

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included \$4 million for the Department of Defense's portion of the design and planning phase of its military treatment facility.

Additionally, recognizing the importance of cost savings and other efficiencies, the FY04 NDAA included report language directing that the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs make every effort to share health care facilities. I have included this report language below:

TITLE XXIV: DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENSE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTHCARE SHARING

The committee continues to believe that significant efficiencies are possible if the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) share health care facilities. However, the Department and VA operate only 7 joint ventures, even though the 2 departments operate approximately 240 hospitals. Such incremental progress is representative of the significant bureaucratic challenges facing the health care sharing effort. Nevertheless, the committee believes that the Department and VA should take advantage of health care sharing opportunities whenever possible.

The committee understands that the Colorado University School of Medicine has begun relocation to the site of the closed Fitzsimons Army Hospital. The Department of Veterans Affairs is currently considering replacement of the Denver VA Medical Center, a 50-year-old structure now co-located with the Colorado medical school, as a part of that relocation. The committee understands that the Department is also considering participation in the VA Medical Center's new facility. As such, the committee believes that the Department of Defense should participate in design and construction of this facility, which would provide ambulatory and acute care medical services to military personnel attached to Buckley Air Force Base. Such an approach would allow the Department to leverage construction, operations, and maintenance costs of a joint facility with VA, and eliminate the Department's need to construct an additional medical treatment facility at Buckley Air Force Base. In this particular case, a joint facility would further benefit by sharing significant assets with the Colorado University School of Medicine Facility, resulting in further savings.

With the expectation that the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs will reach an agreement on sharing design and construction costs at levels representative of their medical requirements, the committee recommends authorization of \$4,000,000 for planning and design of a DOD-VA medical treatment facility at the site of the closed Fitzsimons Army Hospital.

The funds included in the House-passed FY04 NDAA are a critical step toward ensuring that the VA and the DOD leverage their resources through joint projects that meet both of their requirements. Constructing a VA-DOD facility at Fitzsimons will serve as a model for future efforts to serve the medical needs of America's service members and veterans alike. And, I would like to point out that inpatient care for the veterans and the DOD will be located in the same federal tower as the veterans ambulatory care, but will be connected to the University of Colorado Hospital to share expensive facilities such as operating rooms and medical imaging.

Mr. Speaker, given the rising demand for veterans' health care, and the significant challenges of an aging and increasingly less-effi-

cient Denver Veterans Medical Center facility, my interest and my efforts are aimed at continuing the collaboration between the Denver Veterans Medical Center, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and University of Colorado Hospital. I believe that the opportunity to locate the Denver Veterans Medical Center with the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the University of Colorado Hospital at the Fitzsimons campus will meet the demand for veteran care in the VISN 19 area through 2020 and beyond; provide significant savings in both capital and operational costs for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the taxpayer; continue to meet the Denver Veterans Medical Center commitment to education and research; and potentially create a national model for the future of veterans' care dealing with both a new concept for facilities and collaboration with long-established partners. More importantly, this move will retain veteran "identity" while also providing optimum patient care:

To date, over 45 local, state and national Veterans' Service Organizations and the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2241, have expressed their support for this proposal. We stand committed in the goal of providing the utmost modern, comprehensive and cost-efficient medical care that we as a nation owe our veterans. And I believe that co-locating the Denver Veterans' Medical Center with the University of Colorado Hospital will achieve these goals.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a duty to provide the best medical care it can to our nation's veterans and we must always strive for the very best health care services it can by utilizing the most cost-effective measures available. The fact is, aging facilities, lack of funds, and the growing demands on the veterans health system are proving to be daunting obstacles in meeting Congress' responsibilities to our nation's veterans. However, the possibility for the Denver Veterans Medical Center to move to Fitzsimons and co-locate with University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and University of Colorado Hospital is a unique opportunity to provide solid and constructive solutions to these challenges.

WISCONSIN CITIZEN ACTION 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Wisconsin Citizen Action's 20th Anniversary as the state's leading public interest organization. I am honored to share with you today the accomplishments of this powerful Wisconsin organization.

I applaud Wisconsin Citizen Action's twenty year commitment to political activism for progressive change that benefits all of us in Wisconsin. They have helped pass twenty laws, trained and developed hundreds of citizen leaders, and organized tens of thousands of residents to work for social, economic and environmental justice. Just a few of their recent victories include SeniorCare, a vitally important program to provide seniors with prescription drug coverage, a mining moratorium pro-

tecting Wisconsin's precious northwoods against unsafe mining, a tough ordinance for lead poisoning prevention in Milwaukee, and they also obtained a five-fold increase in the funding for the SAGE program, which reduces classroom size for our Wisconsin school children.

As a former Wisconsin Citizen Action board member, I had the privilege of seeing firsthand the truly remarkable impact Wisconsin Citizen Action has had on our great state. Wisconsin Citizen Action has given Wisconsin residents the power to improve their communities. It is through people working together and sharing ideas that social change is achieved, and as these recent accomplishments demonstrate, Wisconsin Citizen Action does just this. I commend this group for their insight and their tireless action in joining the political power of a few with the voices and ideas of many.

Mr. Speaker, I join my fellow Wisconsinites in congratulating Wisconsin Citizen Action on their 20th Anniversary and for their many great achievements. I wish them continued success for another 20 years and beyond.

RECOGNIZING AUBREY DALE BELL

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, Sgt. Aubrey Dale Bell, 33, of Tuskegee, Alabama, did this past Monday in Baghdad. Sgt. Bell was a member of the 214th Military Police Company based in Alexander City, Alabama, and was killed in an attack on the Iraqi police station he was helping guard.

Aubrey Bell was a quiet and unassuming person, Mr. Speaker, but he took pride in working hard for his country. When not serving in the National Guard, he worked in Alexander City at Russell Corporation. Like every other soldier, he dutifully left behind his family and loved ones to serve our country overseas.

Words cannot express the sense of sadness we have for his family, and for the gratitude our country feels for his service. Sgt. Bell died serving not just the United States, but the entire cause of liberty, on a noble mission to help spread the cause of freedom in Iraq and liberate an oppressed people from tyrannical rule.

We will forever hold him closely in our hearts, and remember his sacrifice and that of his family as a remembrance of his bravery and willingness to serve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the House's remembrance on this mournful day.

RECOGNIZING ANOKA, MINNESOTA, AS THE HALLOWEEN CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

HON. MARK R. KENNEDY

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the city of Anoka, Minnesota, as the "Halloween Capital of the World." Anoka has been holding Halloween festivities since 1920, when a group of business and civic leaders suggested the idea of