

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE HMO IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Medicare HMO Improvement Act of 1998.

Earlier this month, nearly 8,000 seniors in my district received perhaps the most frightening news any American can get. Their Medicare HMOs informed them that they are terminating their health insurance by the end of the year. Some of these seniors were recruited only months before through aggressive company marketing campaigns.

Insurers came to the federal government and said "We're private industry, we can run Medicare better than you can while giving more services to seniors. Give us a chance." Well, we gave them a chance and they let our seniors down. They thought they could just jump in and jump out of my district without regard to the health and well-being of the seniors that they had signed up just months ago. This is not acceptable. That is not a responsible way to do business.

The termination announcements sent shock waves through Tolland, Windham and New London counties. At a public meeting that I hosted with Senator CHRIS DODD to discuss this action, 400 seniors gathered to hear about their options for the future. The tension and desperation of my constituents was evident as they vented their frustration and anxiety. One of my constituents, whose wife had recently had a stroke, was so upset about what losing health insurance would mean to him and his wife that after asking a question he had a heart attack. That man, Frederick Kral, died on the way to the hospital.

Under the current system, Medicare HMOs can act with impunity. There is no accountability, no responsibility. Profits are all that matter. Patients and quality health care are secondary. This is just wrong.

My legislation will inject some accountability into the Medicare HMO system. It will change the contract term from one year to three years. This change is designed to discourage HMOs from making short-term promises to seniors only to terminate coverage a year later when they don't make quite as much money as they hoped. It gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) authority to enjoin contract terminations for up to one year if public health will be seriously threatened, insurance coverage will be compromised, or the Governor of the state affected requests that the Secretary exercise this authority.

Moreover, my legislation is designed to discourage HMOs from "cherry picking" between regions within a state by offering coverage only in those areas with the highest reimbursement rates. It accomplishes this goal by requiring the Secretary of HHS to terminate all contracts a Medicare HMO has for a metro-

politan statistical area (MSA) if that HMO terminates coverage in any portion of that MSA in that state. I selected the MSA as the geographical unit because it is already used in the law and should discourage "cherry picking" without reducing coverage on a state-wide basis. Finally, if a company terminates coverage and a beneficiary is currently undergoing treatment, this bill requires the HMO to provide 90 days of coverage to allow the patient to continue to receive such treatment. This will ensure that patients under active treatment will have a few additional months to make the transition to another doctor or health plan.

Mr. Speaker, what Medicare HMOs did in my district—and are doing in others across the country—is unreasonable and irresponsible. The Medicare HMO Improvement Act is a reasonable approach which will provide badly needed protection to older Americans.

THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF REPRESENTATIVE LEE HAMIL- TON OF INDIANA

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 28, 1998

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and much sadness that I join my colleagues in saying "Aloha" and paying tribute to one of our most respected Members, Congressman LEE HAMILTON. I met LEE over 30 years ago. We were both elected to Congress for the first time in the 1964 LBJ landslide election. Seventy-one Democrats were elected to the House that same year. We made history as the Class of 65. This 89th Congress passed some of the most important legislation: Medicare, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the War Against Poverty, and numerous youth programs.

When you leave, it will be just JOHN CONYERS and I to carry on the work of that famous freshman class of the 89th Congress.

It is hard to imagine a Congress without the strong, steady force of LEE HAMILTON. So many times he has been the voice of reason on the difficult and contentious issues in foreign policy. I have consistently relied on his advice and counsel on many issues, the Gulf War, Bosnia, Iran, Haiti, Russia, Kosova. His opinion and expertise is always respected even among those who did not agree with him. His knowledge about the subject matter and his thorough and conscientious review of all matters to assure the best policy for the good of the Nation are his special contribution to every debate.

Over the years LEE has dealt with numerous world situations and issues that seem so far away from his constituents back home. But no matter if he was dealing with Iran-Contra, weapons proliferation, or the Gulf War, LEE knew how to connect these events to the lives of his constituents.

Not many people think of LEE HAMILTON as a Liberal. I don't know if he would even like that label. But the LEE HAMILTON I know cared deeply about the needs of his people and he worked to make this a better world for our children. He fought to eradicate hunger and disease and worked to be sure education was always a high priority. He consistently proved to be a great supporter of programs to care for the most vulnerable.

