of the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense as well as our professional and associate staffs with timely and accurate support regarding Navy plans, programs and budget decisions. His valuable contributions have enabled the Defense Subcommittee and the Department of the Navy to strengthen its close working relationship and to ensure the most modern, well-trained and well-equipped naval forces attainable for the defense of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, John Fristachi and his wife Betsy have made many sacrifices during his naval career. His distinguished service has exemplified honor, courage and commitment. As they depart the Appropriations Matters Office to embark on yet another great Navy adventure in the service of a grateful nation, I call upon my colleagues to wish them both every success and the traditional Navy send-off ''fair winds and following seas.''

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in Honor of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. Each year, the second week of April is dedicated to the men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators.

Telecommunicators are civilians across this country who provide the vital link between the public and emergency service responders, be they police, fire or EMS. They provide the radio, telephone, computer and other communication services that save lives and keep our communities safe and secure. Too often, the importance of this job and the contribution these individuals make go unnoticed.

Today, I would like to recognize and thank the telecommunicators who serve the 20th District of Illinois. They are: Karen Giese, Lora Furlong, Michelle Tarvin, Teri Roado, Nancy Pohlman, Sarah Richey, DeAnna Fare, Lora C. Furlong, Robert I. Castens, Lillian I. Rutherford, Tammy S. Giacomelli, and Sherri M. Deeder.

Mr. Speaker. I extend my deepest appreciation to these and all telecommunicators for talking distressed callers through CPR, calming hysterical crime victims, and making the difficult decisions using limited information to save lives and reduce property damage on a daily basis.

STRUCTURED SETTLEMENT PROTECTION ACT

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Structured Settlement Protection Act. This legislation protects the Congressional policy underlying structured settlements and brings a final resolution to the issue known as ''factoring'' of structured settlement payments.

In introducing this legislation, I am joined by my colleague Mr. STARK and by a broad bipartisan group of our colleagues from the Ways and Means Committee, including Mr. HOUGHTON and Mr. COYNE, the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member respectively of the Oversight Subcommittee which held a hearing on the structured settlement factoring issue in the last Congress. There are a total of 19 Ways and Means co-sponsors of this important legislation.

I am a long-time supporter of the use of structured settlements to compensate victims of physical injuries. Structured settlements constitute a private sector funding alternative to taxpayer-financed programs to meet the ongoing, long-term medical and living needs of seriously-injured victims and their families. Structured settlements enable these injured people to live with dignity, free of reliance on government. For these reasons, Congress adopted special tax rules to encourage the use of structured settlements to provide long-term financial security to injured victims and their families.

The Structured Settlement Protection Act that I am introducing today addresses concerns which have been raised over the ''factoring'' of structured settlement payments, in which factoring or settlement purchase companies buy up part or all of the structured settlement recipient's future payments for cash. My legislation is part of a single overall package of complementary Federal and State legislation that has been agreed upon by the structured settlement industry and the factoring industry to resolve these concerns.

Under the Structured Settlement Protection Act, the States are given the consumer protection role. The Act relies upon a State court review process to govern a proposed factoring transaction to ensure that the structured settlement serves the purpose Congress intended—providing long-term financial security for the injured victim and the victim's family—while enabling the victim to get access to future payments should the court determine that such access is in the best interests of the victim, taking into account the welfare and support of the victim's dependents, and does not contravene other applicable statutes and existing court orders.

The complementary State model legislation agreed to by the structured settlement and factoring industries specifies the process for State court review. Legislation similar to the State model has now been enacted in 19 States and is being actively considered in some 20 other States during the current State legislative cycle.

The Structured Settlement Protection Act protects the Congressional policy underlying structured settlements by providing the threat of an excise tax sanction to ensure compliance with State regulation in light of the multi-State nature of the factoring business, as well as resolving Federal tax uncertainties which factoring has created for the other parties to the structured settlement.

The Structured Settlement Protection Act is similar to legislation that I introduced in the last Congress along with Mr. STARK and a similarly broad bipartisan group of our colleagues from the Ways and Means Committee.

This legislation has been agreed to by the National Structured Settlements Trade Association (NSSTA) on behalf of the structured settlement industry and the National Association of Settlement Purchasers (NASP) on behalf of the factoring industry. In light of the joint support of the structured settlement industry and the factoring industry, I believe that this legislation should be non-controversial. In addition, the identical version of the legislation last year was scored by the Joint Tax Committee as being essentially revenue neutral.

The agreement of the two sides to the provisions of the Structured Settlement Protection Act provides us with a critical opportunity to put the structured settlement factoring issue to rest at long last. We should avail ourselves of that opportunity while it is at hand. Accordingly, I strongly urge the enactment of this important legislation as soon as possible.

ARC OF DALLAS

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and congratulate the Arc of Dallas for its efforts in improving the quality of life of persons with mental retardation and related developmental conditions. The Arc of Dallas will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year and deserves to be recognized for its accomplishments in my district.

The Arc of Dallas formed when a small group of concerned parents met in 1951 to discuss their children's educational needs. This small group was the beginning of an organization that grew into the largest mentally handicapped advocacy group in the Dallas area. Today, there are chapters of the Arc across the United States. While the Arc of Dallas remains connected to the national office, it also works independently to reach the goals of the Dallas community.

The Arc of Dallas works diligently to accomplish its goals and has produced impressive results. Presently, one person in every 10 families in the Dallas area, about 60,000 individuals, has some form of mental retardation and thousands more have related conditions. It is no surprise that in 2000, the Arc of Dallas directly helped nearly 26,000 people. This organization truly makes a difference to the lives of many constituents in my district.

An example of the great success of this advocacy group is it's day-camp program. Last year was the first year to offer a spring and summer day-camp program for children ages 5 to 21. It made a difference in the lives of 140 children last year. This year, the day-camp program will run for 11 weeks and will offer fun summer activities for nearly 220 children such as field trips, crafts, computer centers and outdoor activities. Programs like these truly demonstrate the success of the Arc of Dallas.

Once again, I am very proud to see the honorable work being accomplished in my district. The Arc of Dallas has made a difference in so many peoples' lives in the 50 years of their existence. The difference they are making is immeasurable. I know my colleagues will join me in saluting the Arc of Dallas and chapters across the Nation.