

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE 37TH ANNUAL HUMANITARIAN AWARD WINNERS

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 1998

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the winners of the 37th annual Humanitarian Awards. These men and women have fought hard to ensure improved lives for others. They have each shown a tremendous dedication to reducing bigotry and injustice in the Memphis community. This year's award winners are: Rabbi Harry Danziger of Temple Israel; Retired Criminal Court Judge H.T. Lockard; Bishop J. Terry Steib of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis; and Dr. Jane Walters, state education commissioner.

These awards, as presented by the National Conference of Christians and Jews (Memphis Region), recognize the leaders in our community who have gone beyond their call to ensure a better, more equitable future for all of us.

Rabbi Danziger is a lifetime board member of NCCI as well as a member of the boards of the Metropolitan Inter-Faith Association and the Memphis Jewish Federation. Danziger is a long time leader in Memphis' Jewish Community.

Judge Lockhardt served for 19 years on the bench before retiring in 1994. As an attorney, he was involved in numerous cases that helped end the bitter segregation in education, and in public facilities. Judge Lockhardt will always be remembered as the first African-American elected to old Shelby County (TN) Court.

In addition to his important work with the Catholic Diocese in Memphis, Bishop Steib is a board member of the National Civil Rights Museum and the African-American Bishops' Committee. Bishop Steib, through his service to these organizations, has worked tirelessly to bring together people from all backgrounds, classes and races.

Another deserving winner of the NCIC Humanitarian Award is Dr. Jane Walters. As an educator, Dr. Walters has devoted her career to improving the lives of others. She has touched the lives of countless young Tennesseans, first as teacher, as Principal of Craigmont High School in Memphis and now as Governor Sundquist's Commissioner of Education in the State of Tennessee.

Under her leadership as Principal of Craigmont, the school was designated by the Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon School. Today, as Commissioner of Education, Tennessee is well ahead of the nation in connecting all of the state's schools to the Internet. The Horatio Alger Association named her National Educator of the Year in 1991. We are all grateful to Dr. Walters for her contributions in the field of education.

These men and women can not be praised enough for their contributions. With a tremendous amount of hard work and foresight, these

individuals are determined to eliminate bias, bigotry and racism in our community. Honoring these heroes is a perfect way to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the NCCJ.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 37th annual Humanitarian Award Winners.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 1998

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, today was to be the day that the House of Representatives finally debated campaign finance reform. After over a year of lobbying by a majority of the members of the House to consider some form of campaign finance reform legislation, the leadership had finally relented and were to allow this day to be dedicated to this very important issue.

Unfortunately the leadership of this House designed a bill that was destined to fail, and the majority of the House rejected that approach. So here we stand, with no bill to debate and no assurances of when we will finally have our chance.

The solution is simple: allow an open rule on campaign finance reform. It is time we end the political games and give members an opportunity to clearly state, on the record, where they stand on cleaning up our campaign finance system. We have waited too long. It is time to stop the delay and allow a vote on campaign finance reform. The people of my district will not accept "no" for an answer.

THE MEDICARE SOCIAL WORK EQUITY ACT OF 1998

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 1998

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce The Medicare Social Work Equity Act of 1998.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 includes a provision that will discourage nursing homes from utilizing social workers. This unintended consequence occurs because the legislation requires social workers' services to be included in the consolidated billing of the nursing home while psychologist and psychiatrist services remain outside of the consolidated billing.

Under this construction, if a nursing home utilizes social workers' services, those dollars come out of the nursing home payment. Psychologist and psychiatrist payments do not. The effect of such a policy will be to encourage nursing homes to avoid social workers and instead rely on the more expensive services of psychologists and psychiatrists.

Several firms that provide mental health services to nursing homes across the country

have already informed me that they will cease hiring social workers and replace them with psychiatrists and psychologists beginning July 1, 1998.

Clinical social workers are the primary providers of mental health services to residents of nursing homes, particularly in underserved urban and rural areas. Without correcting legislation, mental health services to nursing home residents will be reduced and Medicare costs for these services will most likely increase.

I do not believe that Congress intentionally created this problem. The Medicare Social Work Equity Act of 1998 seeks to address these concerns by excluding clinical social workers from the consolidated billing provisions of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and treating them identically to other mental health providers.

This bill has been endorsed by the National Association of Social Workers, the Clinical Social Work Federation, the American Health Care Association and the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform. Several firms that provide mental health services to nursing homes across the country have also pledged their support. I am attaching a letter I received from one such firm, MHM/Bay Colony Counseling Services.

I urge my fellow Members of Congress to join with me in passing this crucial piece of legislation. Together, we can ensure that social workers continue to provide essential mental health services to nursing home residents.

MHM/BAY COLONY
COUNSELING SERVICES,

Cambridge, MA, March 10, 1998.

Representative FORTNEY "PETE" STARK,
House of Representatives, Cannon House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE STARK: I am contacting you to extend my enthusiastic support for your efforts in pursuing the Medicare Social Work Equity Act of 1998 which excludes social workers from the new consolidated billing requirement in skilled nursing facilities.

I am the Clinical Director at MHM/Bay Colony Extended Care Service. We provide comprehensive mental health services to the residents of about 125 nursing home facilities in the state of Massachusetts, and we employ about 100 professional clinicians, 60% of which are licensed social workers.

The social workers we employ are trained, and exceptionally skilled psychotherapists who have made a purposeful professional career choice to provide psychotherapeutic services to the medically and psychiatrically frail and compromised older population. In doing so, they also provide consultation and support to the nursing home staff who are extremely challenged in providing front line care to this needy population.

If this consolidated billing requirement for skilled nursing facilities by Medicare includes social workers, the impact will have an enormously destructive effect on systems and services; i.e.:

Our services to these residents will be decimated in terms of available and acceptable trained professionals.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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