

community—children, deserves to be held up as a national role model.

For nearly a decade, Ellen Cokinos and the Children's Assessment Center have conducted a "quite revolution" in the treatment of child sexual abuse. Under Ellen Cokinos' direction, the Children's Assessment Center has set the standard for creating child-friendly intervention systems for sexually abused children by developing a comprehensive, coordinated team approach that draws from both the public and private sector. Ellen Cokinos has led a movement to change the way government agencies deal with sexually abused children by instituting a multi-disciplinary approach to the prevention, assessment, investigation, and treatment of child sexual abuse.

An internationally-recognized expert in her field, Ellen Cokinos deserves praise for her role in educating the larger community about violence prevention through establishing programs to foster greater awareness of child sexual abuse. I have had the great privilege of working with Ellen Cokinos on initiatives to promote the health and safety of Houston's children. The impact of the Children's Assessment Center, Ellen Cokinos' brainchild, reaches well beyond the more than 38,000 children it has served. This award is recognition of the invaluable contribution Ellen Cokinos has made to bringing about a fundamental change in how abused children are treated.

Mr. Speaker, as one who has worked closely with Ellen Cokinos, I know what she is a child advocate without equal and one of our community's great leaders. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pleasure to honor Ellen Cokinos, on the occasion of her receiving the FBI's Director's Community Leadership Award.

MEDICARE, MEDICAID, AND SCHIP
BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT AND
PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to consider the fate of the tax bill passed by the House of Representatives last week, I would implore the President not to veto this bill. As you know, this package includes the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 that provides much needed relief from the unintended consequences of the Balanced Budget Act of 1977 to a variety of Medicare providers including: hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, hospice services, and Medicare+Choice.

Among the various provisions included in the Medicare relief portion of this package aimed at improving the quality of care our nation's seniors depend on, I would like to call your attention to an important public health issue that is in the Medicare relief portion of this package. We have all heard from our nation's hospitals about the unintended consequences of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and its effect on their ability to provide a variety of services to their patients. One area that has been hard hit is hospitals' ability to treat patients with state-of-the-art blood

products. In testimony before the Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, the American Hospital Association specifically cited the costs associated with blood as one of the reasons that Congress should restore the full market basket index.

Patient access to a safe and adequate blood supply is a national health priority and has been recognized by members of this body, the American public, and the nation's public health leaders. Yet, many of us have heard from the American Red Cross, America's Blood Centers, and the American Association of Blood Banks over the past year about hospitals having trouble affording new, innovative blood therapies that help to ensure that the nation's blood supply is safe for patients. Additional funding is needed if we are going to remain committed to providing the safest blood supply possible.

The blood banking and transfusion medicine communities are constantly working to assure that safety improvements for blood are implemented as soon as they become available. Two recent initiatives have been introduced to increase the safety of the blood supply—Nucleic Acid Testing and leukoreduction. Nucleic acid testing allows for early detection of infectious diseases (such as HIV and hepatitis C (HCV)) in blood by detecting the genetic material of viruses. Leukoreduction, the removal of leukocytes (white cells) from blood components can reduce the frequency and severity of complications from transfusions. Unfortunately these new screening protocols significantly increase the cost of blood products. Nucleic Acid Testing and Leukoreduction increase the cost of blood products by over 40 percent for both hospitals and blood banks.

Our Nation's nonprofit blood collection centers operate in the same managed care environment as our hospitals. While volunteers freely give the gift of blood, our nonprofit blood centers must recover the cost associated with providing a safe, state-of-the-art product. This includes the cost associated with collecting, testing processing, storing, and distributing blood for patients in need.

Nonprofit blood centers pass these charges onto hospitals, which, in turn, must get timely and adequate reimbursement for these life-saving and life-enhancing products. Unfortunately, the current system by which the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) determined hospital inpatient reimbursement rates does not account for these new and improved safety measures in a timely manner.

The Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act directs HCFA and MedPAC to review how hospitals are reimbursed for blood and to make the necessary changes to provide for fair and timely reimbursement. While those studies will not be complete, nor will the recommendations be acted upon during the current fiscal year, we must act now to ensure that patients are receiving the safest possible blood products.

The American Hospital Association along with the American Red Cross, America's Blood Centers, and the American Association of Blood Banks have all recognized the importance of this legislation. By restoring the full inflationary update to the Market Basket Index for hospitals, Congress is providing the nation's hospitals and blood centers with the means to afford new blood therapies and to ensure that patients are treated with the safest possible products.

HONORING TOBY ROSENBLATT

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, Toby Rosenblatt is a remarkable individual we are fortunate to have in our San Francisco midst. He has accomplished extraordinary feats in various roles and over many years of public service to the community.

Toby was honored today by Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt for his outstanding work to preserve the scenic and recreational lands of our Golden Gate National Parks in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has made an immense and indelible contribution to our natural landscape. The San Francisco community joins the Department of Interior in congratulating Toby on this special recognition to a most deserving individual.

One of the highlights of this lifetime of accomplishment is Toby's leadership to return Crissy Field, a former World War II airstrip, to historic wetlands along the Presidio's window to the Bay. This is a phenomenal accomplishment—to bring the resources, talent and energy together in a great success that reverberates for the entire Bay Area Community, as well as for all of our national parks.

As Chairman of the Golden Gate National Parks Association (GGNPA), Toby has led the successful drive to bring over \$50 million in private donations to this spectacular project. By engaging the public in this effort, Toby had sparked a new awareness in the importance of our national parks and has led the way in forging the most successful public-private partnership in the history of the National Park Service. As the Secretary's citation notes: Under Toby's leadership at the GGNPA, "the Parks Association has become a national leader of NPS friends groups . . ." with contributions totaling over \$50 million, "the largest of any individual friends group."

In addition to serving as the volunteer Chairman of the GGNPA, Toby also wears the hat of Chairman of the Presidio Trust. In this capacity, he has led the Trust in preserving the Presidio's integrity as a national park and in meeting the goal set by Congress to reduce costs.

On behalf of our community, I extend my congratulations to Toby for this well-deserved honor, and also to his wife, Sally, and their sons Jamie and Adam.

Toby has served as the epicenter for many great accomplishments at the GGNPA and the Presidio and we look forward to his continued leadership in our community on behalf of our national parks.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID M. EVANS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on October 4, a man of great knowledge, talent and dignity passed away. David Meredith Evans was an officer in the Foreign Service, serving his country in that capacity from 1963 until 1995. He was 64 years of age. I came to know him