

HONORING 30 YEARS OF BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS IN PINELLAS COUNTY

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program in Pinellas County, FL. This Saturday, they will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of their service to the children of Pinellas County, which is located in my congressional district. Although I will not be able to participate in their celebration in person, I want to share my thoughts on this critically important program with my colleagues in Congress.

The Pinellas County Commission has proclaimed Saturday, September 27, as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Pinellas County Day. I join them in recognizing one of the premier mentoring programs in the United States. The undisputable fact is that Big Brothers Big Sisters one-to-one mentoring program has a positive impact on children who participate in the program.

Children who are matched with big brothers or sisters are less likely to engage in destructive or antisocial behavior than those kids who are not. The "littles," as they are affectionately called by their bigger counterparts, are less likely to begin using illegal drugs and alcohol and more likely to attend school regularly than those children without the positive guiding influence of a big brother or sister. In fact, program participants are more confident at school and enriched relationships with their family members than those without a "big" influence.

Since 1967, approximately 15,000 children have participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Pinellas County. The agency has been at the forefront in developing exciting and innovative ways to improve the program's success. Its method for screening volunteers has been widely adopted by other children's service organizations.

Last year, Pinellas Big Brothers Big Sisters participated in the President's Summit on Volunteerism. Currently, there are 385 active matches in Pinellas County and there are 163 children waiting to be paired.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support Big Brothers Big Sisters program in their congressional districts. These dedicated volunteers help children become productive well-adjusted and caring members of the society. I commend Pinellas County Big Brothers Big Sisters for their leadership in helping children in my district and wish them continued success in the future.

IN HONOR OF THE BAYONNE LIONS CLUB: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Bayonne Lions Club, an exceptional organization serving the residents of my district, on their 50th anniversary. This

momentous occasion will be celebrated on September 24, 1997, with a cocktail reception at the Chandelier Restaurant in New Jersey.

The Bayonne Lions Club has worked for the Bayonne community since 1947 when they were granted a charter from the Lions Club international headquarters in Oak Brook, IL. This charter hangs on the wall of Amici's Restaurant where the club meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. This year's anniversary celebration will not only raise funds for charity, but it will also provide the opportunity to highlight the club's achievements over the last half century.

Over the years, the Bayonne Lions Club has sponsored Christmas parties at the St. Joseph's Home in Jersey City, given braille typewriters as gifts to individuals, distributed food baskets, and provided medical care and vital eye surgery to those who needed it.

Among the esteemed members of the Bayonne Lions Club was the club's first president, Attorney Jack Feinberg of the law firm of Feinberg, Dee & Feinberg. One of Feinberg's successors, Dr. C.M. Jones, was the first African-American president of any Lions Club charter in the United States. One of the early active club members was businessman C.J. Murphy, who was the first representative of the Bayonne Lions to the Lions International zone and district. Club member, Walter Jones, has held every office in the Bayonne Lions Club and boasts the longest continuous Bayonne Lions Club membership. I would also like to thank Michael O'Connor, the current Bayonne Lions Club president for his hard work and dedication.

The members and officers, past and present, of the Bayonne Lion's Club richly deserve this honor and recognition for 50 years of unique contributions and caring dedication to their community. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the outstanding work and exceptional service of the Bayonne Lions Club. It is an honor to have such an outstanding organization working on behalf of the constituents of my district.

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM F. MILLER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor William Miller, who will receive an award this week for outstanding contributions to the Greater Cleveland community from International Services Center [ISC] in Cleveland, OH.

International Services Center is an agency that assists refugees, immigrants, and other newcomers to the United States to overcome social and economic barriers and adjust to a new culture and way of life. The organization is honoring four individuals this year for their exceptional work on intercultural and interracial issues. These individuals have been chosen because of their commitment to the community and their lifelong achievements which reflect the spirit and the mission of ISC.

Mr. Miller has been a columnist and reporter at Cleveland's Plain Dealer for 36 years. He covers nationality stories, general news, and international news as it impacts Cleveland. He writes an ethnic cultural column for the Friday!

Magazine and his column "New Worlds" appears each Saturday. He covered the fall of the Berlin Wall and witnessed the reunification of Germany. This experience proved helpful as he traveled to Central and Eastern Europe in 1990 to write a series of article called Life After the Wall. The series won the 1991 National Writing Award of the First Catholic Slovak Union of the United States and Canada and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Mr. Miller also won the Distinguished Service Award from the National Journalistic Society's Cleveland chapter.

Mr. Miller's writing was instrumental in saving the three Playhouse Square Theaters from being demolished to make room for a parking lot. His name appears with six others on a plaque commemorating his efforts to save the complex. The beautifully renovated buildings now comprise the third largest theater complex in America. Many other community organizations have also recognized Mr. Miller for his involvement. He has been honored by the Asian/Pacific Federation, the Federation of Italian Societies of Northeast Ohio, Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the United Labor Agency, and the Salvation Army.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating William Miller on a lifetime of wonderful work for the multicultural community in the Greater Cleveland area.

MEDICARE AND MEDICAID PROVIDER REVIEW ACT OF 1997

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, together with Mr. DELLUMS and Mr. MILLER of California, I am pleased to introduce the Medicare and Medicaid Provider Review Act of 1997.

The HHS inspector general reports that an estimated 14 percent of Medicare payments overall, and 40 percent of home health payments, are made inappropriately each year. Much of this \$23 billion per year of fraud, waste and abuse occurs because providers do not comply with Medicare rules about medical necessity, and about how services and supplies should be coded and documented. In some cases, providers don't comply because they don't understand the rules. But in many other cases, providers understand the rules so well that they are able to flout them without being detected. The recent indictments of three Columbia/HCA executives for overbilling Medicare are a glaring example of provider's ability to game the system. In addition, the inspector general recently reported that 25 percent of home health agencies it investigated have "abused or defrauded Medicare or misappropriated Medicare funds."¹

Unfortunately, it's relatively easy for fraudulent operators to escape detection because the Health Care Financing Administration [HCFA], which oversees the Medicare and Medicaid programs, is woefully lacking in resources to provide adequate oversight and to track down abusers. Over the past 7 years, the number of Medicare claims processed rose 70 percent while HCFA's budget for reviewing claims grew less than 11 percent. Adjusting for claims growth and inflation, funding

¹Footnotes appear at end of speech.