

DISTRICT OF MARYLAND, HOME OF CHAMPIONS: KUDOS TO SUITLAND, POTOMAC, SHERWOOD, DEMATHA, SENECA VALLEY AND MAGRUDER HIGH SCHOOLS

HON. ALBERT RUSSELL WYNN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate several of our great high school sports teams in the 4th Congressional District of Maryland for their outstanding seasons. Congratulations to Suitland and Potomac High Schools who both recently won state football championships.

Potomac High School located in Oxon Hill, Maryland rose to victory beating Hereford High School 19 to 12 to win the 2A title championship. Led by Coach Eric Knight, Potomac was finally able to achieve the title that had slipped through their fingers the previous season. In winning the state championship Potomac also became the first team in Maryland history to end the season with a 14-0 record.

Suitland High School located in Suitland, Maryland, led by Coach Nick Lynch and standout junior linebacker Navorro Bowman, beat Damascus High School 14 to 7 to win the 4A title championship. Although Bowman had been pinpointed as the obvious star of the team, the humble young player still managed to praise his fellow teammates including his aggressive offensive line, which did an excellent job to help seal the victory. Navorro Bowman who has already been offered a scholarship at the University of Maryland appears to be a young man on the move who has a bright and promising future ahead of him.

Congratulations are also in order for DeMatha High School in Hyattsville, Maryland, which ended the season as the number one boys soccer team in the region. Sherwood High School in Sandy Spring, Maryland should also be recognized for ending a great soccer season with their boys' team ranked number three and their girls' team number seven in the area.

In addition Seneca Valley High School in Germantown Maryland ranked number four in the top ten for volleyball, while Magruder High School in Rockville ranked number six.

I am extremely proud of the achievements of these young people from my Congressional District. I am sure that all the citizens of Maryland's 4th Congressional District share my enthusiastic admiration for their hard work, sportsmanship and teamwork. Athletics plays an important role in the development of our youth, and teaches valuable life lessons in cooperation, camaraderie, and valor. The famed football coach Vince Lombardi once said that individual commitment to a group effort—is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, and a civilization work.

ON THIS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: AMERICA'S VETERANS DESERVE BETTER

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on December 7, 1941, over 2,200 brave servicemen and women sacrificed their lives protecting the freedoms we have come to cherish. Now, sixty-three years after the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, America has over 26 million veterans who have selflessly dedicated themselves in service to our great country and sacrificed to guarantee Americans the freedoms we enjoy today.

Unfortunately, rather than receiving the full respect they deserve, our nation's veterans are now faced with a recently released Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) directive (VHA Directive 2004-045) that exposes them to tremendous risk. The directive grants optometrists—non-Medical Doctors (MDs)—in the VA system privileges to perform laser eye procedures under the supervision of an ophthalmologist—a fully trained and certified MD. While I fully understand that the Directive mandates the procedure will be supervised, I am also aware of the fact that supervising a procedure is not the same as actually performing the procedure. As a result, allowing an operation to be performed by a non-surgeon could potentially jeopardize patient safety, and ultimately the quality of care provided to our veterans.

As eye health deteriorates with age, more and more older Americans are faced with the need for eye surgery. And just when our aging veterans need this care the most, they are now faced with the prospect of having their surgery performed by someone who hasn't been through intensive surgical education or training. This new policy blatantly imposes a substandard level of health care on our veterans.

Currently, only one state—Oklahoma—permits optometrists (non-MDs) to perform laser eye surgery, while 35 other states have outright prohibited this type of procedure. In fact, 14 states, including Indiana, have debated and soundly rejected similar measures—seven states in this calendar year alone. But regardless of individual state restrictions, the DVA directive allows an eye care professional to practice anywhere in the VHA system, “up to the limits” of their license. As a result, optometrists with no formal surgical education or training will be able to go to Oklahoma, take a 16 hour course, pass the Oklahoma optometry certification exam, and then go anywhere in the country and practice laser eye surgery on any veteran in any VHA facility. Thus, in states that have prohibited this type of threat or rejected Oklahoma-like legislation, optometrists will be practicing surgery on veterans against the wishes of state lawmakers.

As a proud veteran of the U.S. Army, I find it shocking that this practice has been allowed to come this far. And I'm not alone in my belief that medical doctors who are specifically trained to reduce surgery-related risks should be the only ones legally permitted to carry out these delicate laser eye procedures. In fact, in a national poll of U.S. veterans, 95 percent said it was important for a licensed medical

doctor, specializing in eye care, to conduct eye surgery.

Any medical operation has the potential to cause adverse affects. In older populations—such as those served by VHA facilities—the rate of adverse events tends to increase for any surgical procedure. Therefore, it makes no sense that this very population—those most in need of a medical doctor's training and education to determine the safest surgery for their overall health—be needlessly exposed to the very real threat of having a non-MD operate on them. It should be our highest priority as American citizens to help ensure the safety of those who have so proudly and bravely defended our great country. All U.S. veterans deserve to have quality health care performed by medical doctors with the proper education and training.

IN HONOR OF YOLANDA FERNANDEZ-QUINCOCES

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Yolanda Fernandez-Quincoces for her remarkable accomplishments in dance and music and her exceptional artistic contributions to the community over the past few decades.

Ms. Fernandez-Quincoces's extensive career includes teaching, choreographing, and producing. In 1974, she founded Yolanda's Academy of Music and Dance, which has developed young talent in New Jersey for 30 years. In addition to managing the school, she has taught classes in the gifted and talented program in Union City and in the Woodrow Wilson School for the Integrated Arts. Under her dedicated instruction, more than 38 students have won recognition in statewide talent search competitions and many have continued their dance training at prestigious institutes such as the New York City Ballet's School of American Ballet, the Joffrey Ballet, and established universities.

Her professional credits include a position as a teaching liaison between the New York City Ballet and New York City Opera and the Woodrow Wilson School. Ms. Fernandez-Quincoces was also involved with hosting and producing a television arts program on Cablevision, and has made several guest appearances on other shows. In addition to her current projects, she is a member of the National Education Association, the Dance Educators of America, and the National Guild of Piano Teachers.

For her exceptional work, Ms. Fernandez-Quincoces has received numerous awards, including “Teacher of the Year” for Union City, Hudson County, and the State of New Jersey, and “Outstanding Choreographer” for three different productions from the Dance Educators of America in New York City. Most notably, she was also honored at the Statue of Liberty Centennial Celebration with other well-known artists, performers, and political figures.

Ms. Fernandez-Quincoces emigrated from Cuba to the United States when she was three years old. She began studying ballet at the age of five, training at the New Jersey Ballet, Oneida's Dance Studio, and the American Ballet Theatre. Ms. Fernandez-Quincoces also