In foreign policy as well as in domestic policy he worked diligently for a caring and compassionate outcome.

I know we will continue to see LEE leading this nation in some capacity, but LEE your daily presence here in the House will be missed. As an architect of our foreign policy your guidance for the past 30 years has produced the peace and stability which we now celebrate.

I wish you and Nancy all the best, as you enter this new phase in your life. As you spend time with your family please remember we still will need your advice and counsel. Best wishes and God speed.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4060, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOP- MENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 28, 1998

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4060, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1999. I support this bill mainly because it provides \$1,429,885 million for the Army Corps of Engineers construction programs. I am especially grateful that the conference agreement includes language proposed by the House to reimburse the non-Federal sponsor a portion of the Federal share of project costs for the White Oak Bayou, Texas project.

The Administration originally requested \$9.4 million for the continued construction of the Sims Bayou Project in Houston, Texas. The Conference Committee specifically earmarked a total amount of \$12 Million for the Sims Bayou project.

Mr. Speaker, the Sims Bayou Project is a project that stretches through my district. Over the course of recent years, the Sims Bayou has seen massive amounts of flooding. Citizens in my congressional district, have been flooded out of their homes, and their lives have been disrupted.

In 1994, 759 homes were flooded as a result of the overflow from the Sims Bayou. That is 759 families that were forced to leave their homes.

I mainly support the conference report, Mr. Speaker, because the subcommittee has earmarked in this bill \$12 million for the construction and improvement of the Sims Bayou

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

project that will soon be underway by the Army Corps of Engineers.

I would like to thank the Army Corps of Engineers for their cooperation in bringing relief to the people of the 18th Congressional District in order to avoid dangerous flooding.

I am quite certain Mr. Speaker that this project would not have been able to go forward if this additional money would not have been granted by the conference committee.

For that I have to thank Chairman MCDADE, Ranking Member FAZIO, and my friends and colleagues, CHET EDWARDS and MIKE PARKER who sit on the Appropriations Committee.

This must be done and I will work with the Army Corps of Engineers and local officials to ensure that this is done. I urge my colleagues to vote 'yes' on this conference report.

TRIBUTE TO SOUTH FLORIDA
FOOD RECOVERY—19 YEARS OF
SERVICE TO THE NEEDY

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on October 16, 1998, South Florida Food Recovery will observe the anniversary of its 19th year of feeding the poor, needy and homeless throughout Miami-Dade County and all of South Florida. It is fitting that this is also World Food Day.

By any standard, South Florida Food Recovery is a remarkable organization. Its founder, the Honorable Jule Littman, who has served the City of North Miami Beach with distinction in many official capacities, saw a need in our community and sought to fill it. His vision, energy, organizational ability and perseverance has led to an alliance with 359 charitable agencies throughout Florida, through which South Florida Food Recovery provides supplemental meals to over 700,000 people each month—more than 4,200 tons of food this year, at no cost whatsoever to the recipients.

During the week of October 12, in cooperation with 302 schools in Dade County, South Florida Food Recovery will be collecting canned food for distribution to the needy. It will also dedicate its first new freezer truck, which was purchased with funds provided by the State of Florida and the Southland Corporation, based in Dallas, Texas.

In addition, since nutrition and health are so closely related, South Florida Food Recovery will complete the distribution of 500,000 toothbrushes, dental floss and toothpaste to elementary school students in Dade County, at no cost to students.

Mr. Speaker, all of our colleagues can benefit from the example set by South Florida Food Recovery. I join with our entire community in congratulating Jule Littman and his entire staff and volunteers for a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE JESKO, DEP-
UTY SUPERINTENDENT OF THE
LAMPHERE SCHOOLS

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. George Jesko, Deputy Superintendent of the Lamphere Schools after 33 years of service in several positions in the school district.

George first came to Lamphere Schools as a young Science teacher who also coached basketball, track and football. As a result of his success in coaching, he was named Coach of the Year after only two years. This was followed by the same honor six additional times.

George was not only a teacher and coach but also Athletic Director, Assistant High School Principal, Associate Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Human Resources/Athletics.

