

more people of faith were not taking action, so she decided to do something about it. She created a petition for Christian values, calling upon all Americans to stand up and take action to promote and preserve the morals and values we learn from the Bible. Rebecca's efforts were featured on Dr. Kennedy's "Power of One" program. As a man of strong religious conviction myself and as Rebecca's Congressman, I was asked to participate in the program. It was an honor for me to be part of a television program that recognizes the citizens who are taking action to make their communities and their nation stronger. In fact, it reminded me of one of my favorite Bible verses from Isaiah book 6, verse 8. It says, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Kennedy, like Rebecca Mason, has answered God's call, and he has devoted his life to serving as a messenger of God's word. Today, I am proud to recognize his efforts during this exciting year of celebration to show my respect for his devotion and his commitment to spread the message of hope to all America. Thank you Dr. Kennedy, for reminding those of us who serve the American people—and all citizens—that faith and freedom go hand in hand. Happy anniversary. May God continue to Bless you and give you the strength to continue sharing His message with the world.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
GHENT BAND

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Ghent Band on their 100th anniversary in entertaining the communities of Columbia County, located in the heart of the 22nd Congressional District, which I proudly represent.

Founded in 1899 by 15 members, the Ghent Band continues to make history while other bands in New York have become history. Inspired by nationally touring bands like John Philip Sousa, the original 15 members gathered old, second hand instruments and began rehearsing weekly at the Old Ghent School House. To this day, the band plays on, serving as Columbia County's only full-fledged village band.

Mr. Speaker, for a full century the Ghent Band's music has filled the hearts of the young and old, creating lasting memories at the many parades and concerts at which they play. The Ghent Band holds a special place in my own heart as they were present at the inauguration celebrating my swearing in to the House of Representatives.

Given the diversity of age and background of the band's members, as well as their strong ties to the local community, I have no doubt that the Ghent Band will continue on for an additional 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Ghent Band is America at its best, representing all that is good in this nation. I wish its members and their families the best as they celebrate 100 years of serving and entertaining the Village of Ghent.

BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS MAN-
AGED CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT
OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2723, the bipartisan consensus Managed Care Improvement Act. This important piece of legislation is long overdue and I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bipartisan bill that will reform the managed care industry. I commend Mr. NORWOOD and Mr. DINGELL for their diligent work and determination in bringing this bill to the floor today and the House leadership for scheduling debate on this bill.

H.R. 2723, will bring about necessary changes to the managed care industry by bringing the attention of HMOs back to the needs of the American public. For too long, these insurance companies have been driven by profits and have lost sight of their true responsibility, to provide a quality service to those Americans who pay for insurance each month. All too often we hear stories from our constituents who have had numerous conflicts with their insurance companies, ranging from denial of coverage for preventative procedures and medically necessary treatments to denial of reimbursement for trips to emergency rooms and specialists. Americans pay their monthly premiums and expect that if the time comes when they need to seek out medical assistance, they should not have to worry about whether or not their HMO is going to oppose the necessity of their visit to a doctor.

Americans should be able to see specialists such as a cardiologist or oncologist without obtaining a referral from their primary physician, a chore which merely takes up time, time that may be better served by immediately seeing a specialist. Moreover, women should have direct access to their obstetrician-gynecologist and parents should have the option to select a pediatrician as their child's primary physician. Under current guidelines, this is not an option. However, these issues would be addressed by the passage of H.R. 2723.

The major concern that has been brought to my attention by my constituents has been the issue of employer liability. I am gratified that this bill contains a self-executing managers amendment that will directly address this concern. With the passage of H.R. 2723, language will be implemented which clearly states that an employer can not be held liable unless they are making medical decisions. An employer can provide health care coverage for their employees and set the parameters of that coverage with the knowledge that they will not be sued by an employee should the HMO make a negligible medical decision that results in injury or death.

The intent of this legislation is to make managed care coverage more user friendly. To provide the necessary information to policyholders up front so that the frequency of injuries and deaths due to negligent decisions by the HMO decreases. However, there will be times when an HMO fails to provide coverage for services that a policy holder is entitled to. It is for these cases, that the individual has the ability to hold the HMO accountable for its

negligent decisions. In cases of personal injury or death, the individual deserves the right to sue the insurance company and hold them financially responsible for their irresponsible decisions. It is for this reason that I strongly support the liability portion of this bill.

