

40 realized they needed their own home office, which led to the purchase of the building at 241 Gostlin Street in Hammond. This remains their current home office. Local organizations hold special events at Post 40, including the Soccer Club "Polonia," Saturday School of Polish Language, and academia group 3095. In 1936, the Women's Auxiliary at Post 40 was organized by Mrs. W. Wytrzymalski, who also became the first president. The Women's Auxiliary has offered its assistance in all veterans' undertakings, especially in its collection of "Blawatek" (Polish Buddy Poppies), which are sold to help raise money for the veterans.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate my congratulations to Post 40 Commander Prygon, Financial Secretary Wicinski, and all members of PAVA Post 40 for their commitment to remembering their Polish heritage, as well as their commitment to improving the quality of life for all residents of Indiana's First Congressional District. May their 75th anniversary celebration be a joyous one.

#### COLUMBUS HOUSE HONORED

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 16, 1996*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, the week of May 13–20, 1996 will officially be declared Columbus House Awareness Week. Columbus House is an organization which delivers both emergency care and shelter to the homeless and seeks to assist homeless persons in finding permanent housing. On May 19, 1996 Columbus House will honor their volunteers.

Columbus House opened in 1982 and was New Haven's first shelter for homeless men and women. The original mission of the organization was to provide basic food and shelter services. However, it has since evolved and expanded. The organization now seeks to understand and address the problems that lead to homelessness. The Columbus House has been nationally recognized for innovative programs. One such program is the Length of Stay Program, in which the residents set goals for themselves and develop a timetable in which to achieve them. Columbus House also charges residents a nominal fee for their stay, a practice which promotes the ultimate goal of self-reliance.

The dual mission of Columbus House is what makes it so remarkable and valuable to the New Haven community. Providing emergency housing is a crucial community service. The shelter has not only emergency shelter beds but also provides several outreach services. These include a mobile crisis van and outreach workers who try to link the mentally ill with the treatment and services they need. Columbus House aims to help residents become self-sufficient and able to maintain permanent housing. In addition to providing counseling, job training, and medical care, Columbus House strives to cultivate a sense of self-worth, self-dignity, and self-reliance in those who feel that their lives are beyond their control. It is rebuilding a resident's sense of self that is the key to the program's success. Columbus House gives residents the tools to

handle life on their own and to effectively seek resolutions to their problems.

The work of caring for the homeless has become increasingly difficult. Many people are no longer compassionate about the plight of the homeless and are frustrated by the many problems that come together to contribute to homelessness. I commend Columbus House for facing all the issues that surround homelessness and continuing to work every day to solve them. I am proud to join Columbus House in applauding the many volunteers who make the day-to-day operation a success. I thank Columbus House for over a decade of service to the New Haven community.

#### HONORING THE DEKALB COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 16, 1996*

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the DeKalb County Volunteer Fire Department. These brave civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in firefighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee fire training school in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICAL PRIVACY IN THE AGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES ACT

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 16, 1996*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Medical Privacy in the Age of New Technologies Act. This legislation will ensure that a patient's personal health information will not be disclosed without that patient's consent.

For the first time, patients nationwide will have control of their medical records and have the right to deny outsiders access to their private medical information.

This sounds like a simple principle with which the medical community should already comply. Unfortunately, current medical privacy guidelines are inadequate and vary from State to State. In fact, the papers are filled with horror stories about insurers, banks, and employers misusing health information to discriminate against individuals. While businesses gain this medical information to the detriment of the rest of us, only 28 States, including Washington currently allow people even to examine their own medical records.

The legislation I am introducing today will give individuals the right to know what is being done with their medical information. It will place in the individual's control what is done with that information, who sees it, and why.

In addition to being inadequate, today's privacy standards fail to address the impact of new technologies on our medical system. These new technologies deeply affect the privacy of health information. This bill addresses the threats to an individual's health information from new genetic technologies, and from the computerization of medical records.

Genetic health information is an especially sensitive part of a patient's medical record. As knowledge increases about the genetic component of many common diseases, so does the possibility that information in an individual's medical file will be used to deny entire families health care coverage. One recent study documented 200 cases of healthy people being denied jobs, insurance, the right to adopt, and educational opportunities because they either had or were suspected to have a genetic predisposition for a disease, even though they did not actually have the disease.

Computers have revolutionized the way in which an individual's medical information is collected, stored, and disseminated. Without adequate enforceable standards, this information can easily be misused to breach the privacy rights of patients and lead to several forms of discrimination.

Now, I don't want to get into horror stories which already have occurred in the private sector, but I do want to warn you that Congress has yet to realize the importance and consequences of computer technologies in the medical system. Just last month, the House passed Administrative Simplification provisions as part of the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance reform bill. These provisions would force doctors to computerize sensitive patient medical records to make it easier for insurance companies to bill patients. Yet, in making it easier for insurance companies to maximize their profits, Congress failed to attach adequate privacy protections. New technologies have the potential to improve the quality of health care, to help doctors effectively treat their patients, and to lower the cost of health care. However, strong medical record privacy protections must be in place to ensure that such technologies are not misused to discriminate against patients and their families.

I believe this bill gives patients the right to protect their personal health information from being misused and prevent them from feeling the wrath of discrimination to which the erosion of medical standards could lead.