In addition to his school positions, George has been an active leader in community organizations. He served as President of the Oakland Association of Personnel Administrators, Chairman of the Council of Chief Negotiators, and has been very involved in the American Association of Personal Administrators, Michigan Employer Labor Relations, the Metro Bureau and Michigan Negotiators Association.

The Lamphere Schools have indeed been fortunate to have had the services and talent of this outstanding and dedicated individual. I commend him for his commitment to the students in providing the best educational environmental in both academics and athletics.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing George Jesko good health, success and happiness as he enters a new phase in his life.

TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my support to protecting 100 percent of the Social Security Trust Fund, and not using any of the projected surplus for tax cuts at this time. For over sixty years, Social Security has stood as one of our Nation's greatest success stories, providing all Americans with a basic level of retirement security.

Social Security is a contract between the citizens of the U.S. and their government. The people in this country are entitled to know that in retirement they will have security, live in dignity, and be provided with health care. Today, two-thirds of retirees in this nation depend upon Social Security to provide over half of their annual income. Our constituents should know that we, as the leaders of this country, are looking out for not only their future, but the future of their children. A vital requirement for protecting that future is saving Social Security first. Our constituents should be able to trust that their contributions to the Social Security Trust Fund are being used as intended.

I am opposed to cutting Social Security in order to provide tax cuts to those with higher incomes. As lawmakers, we owe it to the country to provide for the long-term health of Social Security and other federal retirement programs, and to ensure that these programs are available to future generations of Americans without increasing the payroll tax.

Some have suggested we should enact a series of major tax cuts in anticipation of the projected budget surplus. What these individuals neglect to point out is that almost all of the money to pay for their tax cuts would be drawn out of the Social Security Trust Fund and other federal trust funds—trust funds that should be preserved for their intended uses. The best tax cut we can give to the American family is a truly balanced federal budget. A balanced budget will lead to lower interest rates and strong economic growth. I am firmly committed to a balanced budget—a budget that protects Social Security for future generations.

In closing, let me say that the question of how to approach any budget surplus is one of the most important issues facing this country. I believe we should resist calls to spend the projected surplus and consider our options very carefully. Balancing the federal budget and keeping it balanced should continue to be one of this country's top priorities, and you can be assured that I remain absolutely committed to accomplishing these goals. We owe it to our constituents, our children, and ourselves to save Social Security.

TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, September 26, 1998

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4578 (the "Protect Social Security" bill) and, by extension, its companion bill, H.R. 4579 (The Taxpayer Relief Act).

Current projections indicate there will be a substantial federal budget surplus over the next decade. According to the majority party, H.R. 4578 saves 90% of this projected surplus for Social Security, leaving the remaining 10% to finance the tax cuts in H.R. 4579—tax cuts worth \$80 billion over five years and \$177 billion over ten years. However, if one looks past the appealing rhetoric in support of H.R. 4578, it becomes evident that the bill is very irresponsible.

For example, even if the optimistic projections about the federal budget come true, the vastly greater portion—98%, to be more precise—of that surplus will be made up of the large yet temporary surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund. Indeed, if the Social Security surplus were excluded, there would be a \$137 billion deficit in the 1999–2003 budget period and only a \$31 billion surplus in the 1999–2008 budget period.

Given that the federal surplus in the 1999–2003 budget period will be entirely Social Security-based while the federal surplus in the 1999–2008 budget period will be almost entirely Social Security-based, it is evident that the 10% of the federal surplus that H.R. 4578 sets aside to finance the majority party's tax cuts represents a raid on Social Security.

H.R. 4578 is ill-advised and short-sighted, and I urge my colleagues to defeat it.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT
GARY A. JACOBSON

HON. JOE SCARBOROUGH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a young man who has dedicated his career to protecting the people of this great nation and ensuring the American way of life. This gentleman has distinguished himself as a diplomatic leader, a dedicated family man, and a decorated soldier in the United States Army. The man I speak about today is Master Sergeant Gary A. Jacobson, Liaison NCO of V (US/GE) Corps to II (GE/US) Korps.

Master Sergeant Jacobson was recently awarded the Bronze Cross of Honor of the Bundeswehr for his outstanding performance and his great service to the Bundeswehr. He is deserving of that honor because of his positive attitude, honesty, and dedication that goes above and beyond the requirements of his duty as a US Liaison NCO.

