

boaters visiting Canada from the Great Lakes Region fell 15 percent in the 1996 boating season to just under 40,000. This translates to a loss of over \$2 million in destination spending on the Canadian side and it can be assumed that similar losses were felt on the United States side.

It is unfortunate that the recreational boating community has been on the receiving end of some bad Government programs in recent years. We all remember the ill-conceived boat luxury tax, the FCC radio license fee and, most recently, the marine diesel fuel tax. Fortunately, all of these programs have been repealed by Congress as detrimental to boater safety and the recreational boating economy. However, once again, we are making it harder and more expensive for law-abiding boaters to enjoy their chosen form of recreation.

I must confess that with all the complex issues to address during my first term in Congress, somehow the news of illegal immigrants cruising across the Great Lakes in power and sailboats got by me. Ever mindful of the problems experienced on our southern borders and with images of illegal aliens coming into Florida, California, and Texas burned into my memory. I rushed down to one of the many marinas in my congressional district, the Ashtabula Yacht Club. That Sunday afternoon was a sight to behold. Sure enough I witnessed 40 some sailboats boldly entering the harbor.

At this point the threat became clear to me. Men, women, and children of United States and Canadian descent docked their sailboats and came ashore illegally. They were barely clothed, sunburned, and the worst among them were telling lies.

While I expected the illegal aliens to soon depart to taste freedom in the interior of our great country—they did not. In fact, the next morning I watched as all of the Canadian boats returned to Port Stanley, ON. Soon after, I spoke to the Commodore of the Yacht Club to see how long this problem has been going on. He informed me that it was the 25th year of the Lake Erie International Sailboat Race between Ashtabula, OH and Port Stanley, ON, and that he hoped to expect the same type of trouble next season. I use this example to illustrate that things are not always as they appear. The cash registers of our local harbor district depend on this annual visit from our Canadian friends to help one of our most promising growth industries—recreational boating.

Mr. Speaker, my bill would not eliminate the I-68 program, but would simply allow recreational boaters the option of using their U.S. passport in lieu of the I-68 permit in order to reenter the United States after returning from Canadian shores. It seems to me that if a U.S. passport is good enough for all other international travel purposes, that boaters traveling between two friendly countries should also be afforded this option.

I would like to thank Representative STUPAK and my colleague from Ohio, Representative TRAFICANT for being original cosponsors of this simple yet important piece of legislation. I look forward to enthusiastic support from all Members of Congress bordering the Great Lakes.

JAMES GILMORE NAMED 1997 PERSON OF THE YEAR BY THE COUNCIL OF SOUTH SIDE ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend, Mr. James Gilmore, on being named one of the 1997 Persons of the Year by the Council of South Side Advancement Associations.

In selecting Jim, the Council of South Side Advancement is honoring a man who has done much to maintain and improve the quality of life of Milwaukee's south side. Through his 25 years of service to the south side of Milwaukee, Jim has made a direct impact on the lives of many people in our community.

Over the years Jim Gilmore has shown his dedication to his neighborhood through his involvement in several community organizations. In addition, to serving on the board of directors for the Council of South Side Advancement, Jim is also involved in the Bay View Business Association, the South Side Scholarship Foundation, and St. Veronica's Parish. His involvement in these organizations demonstrates his desire to help his fellow neighbor in any way he can.

Jim Gilmore has clearly set an example for our entire community. I join the Council of South Side Advancement Associations in commending him on his outstanding dedication to the south side of Milwaukee, and I congratulate him on being named one of the 1997 Persons of the Year.

THE ACCREDITATION
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1997

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that requires all Medicare-accrediting organizations to hold public meetings and to ensure that at least a third of the governing board consists of members of the public.

Healthcare facilities must comply with certain conditions in order to participate in the Medicare Program. Through a process termed "deemed status," the Health Care Financing Administration relies on accrediting organizations to assure that Healthcare facilities are providing quality services to Medicare beneficiaries. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations is one such organization. If a facility is accredited by the joint commission, for example, it is deemed to meet Medicare's conditions of participation.

When facilities are wrongly accredited, Medicare beneficiaries suffer. A 1988 Wall Street Journal investigation found that "accreditation masks serious failings in possibly hundreds of the 5,100 hospitals in America that are inspected and approved by the joint commission." The Journal also reported that many patients died as a result of receiving substandard care in hospitals that were considered "marginal" and that "many accredited hospitals had actually failed inspections but remained ac-

credited for months, even years, as they sought to correct their problems."

