalf of the Nation's veterans. I hope that the committee will continue to be vigilant and aggressive in examining a system of veterans health care in order to ensure that it continues to provide quality care.

This would include, I hope, careful examination of the use of funds by the Veterans Administration. In the last two appropriations bills, this Congress has made careful provisions to increase funding for the provision of VA medical care. In the fiscal year 1997 budget, we increased funding by \$504 million, from \$16.6 billion to over \$17 billion. In fiscal year 1996, the previous year, we increased funding an additional \$400 million.

Sadly, however, although we have increased annual funding by almost \$1 billion in the last 2 years, it seems that those additional funds have not made their way to the grass roots. It has certainly not made it to the Veterans Hospital in my district located in Togus, ME. In fact, if anything, as we have increased funding from Washington, the limitations on services, including the discussion of cutbacks on existing services has continued unabated.

It is not uncommon, for instance, to find a Maine veteran being forced to travel to a VA

hospital in the Boston area and admit him or herself as an inpatient. He or she could remain in Boston for days, if not weeks, to receive needed medical treatment that could have been provided through a cooperative arrangement at a significantly lower cost with a Maine hospital.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3118 is a significant first step in the direction of improving and reforming the delivery of medical care to our Nation's veterans. I hope that, in the course of implementing H.R. 3118, we will see the committee continue to take a vigilant stance in overseeing the administration of the VA system and that it will take whatever action is necessary in order to protect provision of care at existing VA hospitals, such as that hospital located in Togus, ME. Our Nation's veterans, Maine veterans, deserve no less.

TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY "DOTSY" LOCKHART-ELSKOE

HON. VICTOR O. FRAZER

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 31, 1996

Mr. FRAZER. Mr. Speaker, Dorothy "Dotsy" Lockhart-Elskoe was born and raised on the island of St. Thomas and is the second child of Alfred and Elmira Lockhart. Dorothy was a graduate of the Charlotte Amalie High School Class of 1947. She attended on-island education programs for teachers that utilized professors from Puerto Rico and various mainland universities and colleges.

In 1952, Mrs. Elskoe began her teaching career as an elementary school teacher; however, after 8 years as a teacher, she developed a throat condition which forced her early retirement from the classroom. Mrs. Elskoe worked at the Department of Education and the Department of Finance. Additionally, she held various positions in the government. She was Administrative Assistant for the Virgin Islands Urban Renewal Board, Director of Emergency Housing for the Department of Housing and Community Renewal, Director of Community Relations and Complaints for the Virgin Islands Legislature and retired in 1986 as Director of the Rotary Multipurpose Center for Senior Citizens.

Dorothy's retirement gives her more time for community involvement. Her involvement in the community is both civic and political. She was president of the Democratic Party Women's Auxiliary for 8 years and a member of the Democratic Territorial Committee. Dotsy is still involved in politics—her assistance is often solicited by both senatorial and gubernatorial candidates. In addition to her past political involvements, Dotsy is a charter member of the League of Women Voters, member of St. Thomas is All of Us and the Welfare Rights Organization. Mrs. Elskoe chaired the Children's Sub-Committee of the Carnival Committee for 10 years and worked with Sam King and the late Halvor Hart, Jr. to bring children's rides to Carnival—began a children's village and started the tradition of a Prince and Princess float in the parade.

Presently, Dotsy is a member of the Board of Governors for the Virgin Islands Cultural Heritage Institute, United Way Board Member, member of the Downstreet People, Inc., President of the Committee to Revive Our Culture,

Co-Chairperson of the Merry Carolers, member of the Challenge of Carolers, Inc., President of the Elskoe and Associates Carnival Floupe, founder and member of the St. Jude Prayer Group and a Red Cross volunteer. Mrs. Elskoe has given and continues to render assistance to schools, social and civic clubs whenever her services are requested.

Mrs. Elskoe fosters her firm belief of preserving the traditional values and the indigenous customs of the Virgin Islands because they are on the fringe of extinction. In the summer of 1990, Dotsy assisted the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC, in preparing a mini-parade and a past and present living exhibit about the islands for the 24th annual festival of American Folklife.

She has presented and organized many demonstrations in the culinary arts and other arts and crafts to the schools and other organizations—locally and abroad. In past summers, the Committee to Revive Our Culture, of which Dotsy is President, organized youth summer programs for children between the ages of 12 and 17. They learned native culinary arts and additional handicrafts. With the aid of the Tourism Department, the Committee to Revive Our Culture held several successful cultural fairs in May and December at the Emancipation Garden. In the near future, Mrs. Elskoe will be embarking upon a project to organize a cooperative where local crafts and articles made in the Virgin Islands can be purchased.

Forty years ago, Dorothy Elskoe and master float builder—Ector Roebuck gave life to the then Elskoe and Roebuck Carnival Floupe—now known to all as the Elskoe and Associates Carnival Floupe. Dotsy and her floupe members have worked as ambassadors of the Virgin Islands, spreading the culture abroad to various areas in the Western Hemisphere. Elskoe and Associates have traveled to Puerto Rico, Miami, New York, Tortola, Washington, DC, St. Croix, St. John, Antigua, Toronto Canada and Atlanta—winning numerous prizes along the way.

At home, Elskoe and Associates has won numerous first place awards within the floupe category as well as within the King and Queen of the Bands competition. In 1972, the then Elskoe & Roebuck was the first floupe to construct queen and king of the band costumes on St. Thomas. Fayer Elskoe-Liburd—Dotsy's eldest daughter—was the first Queen of the Band and the King of the Band was "Ricardo". One of the famous Elskoe and Associates floupe entries that was considered a masterpiece was a float which displayed a twenty cent Danish coin—built by the late Ector Roebuck. This coin included three ladies who were very prominent in Virgin Islands History. The ladies who portrayed these historic individuals were sprayed entirely in silver for authenticity.

Mrs. Elskoe's overwhelming urge to protect and preserve our culture and heritage has not gone unnoticed by a supportive community. She has received many civic certificates, awards and honorable mentions including the Wilbur Bill Lamotta Community Service Award, The Queen Cosiah Award, the 1974 and 1996 Virgin Islands Carnival Committee Outstanding Participation Awards, the 1993 Virgin Islands Carnival Committee's V.I. Cultural Ambassador Award.

Two calypsos were written in her honor by Glen "Kwabena" Davis and the late Dana Orié