Mr. Speaker, these accomplishments only begin to describe the caliber of a man like Master Sergeant Jacobson. Thomas Jefferson once said that the greatest honor of a man is in doing good to his fellow men. Gary Jacobson has certainly lived by that axiom. If you ask his colleagues to describe him, you would hear words like honest, loyal, dedicated, courageous, honorable, hard working, and a true gentleman.

Master Sergeant Jacobson's dedication to his country serves as a model in the lives of the hundreds of soldiers who have served with him. Gary Jacobson is truly an inspiration to the men and women in uniform from North-west Florida and around the world.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ASTHMA
ACT

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the ASTHMA Act—Action Strategies To Help Millions of Asthmatics—on behalf of myself and my colleague from Texas, JOE BARTON. This bipartisan legislation, which is the result of months of research and preparation, will provide our nation with new tools to battle the epidemic of asthma that continues to affect millions of Americans—especially our children.

Asthma affects more than 14 million Americans, including almost 5 million children. Every year, asthma results in 500,000 hospitalizations and claims 5,500 lives. Since 1980, reports of asthma are up more than 75 percent. Tragically, the asthma-related death rate among children has risen equally fast. Asthma remains one of the leading causes of absenteeism from school and costs our nation more than \$6 billion per year.

Mr. Speaker, public health experts do not have all of the answers, but they know plenty.

We now have the collective knowledge and experience to help millions of sufferers control and manage their asthma. We can reduce absenteeism in school and the workplace, reduce costly ER visits and hospitalizations, and help millions of Americans live happier, more productive lives.

Earlier this year, the Daily News published an award-winning series of articles highlighting the asthma problem in New York City. The ASTHMA Act would go a long way to addressing those problems. It would expand federal asthma data collection efforts; promote new health guidelines on asthma prevention and treatment; educate the public about the dangers of asthma—and how to manage it; and improve the response of local schools and state children's health programs.

Our legislation is supported by organizations leading the battle against asthma, such as the American Lung Association, the Joint Council of Asthma, Allergy, and Immunology, Mothers of Asthmatics, as well as pharmaceutical manufacturers and managed care plans.

Mr. Speaker, asthma is not a partisan problem. It affects Texans and New Yorkers, Republicans and Democrats, men and women, and our children. As a nation we can and should be doing much better. I invite my colleagues to join Congressman BARTON and me in our effort to help asthmatics lead healthier, happier, more productive lives.

DEATH OF MURIEL HUMPHREY
BROWN

HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, Muriel Humphrey Brown's contributions to the state of Minnesota and the nation will always be remembered. Muriel was a truly wonderful human being and as the spouse of former-Vice President Hubert Humphrey and then as a United States Senator herself, Muriel secured a significant place for herself in history. With genuine care and optimism, Muriel and Hubert exemplified the very best of what it means to be an American while helping others understand the importance of social equality and public service. Muriel's motivation to push forward during hard times taught the nation a valuable lesson; "we can do better."

Muriel Humphrey balanced her many roles with incredible success. She created a loving, sheltered home life for her husband and four children, to counteract the national publicity surrounding their political life. In addition, Muriel campaigned whole-heartedly and as a politician's wife, she conducted her public role with poise and dignity. Muriel assumed Hubert's United States Senate seat after his death in January 1978, making her the only woman in the Senate at the time and the first female Senator ever from the state of Minnesota. Admired throughout her life, Muriel remains a role model and inspiration for all of us.

After her marriage to businessman Max Brown in 1981, Muriel stepped away from the spotlight and dedicated time to herself and her family. Although she never again pursued a life in politics, Muriel continued to teach a valuable lesson to those around her about ad-

ressing national and international issues, without forgetting one's roots. The death of this courageous woman marks a significant loss for both the people of Minnesota and the nation. She will be deeply missed.

THE SENIOR CITIZENS
PROTECTION ACT

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a modified version of H.R. 4155, the Senior Citizen Protection Act. H.R. 4155 would expand the authority of state Medicaid Fraud Control Units (MFCUs) to investigate fraud and abuse beyond the Medicaid Program. H.R. 4155 would allow the states and their MFCUs to protect senior citizens by investigating all forms of health care fraud and empowering them to assist state and local authorities in investigations of abuse and neglect against residents in assisted living and other board and care facilities. This legislation would help Federal, state, and local officials crack down on rampant health care fraud and let each and every one of us feel secure that our loved ones are safe in their retirement years.

