

I particularly commend the educational training programs available from Fairfax Public Access in the fields of radio and television production. Thousands of individuals have successfully been trained in these fields by Fairfax Cable Access Corporation and their training program is now listed in the Adult Education catalogues for the local public schools systems.

In recognition of excellence, the Fairfax Cable Access Corporation has been awarded numerous Telly Awards which honors the very best in local, regional, cable and internet programming. The winners of this prestigious award are chosen from the thousands of entries received each year from all 50 states and 5 continents.

Madam Speaker, the quarter century of excellence from the Fairfax County Cable Access Corporation is a true success story, both for the organization and the many citizens it serves. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the achievements of Fairfax Cable Access Corporation and to applaud their commitment to communication, education and service to the community.

HONORING THE MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD PASSENGER TRAIN STATION

HON. MARK H. SCHAUER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Mr. SCHAUER. Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor today the Michigan Central Railroad Passenger Train Station in Jackson, Michigan as they celebrate the Second Annual National Train Day and the 140th Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad.

On May 10, 1869, in Promontory Summit, Utah, the "golden spike" was driven into the final tie that joined 1,776 miles of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railways, ceremonially creating the nation's first transcontinental railroad. These railways provided jobs for thousands of Americans. Now, 140 years after the "golden spike" connected east and west, there's never been a better time to take the train.

In an era of many constant challenges and changes that face our daily lives and at a time when we all share the same pressing concerns about environment and energy conservation, trains are a more energy-efficient mode of travel than either autos or airplanes. The historic Michigan Central Railroad Passenger Train Station opened its doors to the public on September 1, 1873 and is the nation's oldest train station in continuous active use.

I am proud to join with the Jackson community in honor of this coast-to-coast celebration of the way trains connect people and places.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE AMBULANCE ACCESS PRESERVATION ACT

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Medicare Am-

bulance Access Preservation Act. This bill would ensure that my constituents in Massachusetts, and people across the country, continue to have access to ambulance services. Ambulance service providers are a critical part of our country's first responder and health care systems. In fact, as we discuss how to reform our health care system I can think of nothing more fundamental than ensuring that people have access to life-saving emergency ambulance care.

We all know the importance of ambulance services. Many of us see them every day transporting ill or injured individuals to the hospital. Some of us have even been transported and received pre-hospital care in an ambulance. Dedicated, skilled professionals work in these ambulances, ensuring that patients receive the care they need and ensuring that communities are prepared in the case of a disaster. The need to ensure the availability of these services is clear. Yet, Medicare reimbursement policy has harmed rather than helped to reach this goal.

Under the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Congress authorized the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to develop a Medicare ambulance fee schedule. The rates developed under the fee schedule were significantly below what it cost many providers in Massachusetts to deliver services. In May 2007, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) confirmed this problem by determining that Medicare reimburses ambulance service providers on average 6 percent below their costs and 17 percent below cost in "super rural" areas. Ambulance providers aren't even breaking even in Medicare—Medicare reimburses ambulance providers below their costs for every person they transport.

Congress has recognized this shortfall and included temporary Medicare ambulance relief provisions in both the Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA). However, all of these provisions expire at the end of 2009. To address this problem, I have worked with ambulance service providers in my state to develop a permanent Medicare relief package.

My legislation would increase reimbursement to rural and urban ambulance suppliers by 6 percent, and super rural providers by 17 percent. These numbers are consistent with the GAO report. This package will ensure not only continued availability of ambulance services, but also that ambulance service providers will be able to maintain standards of providing quality health care to patients.

As we address health care reform, we must begin by remembering the basics. Ambulance services are a fundamental part of our health care system. Congress must ensure that all Americans continue to have access to ambulance services and that the dedicated men and women who provide ambulance services have the tools and resources they need to serve patients when timely, expert medical care is needed most. I ask my colleagues to join me in this effort by cosponsoring this important legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on May 13, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my vote for rollcall No. 249.

Had I been present I would have voted: rollcall No. 249—aye, on agreeing to the amendment.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF THE FILIPINO VETERANS FAMILY REUNIFICATION ACT

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act, a companion to Senator AKAKA's bill of the same name, which will provide for the expedited reunification of the families of our Filipino World War II veterans.

As you know, Filipino veterans are those that honorably answered the call of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and served alongside our armed forces during World War II. They fought shoulder to shoulder with American servicemen; they sacrificed for the same just cause. We made a promise to provide full veterans' benefits to those who served with our troops. And while we have recently made appreciable progress toward fulfilling that long-ignored promise, we have not yet achieved the full equity that the Filipino veterans deserve.

In 1990, the Congress recognized the courage and commitment of the Filipino World War II veterans by providing them with a waiver from certain naturalization requirements. Many veterans thereafter became proud United States citizens and residents of our country. However, allowances were not made for their children and many have been waiting decades for petition approval.

The Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act would allow for the further recognition of the service of the veterans by granting their children a special immigration status that would allow them to immigrate to the United States and be reunified with their aging parents. It is important to note that the Filipino soldiers who fought under the command of General Douglas MacArthur at this critical time in our nation's history represent a unique category. These soldiers were members of the United States Armed Forces of the Far East. They were led to believe that at the end of the conflict they would be treated the same as American soldiers. It took more than sixty years to begin to make good on our commitment. The Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act recognizes the special circumstances of this group of soldiers.

I look forward to working with my colleagues by providing for the reunification of our Filipino World War II veterans with their families.