Closer to home, he has served on the boards of directors for Boys and Girls Town of Missouri, the Regional Commerce and Growth Association, St. Louis Sports Commission, St. Charles Public Schools, St. Charles Police and Fire Board, Crimestoppers, Mid America Theater, St. Charles County Horse Racing Commission, Daniel Boone District Chairman, Boy Scouts of America and the Eagle Board of Review, YMCA and United Services Blue Ribbon Committee.

He received the Boy Scouts' highest honor, the Silver Beaver Award in 1989, Channel 5's [KSDK] Volunteer Board of Governors Jefferson Award in 1993, the YMCA's highest leadership award and Youth in Need honored him as its first recipient of their Youth Leadership Award. For this lifetime of service, I rise today to recognize and salute William H. Weber, St. Charles Chamber of Commerce 1996 Citizen of the Year. His volunteer work has been a shining example to me as well as all Missourians.

HONORING THE POTTERS ON THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, families are the cornerstone of America. The data is undeniable: Individuals from strong families contribute to the society. In an era when nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of ''till death us do part'' seriously, demonstrating successfully the timeless principles of love, honor, and fidelity. These characteristics make our country strong.

For these important reasons, I rise today to honor Donna and Ralph Potter of Kansas City, MO, who on Sunday, January 5, 1997, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. My wife, Janet, and I look forward to the day we can celebrate a similar milestone. Donna and Ralph's commitment to the principles and values of their marriage deserves to be saluted and recognized.

LOUIS J. AMABILI

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, today I would like to say something about a hero. The distinguished historian Stephen E. Ambrose says that we need to teach our children about heroes. It is by understanding the contributions of great men and women that our youth set standards of achievement for themselves. Common heroes provide a sense of unity and inspire us to aim a little higher than we did the day before.

This week in Delaware, an outstanding man is being recognized for his more than 50 years of service to community, State, and Nation. His name is Louis J. Amabili. He's a loving husband, a devoted father, an attentive grandfather, and fearless firefighter. He's a man who, for half a century, has risked his life to protect the lives and property of others.

Louis is my friend, and I am honored to count him among my friends. He is a member of the Hockessin Fire Company and the founding Director of the Delaware State Fire School. For 32 years, he served as director of that school, leading it to its current preeminent position as one of the leading fire training facilities in the United States.

During his tenure, the Delaware State Fire School not only built its facility in Dover, but established training centers in Sussex and New Castle Counties, providing fire training centers within 30 minutes of every fire company in Delaware.

In additions to these many successes, Louis Amabili also served as president of the New Castle Volunteers Firemen's Association, the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association, and the International Association of Fire Service Instructors. Richard Nixon appointed him to the Fire Prevention and Control Commission, and Delaware Governor Pete DuPont recognized him with the ''Order of the First State.''

Mr. President, Louis Amabili is one of the most well-recognized fire service leaders in America. He served on the Board of Directors of the National Fire Protection Association, and chaired the Fire Officers Professional Qualifications Standards Committee for more than a decade.

Louis was a member of the International Fire Service Training Association and received their highest honor for his role in fire service training. He chaired the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations and helped establish the National Fire Service Professional Qualifications System.

He serves as a member of the board of directors of the Congressional Fire Services Institute—which I have the honor of co-chairing—and he has received that institute's highest honor, the CFSI Fire Service Person of the Year Award.

On this occasion, as Louis Amabili retires from a distinguished career, it is my privilege to recognize his years of selfless service, the lives he has touched, the lives he has taught, and the lives he has saved. I want to express my gratitude to his wonderful wife, Carmen, to his son Louis Jr., and to his daughter, Janice, and I want the record to show without question that we do, indeed, still live in a time of heroes. Quite often these valiant men and women live right next door.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, children's health care coverage needs to be a priority in this Congress. We need to be committed to providing access to affordable coverage and care to all working families in America. We also need to provide coverage for uninsured pregnant women, in order to ensure that children get a healthy start in life. All children should have access to services that provide for their basic health care needs such as immunization, preventive services, acute care, and dental care services, regardless of whether they live in rural or urban areas.

Employers are rapidly cutting health care coverage for children of their employees. When a family earning $16,000 each year is required to pay over 10 percent and sometimes as much as one-third of their income to purchase health insurance for their children, they are forced to make very difficult choices. They must choose between providing their children with basic needs such as food and shelter, and paying for health insurance.

Health care coverage for children is an investment in the future. Children with undiagnosed or untreated health problems may have difficulty learning in school. A child with poor vision that has not been diagnosed or treated may be unable to see the blackboard. A child who is in pain from preventable tooth decay may not be able to eat an adequate diet, and the pain may make it difficult for the child to concentrate. A child with asthma who has poor access to care may spend many hours in an emergency department and many days in the hospital for treatment of problems that could have been prevented. This occurs at a significant cost not only in terms of dollars, but also in terms of lost opportunities to attend school, and loss of work time and income for the child's parents. These situations can be prevented with adequate health care coverage and access for children.

Children in rural areas are especially vulnerable, as there are fewer services available in these areas, and some needed services are located at significant distances from their homes. In addition, these children often live in homes where their parents work for small employers, who are unable to offer dependent coverage at a low cost.

Several States have demonstrated the cost savings available by providing assistance to working families. My home State, Minnesota, operates its own program that helps families buy private health insurance. Ninety-thousand people are covered, including 50,000 children. Over the years, more than 41,000 families have used MinnesotaCare to leave or stay off welfare, saving the taxpayers $26 million per year.

It is essential that we address this issue and provide low- and middle-income families with the option to purchase affordable private insurance coverage for their children. These families must be provided with the means to purchase this coverage in a timely manner, so that they do not have to delay the purchase of coverage for their children.

We need to build on successful private, State, and Federal efforts to help working families afford to provide health coverage for their children. Providing coverage for children through