At a 1990 hearing, witnesses agreed on the need to improve the hospital accreditation process. Participants reported that accrediting organizations' survey standards lacked compatibility with Medicare's conditions of participation and that follow-up with noncompliant facilities was lacking.

Today, I am focusing on the importance of an accrediting organization's accountability to the public. Accrediting bodies should be managed and directed by a balanced combination of healthcare professionals and community representatives and consumers. Currently, many accrediting bodies are directed solely by leaders of the same organizations which they accredit. This is nothing more than the fox watching the chicken house.

The joint commission has attempted to increase its commitment to the public. Currently, 6 of its 28 accrediting board members are members of the public. Although a good start, it is not enough.

We should reconsider the dependence of accrediting organizations on funding and direction from the same healthcare organizations which they survey and accredit. A July 1996 report from the public citizen health research group charged that the joint commission is "a captive of the industry whose quality of service it purports to measure."

Further, the group concluded that the joint commission "fails to recognize the often conflicting interests of hospitals and the public" and puts the interest of healthcare institutions first when conflicts arise. I question the credibility of accrediting bodies, because their income currently depends on the facilities they are supposed to be monitoring. Until a balance of representation is brought to the boards which lead accrediting organizations, we cannot assure the interests of the public are truly being considered.

As the number of accrediting organizations increases, so does the need for public accountability. For this reason, I am introducing a bill that requires all Medicare-accrediting organizations to hold public meetings and to ensure that at least a third of the governing board consists of members of the public.

This bill is a first step in assuring quality of care for our Nation's Medicare beneficiaries through the accreditation process. I am currently working on a more comprehensive bill that will make accrediting organizations more accountable—accountable to the public as well as to the health care financing administration. The upcoming bill will require the following:

Accrediting organizations must release the status of all accredited facilities to the general public within a reasonable time frame.

HCFA must scrutinize all advertising claims which use data from accrediting organizations, and must deny accreditation to all healthcare organizations which falsify accreditation-related information.

Accrediting organizations must allow employees of healthcare organizations to meet with survey teams off-premises, must accept confidential testimony from healthcare workers during surveys, and must provide whistleblower protection for workers who report violations of accreditation rules.

Accrediting organizations must publicly disclose all payments received from organizations that are being accredited.

HCFA must work with accrediting organizations to develop a comprehensive crosswalk between the organization's and Medicare's standards and must resolve any differences.

Accrediting organizations must notify HCFA when facilities are found to be noncompliant and must work with HCFA to assure that hospitals promptly correct identified problems and that HCFA is immediately informed of these actions.

Some accrediting organizations are attempting to increase public accountability. For example, the joint commission publicly releases information about the performance of specific health care organizations so that beneficiaries are able to make educated decisions concerning their health care providers. The commission also has a site on the World Wide Web through which the public will be able to access status information about specific organizations by late this year. However, the joint commission is only one of the many organizations that accredits Medicare facilities.

The goal of the bill I am introducing today is to begin the debate . . . accrediting organizations must be accountable to the public. We must guarantee that the public voice is represented in the organizations responsible for safety and quality in Medicare's healthcare facilities. When this is achieved, we can begin to assure beneficiaries that they will receive high quality treatment in all Medicare-approved facilities.

REV. THEODORE CARL MELINATE;
SPREADING JOY ALONG THE WAY

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who has blessed us all with his commitment and generosity to our Nation's children, the Reverend Theodore Carl Melinat. Reverend Melinat epitomizes the qualities of selflessness, dedication, and devotion that all members of our Society should aspire to.

On Saturday, February 22, The Lutheran Child and Family Services of Michigan will hold its annual meeting, "Joy Along the Way," and honor Rev. Theodore Carl Melinat for his 30 years of dedication to Lutheran Child and Family Services and the people of Michigan. Reverend Melinat joined the Lutheran Child and Family Services of Michigan in 1967 when it was still called the Lutheran Children's Friend Society of Michigan and served as its executive assistant until 1971. In 1972, Reverend Melinat became the executive director of the agency, a post he continues to hold. In 1981, under the Reverend's directorship, the agency switched to its current name, the Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan.

