

Award" from his Science Club. Victor has also participated in two of North Carolina's prestigious summer programs for academically gifted youth, the North Carolina Governor's School and Summer Ventures in Math and Science. He plans to attend North Carolina State University in my Congressional District in the fall.

As a former Scout leader myself and a recipient of the Boy Scouts' Silver Beaver Award, I know the difference that Scouting can make in young lives. Scouting instills important values in young men that leave a lasting imprint and the experience gained through Scouting will continue to serve Victor well.

I was honored to present Victor with his Eagle Scout Award on January 17, 1999. I congratulate him on this momentous achievement and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

### STRUCTURED SETTLEMENT PROTECTION ACT

**HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 10, 1999*

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, on opening day of the 106th Congress, I, along with my colleague Mr. STARK and a broad bipartisan group of our colleagues introduced the Structured Settlement Protection Act, H.R. 263.

This bill would address the serious public policy concerns that are raised by transactions in which so-called factoring companies purchase recoveries under structured settlements from injured victims.

Recently there has been dramatic growth in these transactions in which injured victims are induced by factoring companies to sell off future structured settlement payments intended to cover ongoing living and medical needs in exchange for a sharply-discounted lump sum that then may be dissipated, placing the injured victim in the very predicament the structured settlement was intended to avoid.

As long-time supporters of structured settlements and the congressional policy underlying such settlements, we have grave concerns that these factoring transactions directly undermine the policy of the structured settlement tax rules. The Treasury Department shares these concerns.

Because the purchase of structured settlement payments by factoring companies directly thwarts the congressional policy underlying the structured settlement tax rules and raises such serious concerns for structured settlements and injured victims, it is appropriate to deal with these concerns in the tax context.

Accordingly, H.R. 263 would impose a substantial excise tax on the factoring company that purchases the structured settlement payments from the injured victim. The excise tax would be subject to an exception for genuine court-approved hardship cases to protect the limited instances of true hardship.

Mr. Speaker, too many Americans have been taken advantage of through the purchase of structured settlements by factoring companies. I urge my colleagues to join me to end this abusive practice.

### TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD PROGRAM (TAP) ACT

**HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 10, 1999*

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, when children leave their families to make it in the world, they often do so in stages. The first step for many is to go away to college while still depending on their parents for tuition and living expenses. Others attempt to work immediately, but they also might rely on their family for financial assistance, not to mention emotional support. However, there is one group of young Americans that are required to become completely self-sufficient on their 18th birthday—kids aging out of foster care. The cruel irony of course is that this population is perhaps the least capable of becoming fully independent at such a young age. These kids have to deal with all the traumas and difficulties associated with being removed from their family because of abuse, neglect or abandonment and then being placed in one, two, three or more foster homes. This is hardly the most solid foundation from which to build the rest of their lives.

Repeated studies have illustrated that a sink-or-swim policy for children aging out of foster care has resulted in many falling beneath the waves of poverty and despair. A national study by Westat, Inc. in 1992 found less than half of former foster children had graduated high school between 2.5 and 4 years after being discharged. The study also found only half of former foster kids were working; one-quarter had spent at least one night homeless; and 40% needed some kind of public aid. More recent studies by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Illinois also have illustrated the extreme difficulties faced by this population. The authors of these reports and many of the state officials responsible for overseeing our Nation's child welfare system have called for bold changes to help foster children make the transition to independence. For example, Peter Digre, Director of the Department of Children and Families in Los Angeles, and Nicholas Scoppetta, Commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services in New York City, released a joint statement in 1998 on youth aging out of foster care which declared, "It becomes our responsibility as a society to provide these young people, who are proven to be at a heightened risk of homelessness or involvement in the criminal justice system, with the opportunity to succeed, (including) a safe and comfortable place to live—an opportunity to continue education—and access to health care."

I am introducing legislation today, along with my Democratic colleagues on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, to ensure that the end of foster care does not mean the beginning of poverty and hopelessness for thousands of young Americans every year. The Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP) Act would provide States with the option of extending assistance to former foster youth up to the age of 21 as long as they are working or enrolled in educational activities and have a plan to become completely self-sufficient. This extension of foster care assistance would provide needed resources for housing,

education, health care and employment. In addition, the legislation would: provide tax credits to employers who hire former foster children; allow children in foster care to save more resources for their eventual emancipation; require a collaboration among existing housing, educational and employment programs to help foster kids; and update the formula for the current Independent Living Program. In general, the legislation seeks to send foster children down a ramp to independent and productive lives, rather than off a cliff to destitution and welfare dependency.

Some of my colleagues have said in the past that government programs too often take the role and responsibility of families. However, I would remind them that government is the defacto parent for foster children and therefore has an obligation to do a better job of helping them become self-sufficient. How many other parents tell their children at the age of 18 that they are completely and utterly on their own? Of course, it is true that some foster children make a seamless transition to self-reliance at such a young age, but the statistics show that many ultimately do not.

Mr. Speaker, less than two years ago, Congress passed bipartisan legislation to help promote the adoption of children in foster care. However, adoption is not always possible for many older foster children, and we therefore see our TAP legislation as the next logical step in reforming our foster care system. We offer the bill not so much as the final work on helping foster children, but more as the first step towards building a consensus that Congress must act on this important issue. We stand ready to work with anyone who wants to help former foster youth achieve real independence.

### HONORING COLORADO STATE SENATOR TILLMAN BISHOP UPON HIS RETIREMENT

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 10, 1999*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment to honor an individual who for so many years has exemplified the notion of public service and civic duty and an individual we on the western slope of Colorado will be hard pressed to replace.

Senator Tillman Bishop has represented Colorado's 7th District in the Colorado Senate for 28 years and before that, in the Colorado General Assembly for 4 years. His years of service rank him 5th in the state's history for continuous years of service and he is the longest serving senator from Colorado's western slope.

Senator Bishop, or Tillie, as he is affectionately known, has for decades selflessly given of himself and has always placed the needs of his constituents before his own. I myself served with Tillie when I was a member of the Colorado General Assembly and I consider myself fortunate to have worked with a representative of his caliber.

The number of honors and distinctions that Tillie has earned during his years of outstanding service are too numerous to list, and too few to do justice to his contribution to the state of Colorado.