Legislation is necessary because current law prohibits Medicaid Fraud Control Units (MFCU) from pursuing Medicare fraud when it is uncovered through a Medicaid investigation. Many times, a MFCU referral to federal authorities does not result in investigation or prosecution. Also, MFCUs are prohibited from utilizing their resources and expertise to assist state and local authorities who are responsible for ensuring that patients receive quality care in assisted living residences and other residential care facilities.

After extensive conversations with the various stakeholders which could be affected by this legislation, I have made two modifications to H.R. 4155.

Today's bill modifies Section (2)(a) of H.R. 4155 by clarifying the authority between Federal officials and the MFCUs when the MFCUs decide to pursue an allegation of non-Medicaid fraud. Clearly, states should be empowered to pursue Medicare and other Federal health program fraud uncovered during a Medicaid investigation. However, this new provision would ensure that the inspector general of a federal agency which is responsible for eliminating Federal health care fraud retains the absolute discretion to take over the investigation and prosecution of the case. My expectation is that the HHS Inspector General and the U.S. Department of Justice will develop the appropriate protocols with the state Medicaid Fraud Control Units and the state Attorneys General to implement this legislation.

Today's bill also modifies Section (2)(c) of H.R. 4155 by clarifying the authority of MFCUs to investigate abuse in assisted living and other residential care facilities. Today's bill states that MFCUs may only investigate at the request of state and local agencies who have the current responsibility for ensuring quality care in such facilities under state law. The MFCUs have resources and expertise that clearly would benefit state agencies in the fight against abuse in senior's facilities. The cooperation and expertise of the MFCUs will

strengthen the investigative skills of state and local authorities.

These minor changes have strengthened an already excellent piece of legislation that will cut fraud and abuse in our Medicare system, restore balance in our health care system, and give us all a better quality of life.

Our government should be given all the tools necessary to combat fraud in our health care system and give Americans the peace of mind that their moms and dads are well cared for in their retirement years. We need to ferret out providers who rip off the system, and Americans need to rest comfortably at night knowing our family members and friends receive the highest quality health care without the fear of being physically, mentally, or financially abused. I urge my colleagues to support the Senior Citizens Protection Act of 1998 because it will provide health care security to our seniors and restore their trust in the people who care for them from morning until night.

CANCER RESEARCH

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend thousands of people were gathered in towns all around America to discuss cancer relief. These cancer survivors and supporters should be commended for their commitment to achieving more research funding for our nation's second leading cause of death.

Nearly everyone has had their life touched by someone who has suffered from cancer. This year, more than 565,000 Americans will die from cancer. That's one in every four deaths in this country! Those are not good odds for the 1.2 million people who will be diagnosed with cancer this year alone. We must put a stop to this awful disease.

A cure for cancer would change our world forever. A seven year old little boy may get to spend one more week with his dad, a 12 year old little girl may get to go to high school, and a grandmother may have the opportunity to see her granddaughter get married. Without our help, none of these things may be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my Colleagues to focus more of our efforts toward the cause, care and cure of cancer. Let's put a stop to this nightmare that haunts our Nation.

THREE FINE DOCTORS WHO CAN ERASE THE PAST.

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Drs. Bryna Kane, Edward Glassberg and Wendy Hoffman, who are offering their medical services to help former gang members turn their lives around. With the help of Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, the Long

Beach Health Department, and the Long Beach Police Department, Drs. Kane, Glassberg, and Hoffman lead Erase the Past, a new program that removes the tattoos of former gang members for free in exchange for community service.

All of us, especially those of us from urban areas, are well aware of the terror that gangs can cause. Los Angeles County alone has approximately 1,000 gangs. Many young people are lured into joining gangs and regret it later. Some find it nearly impossible to leave that part of their lives behind them, however, because of the tattoos they were scarred with as gang members. As a visible sign of a violent past, gang tattoos can make it difficult for former gang members to find jobs and rebuild their lives.

Dr. Kane is all too familiar with unwanted tattoos. She is the daughter of Holocaust survivors, and she remembers vividly the tattoos that the Nazis had burned into the skin of family friends. Those tattoos were an unmistakable and inescapable reminder of the Nazi death camps.

