

In the past 20 years Beverly Braun has worked under five speakers, under both Democratic and Republican control of the House and has been involved in coverage arrangements of many diverse events. Some were annual like State of the Union Addresses, St. Patrick's Day luncheons and Christmas Tree lightings. Some were periodic like mock swearing-ins of new members. Some were joyful like the joint meeting to celebrate Harry Truman's 100th birthday. Some were tragic like that lying in honor for Officers Chestnut and Gibson, and September 11th. Some were historical hearings such as Iran-Contra and Waco. Some were historical visits such as those by Queen Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel, and most special to Braun, the Dalai Lama.

As part of her regular Gallery work Braun worked with many Congressional staffers and committee members, but in recent years has primarily served as liaison to the Ways and Means, Financial Services and Rules Committees. In addition to her regular Gallery work, Braun helped with broadcast arrangements for 10 Democratic and Republican national political nominating conventions and provided on site assistance in San Francisco, Dallas, Atlanta, New Orleans, New York City, Houston, San Diego, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

Braun was born to Phyllis (Lawson) and Ray Nicholas in Warren, Ohio in 1942, attended Ohio University and graduated from St. Vincent School of Medical Technology in Cleveland in 1961. She and her first husband Roland Braun lived in Pittsburgh PA where her son Stephen was born in 1964, and in Ramsey NJ where her daughter Leslie de Vries was born in 1966. They moved to Minnesota in 1967 where Braun became active in politics and women's rights organizations and where she ran unsuccessfully for a state senate seat in 1972. She later served as Communications Director for the Minnesota Bicentennial Commission, Director of the Small Business Division of the Minnesota Department of Economic Development and managed a Small Business Development Center for Control Data Corporation.

Braun and her second husband, Skip Loescher, moved to Washington, D.C. twice, staying here since their second move in 1981. After spending 20 years with WCCO-TV and a short stint with Senator and Vice President Walter Mondale, Loescher has been the Washington correspondent for CNN Newsource for the past 12 years. Prior to her employment with the Gallery, Braun worked in Washington with the National Women's Education Fund and later founded a business which provided services to companies that did not have a Washington Office.

Braun and Loescher's families are spread all across the country. Braun's mother Phyllis Beadle lives in Queensbury NY. Braun's son Stephen and his wife Anne live in Columbia MD. He has a son Nicolas and daughter Katie. Braun's daughter Leslie and her husband Jackson Griffith live in Sacramento CA with daughters Emma and Ellie and son Will. Loescher's son Jeff lives in Portland OR with wife Carol, daughter Nicole and son Tyler. Loescher's son Mick and wife Erin live in Peabody MA with sons Sean and Christian. Loescher's daughter Suzy and husband Jeff Quinlan live in Covington GA with son Alex and daughter Kate. Both Braun and Loescher

are also blessed with aunts, uncles, cousins, former classmates and friends in almost every other state represented by the members in this chamber.

After leaving Congress, Braun plans on possibly teaching, writing and doing more gardening at her home in Annapolis where she and her husband moved after 19 years on Capitol Hill. She also wants to address end of life issues. She and her husband hope to eventually pursue training and taking therapy dogs in hospitals, nursing homes and hospices . . . and spending more time with all those adorable grandchildren.

Braun has always been a helpful and cheerful professional and she will be missed. So at the end of her career with us, let us say to Beverly as we have heard her say at the end of many a photo op . . . "Thank you . . . lights!"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROHRABACHER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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THE HEALTH CARE CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening with my fellow members of the Congressional Black Caucus to address the health care crisis in America. While millions of Americans lack adequate health insurance, the rights of the uninsured continue to increase. In addition, the cost of prescription medication is placing an enormous financial burden on consumers. And our seniors, many of whom are living on fixed wages, are in desperate need of relief.

Mr. Speaker, the late Senator and former Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, once said, ". . . the moral test of government is how it treats those in

the dawn of life, the children; those in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped." As a Nation we have failed that test on all three counts.

Currently, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are offering a bill to overhaul the Federal Medicare program under the guise of a much-needed prescription drug benefit for this Nation's seniors. This bill, if passed, would cost our children over \$400 billion. Mr. Speaker, I say it will cost our children because the government is currently operating in a deficit. We simply do not have the money. Therefore, it is the younger generations and those yet unborn who will have to shoulder the financial burden required by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, let us not be mistaken. Every dollar being spent worth saving or improving one's quality of life is a dollar well worth spending. However, this bill directs billions of dollars towards enhancing the financial well-being of corporations at the expense of the physical well-being of those who need it the most.

This Nation's seniors have practically begged us, as their congressional representatives, to work together in drafting a comprehensive bill that would provide prescription drug coverage and enhance the current Medicare program. Quite frankly, this bill is an inadequate response to their plea.

Let me boil it down to the very basics. The Medicare conference agreement prohibits the Secretary of Health and Human Services from negotiating lower drug prices on behalf of the 40 million Medicare beneficiaries. In other words, this legislation says that the Secretary of Health and Human Services cannot negotiate lower prices although we have millions of Medicare beneficiaries buying medicines or obtaining medicines from these pharmaceuticals.

This proposed legislation also creates a gap of \$2,844 that would be impossible for lower-income seniors to bridge and disallows lower-income seniors the ability to receive coverage under both Medicare and Medicaid. And further, Mr. Speaker, the bill could have disastrous effects on my home State of Maryland. 59,640 Maryland Medicare beneficiaries could lose their retiree health benefits and 75,800 Maryland Medicaid beneficiaries could pay more for the prescription drugs that they need. Mr. Speaker, that is simply unacceptable. We can and we must do better for our seniors.

The Congressional Black Caucus is extremely concerned about the health care needs of the 26 million people of every color that we represent. Therefore, providing affordable, high-quality health care for every American is a top priority. And I emphasize the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus represents not only African American people but we represent people of all colors. As a matter of fact, many of our