

CONCERNS ABOUT THE PHILIPPINE AUTOMATED ELECTIONS

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2010

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, on May 10, 2010, the Republic of the Philippines will undergo historic elections in its budding democracy. These elections mark the first fully automated national elections to determine the fates of over 85,000 candidates for some 17,000 national and local seats, including that of the President and Vice President. With such a large ballot of candidates and the challenge of polling across a nation of over 7,000 islands, the benefits of an automated system are apparent.

These automated elections, however, are not flawless. Automated voting is not guaranteed to eliminate fraud and error, but seeks to minimize them. Additional independent systems should be in place to ensure transparency and validity across the entire election process and, in particular, over the electronic voting systems themselves. Especially troubling are the reports that the new voting system has never been fully tested in the Philippines, which reinforces the need for a contingency plan in case of voting machine failures. In fact, the National Democratic Institute and other international observers have already expressed similar concerns about these upcoming automated elections.

The Philippine Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has the daunting task of administering these elections, and would do well to heed the bitter lessons that the United States learned from the controversies surrounding our electronic voting machines during recent elections. While still working to improve our election process, we also recognize the importance of mending the public confidence. Public confidence in any form of government is paramount to its success, and this is especially true for any democracy—Philippine and American. Again, I urge COMELEC to establish necessary transparency and validation mechanisms that will earn the confidence of the Filipino people to ensure that their constitutional right was fairly exercised. I look forward to these historic democratic elections and hope that they will result in a confident and peaceful transition of government.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT H. ANDERSON

HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2010

Mr. BILBRAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a constituent of mine, Robert H. Anderson, Lt. Col., USMC (ret.) who sadly passed away in November 2009. Lt. Col. Anderson was laid to rest Friday April 2, 2010 in Arlington National Cemetery.

Lt. Col. Anderson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism during World War II. He became a Corsair pilot and was in nearly every major battle in the Pacific including Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Okinawa, Tarawa,

Guam, Peleliu, Tinian and others. Between these battles, he fought kamikazes that were attacking our ships, flew reconnaissance missions, and escorted bombers, protecting them from Japanese fighter planes. During one of his escort missions he was hit with anti-aircraft fire and told to bail out. He jettisoned the canopy but at the last moment he decided that he would take his chances and try to get back to his base in Okinawa. He successfully landed on the runway at Okinawa with no canopy, no landing gear and much of his plane and controls damaged.

Throughout his life, Lt. Col. Anderson demonstrated his commitment to serving his country. After World War II, Lt. Col. Anderson served in the Marine Corps Reserve testing new jets, training pilots and keeping his skills sharp in case he was needed in combat again. He served one weekend a month and two weeks twice a year until Vietnam. He also volunteered as a recruiter for the Marine Corps Reserve and helped overhaul their public relations strategy. He volunteered for active duty during the Korean Campaign, but was not called.

Lt. Col. Anderson's service and dedication to this country warrants the highest recognition. I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating this great American.

INTRODUCING THE COMMISSION ON IMPROVING LONG-TERM CARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ACT OF 2010

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Commission on Improving Long-term Care and Community Services Act of 2010.

Long-term care is a broad range of health and social services that is used by people who cannot care for themselves independently because they live with a physical, cognitive, or mental disability. Well over 9.4 million adults receive long-term care in the United States and this number is expected to rise. Longer life spans among the chronically ill and disabled, and higher incidences of acquired disabilities from unmanaged conditions such as HIV/AIDS, diabetes, obesity and heart disease project an increase in our reliance on long-term care. States with significant elder populations like Florida know the importance of ensuring that our health care system is well equipped to provide adequate long-term care services.

Last year, I introduced H. Res. 271, a resolution that expressed the need for a national strategy on long-term care, and the necessity of including long-term care in comprehensive health care reform. Many agreed that addressing the state of long-term care and community services is critically important to improving our health care system. However, concerns about the potentially high cost of implementing corrective measures stymied efforts to aggressively tackle the problem in the health reform bill.

The inclusion of long-term care insurance in the health reform bill is helpful, but it cannot serve as a substitution for comprehensively

addressing long-term care and community services issues. Too many patients and families are enduring the physical, emotional and financial consequences of accessing long-term care in a system that is in dire need of improvement. The lack of streamlined standards and dominant payment methods for long-term care have left the system handicapped: depriving countless people of much needed services and placing a tremendous financial and emotional burden on families and caregivers. And yet, there has never been a national plan for long-term care, and nearly 20 years have passed since Congress comprehensively reviewed long-term care policy.

The Commission on Improving Long-Term Care and Community Services Act of 2010 is a cost-effective way to ensure that we comprehensively address long-term care and community services policy in the U.S. and U.S. territories. My bill directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a National Commission on Improving Long-Term Care and Services. The Commission will be composed of a variety of Federal and national stakeholders that will construct a comprehensive strategy on how to increase the affordability, accessibility and effectiveness of long-term care and community services in the U.S. and U.S. territories. The Commission's policy recommendations must consider cost, geography, culture, transportation, workforce and other factors that influence access to care.

And, the Commission's strategy must also provide guidelines on how to combat waste, fraud and abuse by long-term care providers, address flaws in Medicare reimbursement policies, increase access to home and community-based services through Medicaid, and promote fiscally responsible ways to finance long-term care. The Commission on Improving Long-term Care and Community Services has two years to submit a report to the President, Congress and the general public about their recommendations and findings.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the National Commission on Improving Long-term Care and Community Services Act of 2010 and truly invest in the welfare of our Nation's health and health care system.

HONORING BARTOW HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 2010

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor my high school alma mater, Bartow High School, for winning the 5A state title in boys' basketball. The final game had the Bartow Yellow Jackets beating the Tampa Sickles in a 51–37 match hosted in the Lakeland Center. This will be Bartow High's fourth boys' basketball title, but its first since 1988. The boys were led by head coach Terrence McGriff and seniors Jeremiah Samarippas, Weedlens Beauvil, Adrian Brackins, Richard Murvin, Vincent Reed, and Reginald Polite.

The school's athletics program is also recognized for its girls' softball team, who appeared in the state championship game for 10 consecutive years from 1997–2006 and won 7 out of the 10 matches. Bartow High also has many football alumni who went on to compete