I am confident that by requiring health plans to disclose information to policyholders regarding coverage of benefits, doctors, facilities, and claim procedures, the need to proceed to a judicial solution should not occur as often as opponents of this bill insist.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to stand up and fight for the rights of the American public and to support passage of this legislation.

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL
CENTER IN GRAND JUNCTION,
COLORADO HONORED

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to honor not one individual but a team who has dedicated their time, effort, and care into making the smallest VA hospital in the Country, the best. The employees of the Grand Junction VA hospital have changed health care in this country as we know it. Their unparalleled care for the patient has won them the Department of Veterans Affairs highest honor.

The Robert W. Carey Quality Award trophy is given to one facility each year to recognize organizational effectiveness and performance through quality management. It was the first time that the hospital submitted the entry form which was fifty pages long and took five months to process. The employees of the Grand Junction VA hospital patiently waited to hear back while a Department of Veteran Affairs panel reviewed applications. Soon after a panel visit to the hospital and a final ranking decision by a panel of outside judges, they were chosen for the award.

The basis for their winning the award are numerous and well founded. Among them, their work in the revolutionary, primary-care approach to health care that began in 1988. They call it a "virtual circle of care" in which patients see the same physician, nurse, clerk, and social worker each time they visit the hospital. This allows for more personalized care which pays off on a large scale. Health care providers become familiar with the patients they see, therefore providing outstanding, personalized service to them. Also recognized was their work on the Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which brings veterans to Crested Butte every weekend.

In addition to these accolades, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few final highlights. The administration's attention to the needs of the employee is another facet that makes this hospital so exceptional. They are constantly looking for ways to improve, including their anonymous e-mail system that allows employees to voice any concerns they might have or suggest any improvements they see necessary. Their volunteer program has also grown tremendously. People are getting involved to make a difference and they have.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I honor this institution, on behalf of the people of Western

Colorado, for their accomplishments in the health care of our nation's veterans and say thank you for their care and hard work.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK FARRELL

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of Massachusetts' finest leaders, Frank Farrell. Frank is retiring this year after many years as President of the Worcester/Framingham Central Labor Council. I know that thousands of working families throughout Central Massachusetts join me in thanking Frank Farrell for his years of hard work and dedication.

Since 1955, when he was hired as a quality control inspector at Olson Manufacturing in Worcester, Frank Farrell has been a member of the United Steelworkers of America. He has very active in his local union and rose to its presidency in 1965.

He has also been active in the Worcester/Framingham Central Labor Council, and was elected as its president in 1970—a post he has held for the last 20 years. For those 20 years Frank has fought the good fight—he has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the men and women in organized labor and their families. He has advocated for better wages, better health care, better retirement and better working conditions. Central Massachusetts is a better and safer place to work today because of the hard work put in by Frank Farrell.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to Frank; his wife Jan; their 3 children Frank III, Steven and Lisa; and their two grandchildren Bernard and Meressa. I wish them best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement. No one deserves it more.

CYPRUS PEACE TALKS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate President Clinton and Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit on the significant progress made on the subject of Cyprus during their recent talks in Washington.

I have always felt that Cyprus presents an exceptional opportunity for the United States to facilitate a successful solution because a settlement on this island is within reach. Cyprus is small in size and population, has clearly discreet borders as an island nation, and the international community is committed to the removal of Turkish forces and return of Cypriot sovereignty. Many United Nations and United States Congressional resolutions have been passed over the years expressing the internal community's and United States' commitment to a just and peaceful resolution to this conflict. Failure to secure a solution in Cyprus would undermine international law and UN resolutions, as well as contradicting official U.S. foreign policy, and our national interest in deterring aggressor states.

Failure to solve this problem also bolsters the false notion that ethnic conflicts are

unsolvable and that their use as a pretext for international aggression is acceptable. However, over the past decade in Northern Ireland, in the Middle East, and in the former Yugoslavia, have proven that the international community, led by the United States, can and should negotiate and work for peace and an end to ethnic division and conflict.