Ted Melinat was born in Crockston, MN and attended Concordia College, Concordia Seminary, and the University of Michigan before becoming a Missionary-at-Large for the Michigan District of LC-MS in northwest Grand Rapids. During his long and varied career, Theodore Carl Melinat has been the first pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Comstock Park, MI, the vacancy pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Auburn, MI, and served as an advisory pastoral delegate for the Convention of

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Anaheim, CA. Always willing to give of himself, Reverend Melinat over the years has served on numerous boards of directors for Michigan Children associations such as the Michigan Federation of Private Child and Family Agencies.

Never seeking the limelight, Reverend Melinat has quietly contributed his time and energy to a wide variety of charitable causes for the sake of our children. Causes such as the Child Welfare League of America and the Governor's Task Force on Children's Issues have been fortunate enough to have the Reverend working tirelessly on behalf of their organization. Through the years, the Reverend has served on numerous boards to assist the Lutheran Church in their outreach efforts in Michigan. Reverend Melinat is a humble, decent citizen who has embodied the Christian work ethic throughout three decades of dedicated public service.

Mr. Speaker, moral courage and dedication to service are only two of the myriad of admirable qualities that Theodore Carl Melinat teaches us by example every day. For three decades Michigan's children and you and I have been fortunate enough to have him as an advocate. For these reasons, I ask you and the rest of our colleagues to join me in congratulating Reverend Melinat for 30 years of dedicated service to the people, and most importantly the children, of Michigan.

IT IS TIME FOR AN AFRICAN-
AMERICAN MUSEUM

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, once again I am introducing a bill to establish an African-American Museum on the Mall in Washington, DC as part of the Smithsonian. I submit this bill during Black History Month to highlight the significance, urgency and importance of such a museum.

The story of black people in America has yet to be told in its entirety. African-American history is an integral part of our country, yet the richness and variety of that history is little-known and little-understood. As tourists from all over the world come to visit our Nation's Capital, they will not be able to learn the full history of black people in America. This museum presents a great opportunity—to showcase our history in its diversity and breadth, and to make the understanding of American history more complete.

Did you know that Dr. Daniel Hale Williams was a pioneering heart surgeon that played a vital role in the discovery of open-heart surgery? And that Ernest Everett Just, Percy Julian, and George Washington Carver were all outstanding scientists? Educators such as W.E.B. DuBois and Benjamin E. Mays left an indelible mark on this country. The Harlem Renaissance produced poets, writers, and musicians like Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Duke Ellington. The civil rights movement changed the face of this country and inspired movements toward democracy and justice all over the world producing great leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Whitney Young. Too few people know that Benjamin Benneker,

an outstanding mathematician, along with Pierre L' Enfant, designed the District of Columbia. There are many more and their stories must be told.

Until we understand the African-American story in its fullness and complexity, we cannot understand ourselves as a nation. We must know we are and where we have come from so that we may move forward together. And we recognize the importance of all our people and all of our history. The establishment of this museum would be one important step toward achieving greater understanding as a nation and as a people.

It is my hope and prayer that as we preserve these important moments in history, we will inspire future generations to dream, to write, to march and to teach. As they are able to look back at all that has been accomplished, they will be able to look forward and believe in the future of our great country.

I am pleased and delighted that many of my colleagues have joined me in cosponsoring this bill. I urge all my colleagues of the 105th Congress to support this worthwhile and important legislation.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, in the last Congress, excellent progress was made on immigration reform. I was proud to be an active participant. However, we did not go far enough. Much more needs to be done to stem the ever increasing tide of illegal aliens flowing across the U.S.-Mexico border. That's why today I am introducing legislation which would authorize the use of Department of Defense personnel to assist the U.S. Border Patrol and other Federal law enforcement agencies working to stop illegal immigration.

With current estimates reporting thousands of illegal immigrants entering our country each day, Congress has an obligation to make available to Federal law enforcement agencies all possible resources in securing our borders.

My bill authorizes the Secretary of Defense to assign Department of Defense personnel to assist the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the United States Customs Service in patrolling the borders and stopping illegal immigration. The bill does not mandate the use of troops on our border. It simply authorizes the Pentagon to supply troops at the request of the Attorney General or the Secretary of the Treasury. In addition, if employed, the troops would only provide support to law enforcement. They would have no arrest powers.

For the last 8 years, the Department of Defense has rapidly and dramatically expanded its role in the "war on drugs." Today's military is well-equipped to handle law enforcement functions. The military's role in combating drug smuggling along our southern border is a perfect example. Given the continuing problem we have with illegal immigrants, Federal law enforcement officials should be given the option of using the military to support their efforts.

I would urge my colleagues to support my legislation. It is a positive step in closing the door on illegal immigration.