

in these affairs. It increases discretionary funding by \$96 million to a total of \$45.1 million in FY 2000 and \$47.5 million in FY 2001 so USFA can improve its service as a research center and clearinghouse of information for state and local governments to draw upon.

Furthermore, the bill sets aside \$6 million in FY 2000 and \$8 million in FY 2001 to train fire crews for anti-terrorism and response activities. This goes beyond the Clinton Administration's budget request. One of the best areas the federal government can play a role in fire prevention, is in helping states respond to terrorist attacks. The federal government is best suited to provide training or anti-terrorism and response activities due to its expertise in national defense, its strong intelligence capabilities, and the often-international character of terrorism.

More work may be needed in training our state and local governments to respond to terrorism incidents. H.R. 1550 requires USFA to investigate the need for further counter-terrorism training programs. Last year, Congress passed the Rescue and Emergency Services Prepared for Our Nation's Defense Act. It created a commission to assess our nation's weapons of mass destruction domestic response capabilities. I am anxious to read these reports when they are completed and begin to implement the suggestions in a timely manner. As the world's only superpower, the United States is a big target for terrorist attacks. We must accept the reality that comes with being a world superpower and respond accordingly.

Again, I urge my colleagues to support this bill as a strong common sense, fiscally responsible measure that preserves the principles of federalism that have helped make the United States a world leader. Firefighting will always be predominantly a local responsibility carried out by dedicated members of the community. The federal government should not interfere in this effort, but provide appropriate support to help on national problems such as terrorism. This bill maintains that important balance.

RANGER IN THE BANKHEAD
NATIONAL FOREST RETIRING

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 14, 1999

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James Ramey, District Ranger, Bankhead National Forest, Bankhead Ranger District, National Forests in Alabama.

Mr. Ramey has worked 34 years caring for the land and serving the public. He started his journey while attending school at Oklahoma State University, earning a degree in forestry while working on the Ouachita National Forest, Poteau Ranger District in 1965 and will end this journey on June 3, 1999. He served three years in the U.S. Army, earned the rank of 1st Lieutenant and served one year in Vietnam.

In April 1986, Mr. Ramey began working on the Bankhead National Forest as the District Ranger. During this time period he achieved a number of important accomplishments such as the success of using \$700,000 provided by former Congressman Bevill to build a horse trail, multiple-use trail and hiking trail. He

helped to manage stream side management zone practices that led to the protection of mussels and other aquatic species; he was instrumental in the design and layout of Clear Creek and Corinth Recreation Areas and also in trying to help operate additional recreational facilities during a time of increased use and decreased budgets. In April 1991, his leadership efforts led to the Bankhead Ranger District being recognized by the Southern Region of the National Forest Service as the best unit within the southeast.

As someone who grew up around the forest, I know how much his efforts have been appreciated and how he will be missed by everyone who cares about the Bankhead National Forest. I extend to Mr. Ramey, his wife Zondra, and his family best wishes for a job well done and hope he will have many years ahead to enjoy a well deserved retirement.

NATIONAL HOSPITAL WEEK

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 14, 1999

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, this week America is celebrating the work of some of our finest citizens. This is National Hospital Week and I would like to express my gratitude to those whose daily job it is to save lives.

Seventy-seven years ago, National Hospital Week began as a way to honor our hospitals and the dedicated staff who save lives and keep our hospitals functioning. This week we extend our gratitude and thanks to the thousands of Americans nationwide whose job it is to care.

America's hospitals and their staffs work tirelessly to serve the communities in which they are based. Many of these dedicated men and women are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, caring for one and all.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the many men and women of our nation's hospitals. Their devotion is what keeps America strong and healthy.

IN MEMORIAM OF JOSEPH F.
SMITH, FORMER MEMBER OF
CONGRESS

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 14, 1999

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, it is with a deep sense of loss that I rise today to inform the House of the passing of former Member of Congress Joseph Smith. The people of Philadelphia will sorely miss this great statesman who understood and related to his fellow citizens so well.

Born and raised in St. Anne's Parish, Philadelphia, Joe Smith remained supremely dedicated to serving his constituents; he was a man devoted to his roots. He started his career of service to this Nation as a sergeant in the United States Army, receiving a Purple Heart for his actions during World War II, and then as an assistant to U.S. Congressman James A. Byrne of Pennsylvania. He eventually served in the Pennsylvania State Senate

from 1970 to 1981, and was elected to the Ninety-seventh Congress in 1981. Joe also worked at the forefront of the Democratic party as the Democratic City chairman in Philadelphia from 1983 to 1986.

Throughout his career the people of Philadelphia looked to him for leadership, and he immersed himself in understanding their needs. Joe understood that public service is most effective when one understands and closely reflects the convictions and beliefs of one's constituents. No matter what body he was serving in, his heart was always with Fishtown and the people who resided in its communities. After his retirement, Joe could still be found sharing wisdom and insight from his stoop to those who sought advice and kinship.

I am deeply saddened at the loss of an outstanding legislator, a great human being, and a distinguished American. My deepest sympathies are extended to his wife Regina, his daughter Gi and her family. He left a special mark on me, and I deeply mourn his passing. Joe will be profoundly missed.

THE WORKING UNINSURED TAX
EQUITY ACT

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 14, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of important legislation my colleague Congressman JIM MCDERMOTT and I introduced today, the Working Uninsured Tax Equity Act. Many of the estimated 43 million Americans without health insurance are employed. The current Tax Code, however, discriminates against those workers if they choose to buy health insurance on their own.

Currently, employees with employer-sponsored health benefits enjoy those benefits tax free. This simple, straightforward proposal seeks to equalize the tax treatment between workers whose employer covers the cost of health care insurance premiums and those workers who must pay for their health insurance entirely from their own paychecks. The Tax Code should not punish these employees because their employer does not offer health benefits.

Our bill provides those workers paying for the entire cost of their health insurance a 30-percent partially refundable income tax credit to help defray the cost of those insurance premiums. The 30 -percent credit approximately equals the tax benefit enjoyed by workers with employer-provided tax benefits. The credit would be available to individuals with incomes to \$30,000 and married couples, filing jointly with incomes to \$50,000.

Our bill will not solve the crisis associated with the number of Americans who do not have health insurance. It does, however, provide a starting point for liberals and conservatives, state governments, insurance companies, and others to begin addressing health policy issues relating to uninsured Americans.

I encourage our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join us in supporting the Working Uninsured Tax Equity Act.