

and to protect against increasing drug prices for veterans.

I cannot support H.R. 4 for one important reason: it will limit access to prescription drugs for senior citizens. The Washington Post shares these concerns, "A switch to government purchasing of Medicare drugs would choke off this experiment before it had a chance to play out, and it would usher in its own problems."

The Democrats want you to believe that this legislation will not limit the number of drugs available on a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan's formulary. They point to programs like the Veterans Administration and Medicaid to assure the public that access to drugs won't be limited. But the truth is that both the VA and Medicaid programs restrict patients' choice of drugs. Veterans have access to less than one-third of the prescription drugs available under Medicare Part D plans. State Medicaid programs also routinely limit the number and types of drugs that patients can receive.

In addition, and of particular concern to my constituents, the VA distributes 70 percent of its medications by mail. Seniors deserve the right to speak to their local pharmacist about their prescriptions, and not having that opportunity is a potential health risk. In contrast, the current Part D plan uses mail for less than 2 percent of its medications. We should not alter this important program.

As Leslie Norwalk, the Acting Administrator for CMS said, "The bottom line from the news today is that beneficiaries are paying less in premiums and taxpayers are seeing billions of dollars in lower costs, without the need for government to interfere and reduce access or convenience for beneficiaries." As in many areas, the best thing the government can do is to step back and allow the current trend to work. Government interference would risk the value of this important benefit to our seniors. I encourage my colleagues to join me in standing up for low cost and full access to prescription drugs for senior citizens and vote against H.R. 4.

STEM CELL RESEARCH
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3, the Stem Cell Research Advancement Act of 2007.

In California, we have devoted State funds, nearly \$300 million a year, to pursuing research on embryonic stem cells, and it has helped make California a destination for researchers on the cutting edge of biotechnology. But the promise of stem cell therapies will not benefit just the people of California, but all Americans, and indeed the entire world. Shutting the National Institute of Health out of this research is misguided, and turns our back on the many millions who may benefit from the cures it may provide.

More than five years after the Administration instituted restrictions on Federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, the promise of this potential line of treatment is greater than ever.

There are those who suggest that research on adult stem cells is equally promising and has produced new therapies—and I welcome further research in that area. But we, as legislators, should not prejudge which avenues are most promising. We should leave the science to the scientists.

Embryonic stem cells have the potential to transform the way we treat diseases that afflict millions of Americans. There is not a person in America who doesn't know someone who suffers from diabetes or Alzheimer's or cancer or heart disease, and embryonic stem cell research hold tremendous promise for the treatment of each of those, along with many other potential therapies.

Medical and biological ethics are a serious issue and we can have differences of opinion, but I believe that a commitment to lifesaving medical research that holds the potential to cure diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's is consistent with a commitment to the sanctity of human life.

Last year, I voted to override the President's veto of this important legislation. I hope the President will reconsider his opposition, and it will not be necessary to vote on an override again.

IN RECOGNITION OF DON
SCHIRMER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Don Schirmer and his many years of service to the community of Maple Heights as a high school varsity football referee. Don's five decades of tireless dedication to the game of football is a testament to his heartfelt love of sports and the Maple Heights community.

Don began his tenure as a referee in 1954 in Maple Heights, where his knowledge of sports translated into a position as a varsity official. Over the years, the students playing the game changed, but their referee, Don Schirmer, remained a staple of the community. Through all the victories, losses, and dramatic twists of the sport, one man has stood behind it all.

More than just a referee, Don served as a pillar of his community by volunteering, often cooking for the homeless. It is this spirit of giving, sharing, and brotherly love that Don Schirmer has contributed to the community of Maple Heights. A modest man of many accomplishments, Don can count being an umpire in Major League Baseball, a veteran of the U.S. Navy, and the Captain of the Maple Heights Fire Department all as notches in his all-American belt of experience.

Even at the ripe age of 79, Don's energy, passion, and love of life are at an all-time high. An avid hunter, Don is giving up his striped referee uniform for an orange vest. Though nearly an octogenarian, his zesty vigor keeps him active in the outdoors.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Don Schirmer as a true American sportsman. His undying presence on the field has been a joy, honor, and privilege to the students of Maple Heights for over 50 years.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDENT
FINANCIAL READINESS ACT OF
2007

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a very important piece of legislation that will provide additional relief for families as they plan for the financial cost of their children's education.

The cost of college tuition continues to rise in the United States. In fact, over the past 5 years, the cost of obtaining a college education has increased by 35 percent. The higher cost of college should not prevent individuals from receiving an advanced education.

That is why I am introducing the Student Financial Readiness Act of 2007, which will increase the annual tax-free contribution a family or an individual may contribute to a student's elementary, secondary, or college expenses.

Coverdell Education Savings Accounts allow families to make an annual tax-free contribution of \$2,000 to assist each of their children with their education. The money can be spent on both K-12 education and college. By allowing families to make tax-free contributions to education savings accounts, we promote ownership of education. Families that save for their children's education are empowering their children. However, the current \$2,000 annual limit needs to be adjusted with the increasing tuition rates. The Student Financial Readiness Act of 2007 would permit a contribution level of \$5,000 annually and index the contribution amount by the cost-of-living adjustment.

We must give families the option to provide the very best education possible for their children. Our Nation's future depends on educating our children and they must be given every chance to receive the highest education. Our children deserve a competitive advantage in our Nation's job market.

Madam Speaker, I respectfully request the support of my colleagues for this important piece of legislation that will ensure the future success of our Nation's children.

CONGRATULATING MR. CALVIN C.
GOODE ON HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 19, 2007

Mr. PASTOR. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to proudly bring to your attention the 80th birthday of a fellow Arizonan who is one of the most respected leaders in my home State and city—Mr. Calvin C. Goode. Calvin Goode is celebrating his 80th birthday this month and, therefore, it is the perfect time to pay tribute to this well-revered public servant who is best known for dedicating 22 years of his life as a Phoenix City Councilman. He has been equally dedicated to the promotion of education and the advancement of civil rights and continues to stand up to injustice, even in his retirement.

Goode's family came to Arizona to work in the agricultural fields when he was an infant,