Late last year, I urged President Clinton to get personally involved in resolving the Cyprus conflict by sending a special envoy, as he did in the Middle East and Northern Ireland. This past summer, I also asked the new Turkish Prime Minister to accept such an offer. I am extremely gratified by recent reports that these events have indeed taken place.

During their recent talks in Washington, Prime Minister Ecevit accepted President Clinton's offer to dispatch a special envoy to work toward a settlement of this quarter-century-old dispute. Indeed, special envoy Al Moses has already been appointed and soon will be beginning his work in this troubled region.

Again, I applaud the leadership of both President Clinton and Prime Minister Ecevit. The time has come for all efforts to be dedicated to resolving the abhorrent injustice of the division of Cyprus. We must all now redouble our efforts to bring peace and justice to the Mediterranean.

IN HONOR OF THE TEMPLE-TIFEREH ISRAEL ON THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 12, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of The Temple-Tifereth Israel in Cleveland, OH. The Temple begins its year long celebration on Friday, October 15, 1999 with a Shabbat service and reception. This surely will be a historic occasion for the Temple members.

Just 11 years after the first Jewish settlers came to Cleveland, The Temple-Tifereth Israel was founded. In the past 150 years The Temple has been a cornerstone of the Jewish community in the Greater Cleveland Area. Rabbis with extraordinary vision and leadership and members with great commitment and activism have guided The Temple throughout its 150 years. The Temple has developed a flourishing religious school, passing on the traditions of the study of Torah and mitzvah to countless children, and currently boasts a membership of 1,600 families.

Organizations like The Temple-Tifereth Israel must be applauded and recognized for passing on traditions to so many generations of Ohioans. It is not often that organizations can last as long as The Temple, let alone thrive as has been the case for The Temple.

I urge my fellow colleagues to please join me in recognizing the dedication and faith of the families of The Temple-Tifereth Israel as they celebrate 150 years of service in the Greater Cleveland Area.

BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS MANAGED CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 2723) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, title XXVII of the public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to protect consumers in managed care plans and other health coverage.

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased that on October 7, 1999, the House of Representatives passed the long-overdue Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act (H.R. 2723) by such a large margin. I truly believe that H.R. 2723 is good, common-sense legislation that will protect the interests of patients in contracts with health insurers. I am attaching a letter signed by representatives of the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine, the Kansas Dental Association, the Kansas Medical Society, the Kansas Pharmacists Association, the Kansas State Nurses Association, the National Association of Social Workers—Kansas Chapter and the Kansas Trial Lawyers Association expressing support for H.R. 2723.

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2723 and supported passage, although I was very disappointed that the Republican leadership did not allow Representatives Norwood and Dingell to offer an amendment to pay for provisions in the managed care bill. Their amendment would have provided \$7 billion in offsets for revenue losses estimated to result from increased deductions for higher medical premiums. I fully expect the conferees to offset this cost to gain my support for the final bill, and I am encouraged that the President has said that he will not sign the final bill unless it is fully offset.

On October 6, 1999, I opposed final passage of H.R. 2990, the so-called "access" bill. This bill was estimated by the Joint Committee on Taxation to cost \$48.7 billion over 10 years with not offsets. Sponsors of H.R. 2990 claim that it will be paid for out of the projected budget surplus, which is based upon the assumption that Congress will abide by the spending caps enacted in the 1997 budget agreement. The Congressional Budget Office, however, has estimated that Congress has already voted to increase spending by at least \$30 billion over the caps for fiscal year 2000, which will require tapping into the Social Security Trust Fund. I voted against H.R. 2990 because I made a commitment not to spend one penny of the Social Security surplus.

Let me make one thing clear—I do not believe that legislation to protect patients and efforts to make health care more accessible are mutually exclusive. As a member of the Small Business Committee, I am working hard to expand health coverage to the 43 million Americans who lack it, since more than 60% of the uninsured have one thing in common—they are either self-employed, or their primary breadwinner is employed by a small business that cannot afford to provide health benefits.