

policy expired. As required by law, the insurance company had to offer conversion to an individual policy—but the law does not specify at what price that policy has to be offered. The company made an offer almost every family in America would have to refuse—\$25,600 per year.

Why so much? The wife had been sick but not seriously so.

She has been without health insurance for over 3 years now. It will be 2 more years before she will be eligible for Medicare. The husband is already on Medicare.

Kennedy-Kassebaum will not help in this type of case. There is no guaranteed issue for individual policies. For those who have been out of the work force for a while, it offers no protection.

The family's plea is not to raise the age of eligibility for Medicare: "Now her only hope is to have reasonable access to Medicare by her 65th birthday in July 1998. If you take that away, a major medical occurrence would ruin this family."

Mr. Speaker, Kennedy-Kassebaum was a small first step. Let's step forward and fill in the remaining gaps in health insurance. I've introduced legislation, H.R. 3342, which would make COBRA health continuation rights permanent after age 55. Anyone, for whatever reason, would be able to buy COBRA group rate insurance after age 55 and until they reach age 65 and Medicare eligibility. This type of legislation would provide some meaningful help to families who cannot afford the cost of individual policies.

DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 1, 1996

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to ensure that the name of Devils Tower National Monument remain unchanged.

For more than 100 years the name Devils Tower has applied to the geologic formation in my State and has since appeared as such on maps in Wyoming and nationwide. The name was given to the monument by a scientific team, directed by Gen. George Custer and escorted by Col. Richard Dodge in 1875, and is universally recognized as an important landmark that distinguishes the northeastern part of Wyoming. The monument has brought a vital tourist industry to that portion of the State due to its unique character and structure.

According to a July 17, 1996, release by the United States Board on Geographic Names, the National Park Service has advised the board that several Native American groups do intend to submit a proposal, if one has not already been submitted, to change the name of the monument. On September 4–6, 1996, the Superintendent of Devils Tower, Deborah Liggett, is scheduled to give a presentation at the Western States Geographic Names Conference in Salt Lake City, UT, giving the Native American perspective.

During a July 1, 1996, meeting with Ms. Liggett she gave me her assurance that she had no intention of proposing a name change

for the monument, and made it clear to me that on one else was in the process of initiating a name change. The legislation that I am introducing today on behalf of the State of Wyoming will ensure that the name of the geological formation, historically known as Devils Tower, remain unchanged.

It is my belief and the belief of hundreds of people from around the region that the name change will only bring economic hardship to the tourist industry in the area. I cannot and will not stand idly by and allow that to happen. I commend this bill to my colleagues and urge them to join me in cosponsoring it.

THE BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

HON. WILLIAM H. ZELIFF, JR.

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. ZELIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very important addition to the community of Bedford, NH. After years of planning, fundraising and hard work, the dream of having a public library in the town of Bedford has become a reality. On June 23, 1996, the Bedford Public Library opened its doors to the people of the surrounding community.

The Bedford Public Library offers more than just a place where an individual can go to read, or a child can go to research his or her school project. This facility also offers the Bedford community a common place to gather. On the lower level visitors will find a coffee shop, an art gallery and two community meeting rooms.

In addition to these amenities, the library has one of the finest children's learning centers in New England. The learning center is furnished with a puppet theater, a craft-activity area, a reading center that includes a section for the reading and hearing impaired, and Camelot, a reading castle. Also, included is the computer and reference center. Each computer is connected to the Internet and has CD-ROM access for state of the art sound and picture collections.

This library would not have been made possible if it was not for the vision of one special person, Ms. Francis Wiggin. Ms. Wiggin established a goal more than 35 years ago and with help of the trustees, the Bedford Lions Club, the Bedford Rotary Club, the Bedford Garden Club, the town and the people of Bedford, she is responsible for the creation of this beautiful library.

I am extremely proud of this community-wide effort and would like to congratulate all who have devoted their time and effort to such a great cause. I wish the people of Bedford the best of luck with their new community facility.

THANK YOU, BOB FERGUSON, FOR YOUR LOYAL SERVICE

HON. JACK FIELDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. FIELDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it was with mixed emotions that I announced last De-

cember 11 my decision to retire from the House at the conclusion of my current term. As I explained at the time, the decision to retire was made more difficult because of the loyalty and dedication of my staff—and because of the genuine friendship I feel for them. Each one of them has served the men and women of Texas' Eighth Congressional District in an extraordinary way.

Today, I want to thank one member of my staff—Bob Ferguson, my administrative assistant—for everything he's done for me and my constituents in the 16 years that he has worked in my office.

From the day I first took my oath of office, Bob has managed and overseen the operations of my Washington office. I have relied on his experience and counsel on personnel, budgeting and administrative matters, as well as advising me on various legislative issues throughout my 16 years in this institution. More recently, in my final term in the House, Bob has served as my legislative director, personally handling social issues, welfare reform, Government reform, energy issues, clean air legislation, private property rights and endangered species legislation. The fact is that Bob has served on Capitol Hill longer than I have.

He came to my office from the Senate Republican Policy Committee, then chaired by Senator John Tower of Texas, where he served as a staff economist. In that position, Bob conducted research and formulated position papers on economic policy. In 1980, he assisted in the development of the economic policy plank of the Republican platform as a staffer to the Republican Convention Platform Committee, also chaired by Senator Tower.

Following the Presidential election, Bob served as a member of the Reagan administration transition team for the Department of the Treasury—helping to develop economic policy papers, and helping to fill key positions in the Treasury Department.

From 1977 to 1978, Bob had served on the staff of the House Republican Study Committee, working closely with our former colleague, Jack Kemp, on a variety of supply-side economic initiatives.

In addition to his work on my staff, Bob is an extremely active member of his church, the Church of Latter Day Saints. He is devoted to his lovely wife, Carol, and to his children Robby, Alecia, and Michael.

Bob is well-known as an avid fan of Brigham Young University football, and is also known as an enthusiastic gardener. More recently, he has begun a new hobby, beekeeping.

I have depended on his advice and counsel throughout my years in Congress, and appreciate this opportunity to express my gratitude for everything he has done for me over the years.

Bob Ferguson is one of those hard working men and women who make all of us in this institution look better than we deserve. I know he has done that for me, and I appreciate this opportunity to publicly thank him for the dedication, loyalty and professionalism he has exhibited throughout the years it has been my privilege to know and work with him.

Bob has yet to make a definite decision about what he wants to do when I retire from office. But I am confident that the skills and the personal qualities he has demonstrated in my office will lead to continued success in the future.