Dr. Kane, a dermatologist, and Drs. Glassberg and Hoffman organized Erase the Past to give these individuals a better chance to leave the world of gang violence. They remove tattoos once every month at Long Beach Memorial. This program is available free of charge to those ages 14 to 25 who have not had a reported gang incident in the past six months. In exchange for the one-hour tattoo removal session, the individual must perform five hours of community service. The removal of a tattoo can require up to three or four treatments.

Erase the Past gives young people a helping hand in leaving gangs and helps them remove a major obstacle to becoming a productive member of society. It also encourages community service. All of the benefits spring from the generosity and ingenuity of these three doctors and the organizations and agencies assisting them. Drs. Kane, Glassberg, and Hoffman and Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, the Long Beach Health Department, and the Long Beach Police Department deserve our gratitude and praise.

Mr. Speaker, I have added a wonderful article on Erase the Past. It is written for the Press-Telegram by a very fine reporter, Bonnie Heald.

PURGING THEIR PAINFUL PAST

As a young child and daughter of Holocaust survivors, Bryna Kane clearly remembers the visible and permanent sign of the Nazi death camps—the tattoos crudely burned into her relatives' arms.

Today, Dr. Bryna Kane is committed to removing more modern tattoos that also are painful reminders of the past—those of former gang members.

Kane, a Long Beach dermatologist, and her partners, Drs. Edward Glassberg and Wendy Hoffman, launched a program at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center on Wednesday to help youths remove the visible emblems that stigmatize them as gang members.

The program, called Erase the Past, offers former gang members free tattoo removals in exchange for community service. The tattoo removal program will be held once a month at the medical center for people between the ages of 14 and 25.

All participants will be screened and must have clean police and probation records without a reported gang incident in the past six months, Kane says.

For each hour-long session of tattoo removal, the participant must perform five hours of community service. Complete tattoo removals may take three to four sessions, Kane says.

"These are kids who want to change," Kane says. "A tattoo is the last vestige of a life they want to forget."

Kane and Glassberg use an ND-YAG laser, the latest technology for tattoo removal, that they purchased for their private Long Beach practice.

Kane's interest in tattoos stems from her childhood in the 1950s.

"I remember so vividly my parents' summer parties. It was 80 degrees, and all these people were wearing long sleeves because they didn't want anyone to see the tattoos the Nazis had burned into their arms. . . . I was a child, so I was eye-level to these people's tattoos. I remember them as ugly scars.

The Long Beach Police Department is providing the program with volunteers for some of the administrative tasks, says Lt. Torben Beith, the officer in charge of the department's gang enforcement section.

A lot of organizations are involved with the program, says Beith, who has been attending monthly planning meetings since last November.

"The tattoos are an excuse, especially for the older ex-gang members," he says. "They say 'I can't get a job because I've got tattoos.'"

"We're targeting younger kids. A lot of them want to get out."

Alvin Bernstein, superintendent of the gang intervention/prevention unit for the city of Long Beach sees many young people who want a fresh start, he says.

"They realize they have made a huge mistake, both male and female," he says. His office, along with the Police Department and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office refer former gang members to Kane's growing list of young people who want to be rid of the visible signs of their former gangs.

There's already a huge waiting list, says Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill, who joined the program's kick-off party at Memorial Hospital on Wednesday.

O'Neill would like to see the city help fund the purchase or rental of a second laser machine, she says. Each laser costs between \$80,000 to \$100,000.

Chris Van Gorder, Memorial Medical Center's chief executive officer, has offered the hospital's help in raising money for a second laser. Memorial is providing support staff, facilities, space and security for the program.

As a former police officer, as well as a health care administrator, Van Gorder understands the difficulties faced by young people laden with visible tattoos.

Van Gorder, the former police officer, believes the one-on-one program between doctor and patient can help change a youthful attitude, he says. With gang-related tattoos, "they don't have a chance to get through the initial (job) interview," he says.

And Van Gorder the health care provider adds, "Maybe we can keep some of these kids out of our trauma center."

Anyone wishing to donate to the Erase the Past program, can send a check made payable to the Memorial Medical Center Foundation for Erase the Past, 2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach, CA., 90801-3652.