money are allowed safe passage here; we must also express our concern for the welfare of Venezuelans and others around the world. The control of harmful substances is an international effort in which we must all take an active and engaged role.

I am deeply committed to fighting our international war on drugs. However, the United States diplomacy has been entirely too weak in this regard, and we must recognize that Venezuela is an ally, not an enemy. Our foreign policy must be governed by what is best for the American people rather than by what party is in power. Recent evidence shows a general lack of enforcement in Venezuela of the measures necessary to avoid the trafficking of narcotics and other controlled substances. However, instead of delivering a political attack to a nation for a lack of customs control in an international airport, we must be constructive and pragmatic in our call for stricter enforcement.

I support the message of this resolution to ensure the compliance of the international community with the Organization of American States conventions and comprehensive treaties on narco-terrorism. However, we would benefit from more constructive engagement in diplomatic relations with our allies in the Western Hemisphere rather than simply issuing a reprimand.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution and support better diplomatic relations with the Government of Venezuela.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PATIENTS' ACCESS TO PHYSICIANS ACT (PAPA)

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, this legislation responds to the fact that physicians are currently scheduled to receive a significant reduction in their Medicare payments over the next 5 to 10 years. The Medicare Trustees have projected that Medicare payments to physicians will be cut by 4.6 percent in January. And, if Congress does not act, physicians will see a cumulative cut of approximately 37 percent through 2015. Providers in Michigan alone stand to lose $8 billion over this time period if the cuts that are forecast are allowed to take effect.

My legislation would provide a temporary halt to these Medicare physician payment cuts. It would provide a positive physician update, expected to be between 2 and 3 percent, in both 2007 and 2008. The update would reflect physician practice cost inflation. This follows the advice of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission's recommended formula of increases in physician practice costs minus productivity adjustment.

This legislation would also protect beneficiaries from any additional premium increases that would otherwise be caused by this change in physician payments for these 2 years. For seniors living on fixed incomes, unexpected increases in their living expenses can impose hardship. The Part B premium already consumes 9 percent of the average Social Security check. Thus, the bill ensures that beneficiaries would not see an increase in beneficiary premiums due to Congressional action to increase physician payments.

It is critical that Congress protect the right of beneficiaries to see their doctor in Medicare. The vast majority of seniors and people with disabilities are and will remain in Medicare where they have the freedom to choose their own doctor and get the care that is right for them.

While ideally we will develop a new payment system that integrates payment and quality, we do not have enough information and data to implement such a system at this time. My legislation would provide a temporary increase for doctors while Congress continues to work toward a permanent solution.

IN HONOR OF MARY LOU McCUTHEON'S SERVICE TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, for 15 years, Mary Lou McCutcheon has served the senior citizens of Sussex County with integrity, dedication and pride. Under her leadership, first at the County Office on Aging and then at the Division of Senior Services, seniors in Sussex County have seen an improved quality of life financially, medically, and socially. She has always put forth extra effort, going far beyond what was required of her job, to address the needs of the elderly in Sussex communities with true compassion.

Mary Lou has also served as a spokesperson for the elderly on both the state and national level. Just last year, Mary Lou was appointed by the Governor to be part of the New Jersey delegation to attend the White House Conference on Aging.

Her achievements have been too numerous to list and will not be forgotten anytime soon. Without a doubt, Mary Lou has touched the lives of many through her public service in Sussex County. Upon the occasion of her retirement, I extend my warmest appreciation to Mary Lou for her years of service and my best wishes for a happy retirement.

UNITED STATES AND INDIA NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5682) to exempt from certain requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 a proposed nuclear agreement for cooperation with India:

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise in qualified support of this legislation.

India is the world's largest and most diverse democracy and a strong ally and friend of the United States. As a member of the India Caucus, I recognize the benefits of increased economic, security, and cultural cooperation between India and the United States and am proud that in recent years the relationship between our two countries has made rapid advances in so many areas.

Because of the growing importance of that relationship, it made sense for the Bush Administration to consider expanding the U.S.-India strategic partnership to include civilian nuclear energy development. In the context of our friendship with India, I support the concept of civilian nuclear cooperation, and I will support this legislation today.

U.S. law prohibits nuclear cooperation with countries that have not pledged under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty—like India—to forgo nuclear weapons. H.R. 5682 carves out an exception for India to allow it to gain access to long-denied civilian nuclear technology in exchange for opening 14 out of 22 of its nuclear facilities to inspections under the International Atomic Energy Agency. Importantly, the bill requires that India and the International Atomic Energy Agency negotiate a safeguards agreement and that the Nuclear Suppliers Group approve an exemption for India before Congress votes on the final cooperation agreement. That means Congress will have a chance to vote up or down once more, this time on the final negotiated agreement. I think that's the right approach.

In exchange for getting access to sensitive nuclear technology and fuel supplies, India has promised to continue the moratorium on nuclear weapons testing, to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs and not to transfer the nuclear technology to third parties.

But the deal would not prevent India from ramping up its military nuclear program. Whether or not India actually begins building more nuclear arms is less important than the fact that it will have the capability to do so, and it is unclear what actions countries like China and Pakistan might take in response to that new reality.

I tend to agree the statement by Rep. BERMAN (D–CA) in his additional views on H.R. 5682 that ''only a halt on fissile material production would make this deal a net plus for nonproliferation.'' In the July 2005 joint statement between President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, India committed to ''assume the practices and responsibilities'' of other advanced nuclear powers. With four of the five recognized nuclear weapons states already having stopped producing fissile material for nuclear weapons and China believed to have halted production, it would seem that India should be able to ''assume'' this important practice.

Yet the agreement itself does not include any promise by India to cease its production of fissile materials. So I remain concerned about the potential effects of the agreement on our broader nonproliferation goals, since the real has ramifications far beyond the U.S.-India relationship. That's why I supported an amendment based on a proposal by former Senator Sam Nunn to allow the exports of nuclear reactors and technology to India but not the transfers of reactor fuel until it had been determined that India had halted the production of fissile material for its weapons program.

We must try to strike the right balance between strengthening our relationship with India and also maintaining our robust and time-tested international nuclear nonproliferation regime. I will support the bill today, but once the