

Joseph has served twenty years with the USPS. Within three years of his induction to the USPS, he was promoted to a supervisory position. Joseph has held numerous positions in customer services, including Delivery and Collection Supervisor; General Supervisor of City Delivery; Station Manager; Manager of Delivery and Collection; Manager of Stations and Branches; Area Manager; Postmaster of Far Rockaway; Senior Manager of Post Office Operations in Westchester, New York; and various details at USPS Headquarters and in the New York area.

A product of Brooklyn, New York, Joseph grew up in the New Lots neighborhood of Brooklyn. He attended Public School 171, Thomas Edison High School, and graduated from St. Johns University.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to Joseph Lubrano for his commitment and dedication to ensuring quality service to the people of Brooklyn from the United States Postal Service.

HELP EXPAND INSURANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO DEFEND OUR NATION

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I have introduced the Veterans' Life Insurance Opportunity Act of 1998 (H.R. 4115) to increase the accessibility of the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program to men and women of our Armed Forces following their separation from active duty.

Active duty service members, unless they decline coverage, automatically participate in the Servicemen's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program. This coverage expires following their discharge from the Armed Forces.

Under current law, veterans have only four months to convert directly from SGLI to the VGLI program. Then they have an additional 12 months to apply for VGLI if they can provide medical proof of insurability. Following this brief time period, veterans have no other opportunities to enroll in VGLI.

How many veterans, who are in transition from military to civilian life, busy relocating themselves and their families, finding housing, returning to school, and working hard to enter and advance themselves in the civilian workforce, are also thinking of life insurance needs? Many are young and have not yet thought of their future beyond the military. The deadlines for conversion are missed because of the many more immediate issues that newly-separated veterans are facing.

Then, a couple of years go by, and the veteran realizes the importance of life insurance. By that time, it is too late!

My bill, the Veterans' Life Insurance Opportunity Act, provides a reasonable and more realistic level of flexibility for our veterans who want coverage under the VA life insurance program. It would allow two years following their date of discharge to convert from SGLI to VGLI. Additionally, a second opportunity to make the conversion would be provided five years after their date of discharge from military service.

Who, in our country, deserves and needs life insurance more than anyone else? This may be a hard question to answer, and indeed, our answers may vary. But high on the list, I believe, must be our veterans.

I urge my colleagues to expand insurance opportunities for veterans. Please support and co-sponsor H.R. 4115.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BIOMASS ENERGY EQUITY ACT OF 1998

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, today I join with my colleague Mr. MATSUI and our cosponsors—Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. MCCREY, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. POMBO, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. DOOLEY, Mr. GIBBONS, and Mr. BLUMENAUER—to announce the introduction of "The Biomass Energy Equity Act of 1998," legislation that will help sustain the economic and environmental benefits provided to the public by the biomass power industry in the United States.

The biomass power industry is a unique source of renewable electricity. It generates electricity by combusting wood waste and other non-hazardous, organic materials under environmentally-controlled conditions as an alternative to disposal or open-incineration of these materials. In effect, the biomass power industry makes constructive use of waste materials that would otherwise become a public liability.

Mr. Speaker, the organic materials used as fuel by this industry are gathered from the agricultural and forest-related sectors of our economy and from our urban waste streams. In addition to the jobs that are generated by this activity, a range of quantifiable benefits arise: the risk and severity of forest fires is diminished, air pollution from open burning of agricultural residues is avoided, and landfill space is preserved. In the absence of this \$7 billion per year industry, the nation would face a series of negative consequences above and beyond the loss of the renewable electricity itself.

Congress recognized the importance of the biomass power industry when it enacted a biomass energy production tax credit in 1992. Unfortunately, the production tax credit provided by this code section—due for expiration within a year—has never been accessible to the biomass power industry due to excessively narrow drafting. Our legislation corrects this defect in order to recognize and retain the public benefits, including the national security and system reliability benefits, of this important industry.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that this is a "good government" issue whose clear merits and environmental benefits transcend partisan and regional politics, and I would urge all of my colleagues—on both sides of the aisle—to cosponsor this important and much-needed legislation.

CIGARS ARE NO SAFE ALTERNATIVE ACT OF 1998

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Cigars Are No Safe Alternative Act of 1998.

Mr. Speaker, available scientific evidence demonstrates that regular cigar smoking causes a variety of cancers including cancers of the lip, tongue, mouth, throat, esophagus, larynx, and lung. That same evidence demonstrates that heavy cigar smokers and those who inhale deeply are at increased risk of coronary heart disease and can develop chronic lung disease. Despite these serious and deadly health risks, cigar use is up dramatically in the United States over the last five years: small cigar consumption has increased by an estimated 13%, large cigars by 70%, and premium cigars by a whopping 250%. Teenagers are a fast-growing market for these deadly tobacco products. In fact, data from the Centers for Disease Control's 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that among high school students, over 30 percent of the males and 10 percent of the females are current cigar smokers.

Mr. Speaker, cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Compared to a cigarette, nicotine yields for cigars are 9 to 12 times greater; tar yields 2 to 3 times greater; and large cigars emit 20 times more ammonia, and up to 10 times as much other cancer causing agents.

In order to drive home the message that smoking cigars is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes, I am introducing the Cigars Are No Safe Alternative Act of 1998. The CANSA Act will prohibit the sale and distribution of cigars to any individual who is under the age of 18. It will directly impose restrictions on the sale and advertising of cigars directed at youth, and eliminate cigar advertising on electronic media. It will encourage cigar manufacturers to end the practice of paying for, or participating in cigar product placements in movies and on television where a substantial segment of the viewing audience is under the age of 18. And it will direct the FDA to require warning labels on cigars to warn cigar users about the health risks presented by cigars.

Mr. Speaker, the CANSA Act will also require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study on the health effects of occasional cigar smoking, nicotine dependence among cigar smokers, biological uptake of carcinogenic constituents of cigars, and environmental cigar smoke exposure. It will require the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to report to Congress on the sales, marketing, and advertising practices associated with cigars. And in addition, the Secretary, acting in cooperation with the FDA, the FTC, and the Department of Treasury, shall be required to monitor trends in youth access to, and use of, cigars and notify Congress of the results.

Mr. Speaker, if and when Congress does act to reduce teen smoking, we must send the unambiguous message to children and adolescents that cigars are no safe alternative to