

the temporary 10 percent add-on for home health services furnished patients in rural areas. This, too, was included in last year's legislation, this bill would make it permanent.

In Montana, we know too well how very expensive it is for home health agencies to deliver services to rural patients. They have to travel long distances, and it takes a long time to reach those patients. That all adds to the cost.

The Home Health Care Stability Act will provide essential relief for our home health agencies that are struggling to make ends meet. I am proud to add my name as a cosponsor of this important piece of legislation. I hope we can get quick action on this bill to ensure that seniors and the disabled have appropriate access to quality home health care.

PUBLIC MEDAL OF VALOR ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to cosponsor the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act, S. 39, which was introduced by Senator STEVENS. I thank him for his hard work on this important piece of legislation.

I supported and cosponsored the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act in the last Congress as well. I was disappointed that this legislation did not become law then. In April and May, 1999, I made sure that the Senate acted on this bill. On April 22, 1999, the Senate Judiciary Committee took up that measure in regular order and reported it unanimously. At that time I congratulated Senator STEVENS for introducing the measure and thanked him for his leadership. I noted that we had worked together on a number of law enforcement matters and that the senior Senator from Alaska is a stalwart supporter of the men and women who put themselves at risk to protect us all. I said that I looked forward to enactment of this measure and to seeing the extraordinary heroism of our police, firefighters and correctional officers recognized with the Medal of Valor.

On May 18, 1999, I was privileged to be on the floor of the Senate when we proceeded to consider S. 39 and passed it unanimously. I took that occasion to commend Senator STEVENS and all who had worked so hard to move this measure in a timely way. That was during National Police Week nearly two years ago. The measure was sent to the House of Representatives where it lay dormant for the remainder of the 106th Congress.

Instead, the House, in the last Congress, insisted that the Senate take up, fix and pass the House-passed version of this measure, H.R. 46, if it were to become law. House members indicated that they were prepared to accept most of the Senate-passed text, but insisted that it be enacted under the House bill number. In order to get this important measure to the President, we did that on December 15, 2000. We discharged

the House-passed version of that bill from the Judiciary Committee, adopting a complete substitute, and sent it back to the House. Unfortunately, the House failed to act on our good faith effort last year, and the Public Medal of Valor was never enacted.

This year, I have again worked with Senator STEVENS, Senator HATCH, and others to get this important bill passed. I urge my colleagues to work towards improvements to ensure that the Medal of Valor Board will work effectively and efficiently with the National Medal of Valor Office within the Department of Justice. Our legislation should establish both of these entities. It is essential that they work well together to design the Medal of Valor and to create the criteria and procedures for recommendations of nominees for the award. The men and women who will be honored by the Medal of Valor for their brave deeds deserve nothing less. I hope the Senate will quickly act on these changes to this important measure.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I'd like to make a few comments today in recognition of Black History Month. For a quarter-century, our country has held the month of February in special regard as a time to remember and reflect on the rich history and extraordinary achievements of African Americans. Today, I would like to speak about some important and influential African Americans from my home State of Massachusetts.

The diversity we celebrate during this month encompasses many areas. African-American leaders should be recognized not only for their achievements in the face of racial discrimination, but for the accomplishments they have made in a wide variety of occupations. Diversity stretches beyond race and crosses into gender, age, and occupation. The following men and women cover a wide spectrum of interests, eras, and accomplishments, and each has made a significant contribution to the Massachusetts community.

In 1845, Macon B. Allen became the first African American officially admitted to the bar, and he practiced law for many years in Worcester, Massachusetts before moving to South Carolina, where he became one of the first black Federal judges in the Nation. Mr. Allen set a precedent that opened many doors for the minority attorneys and judges who followed in his footsteps.

Dr. W.E.B. DuBois has long been recognized as a figure of leadership in African-American history. Dr. DuBois fought racism through words, writing in such publications as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People journal. He approached civil rights boldly, advocating the eradication of all distinctions on the basis of race or color. Throughout the early half of the 20th century, DuBois

sought this ideal, in his words, "to obtain without compromise such rights and privileges as belonged to members of civilization of which he was a part."

John Thomas, an athlete from Massachusetts, truly soared above his competition. As a freshman at Boston University, Thomas established a new world record for the high jump at 7 feet, 1¼ inches in 1959. As the first athlete to consistently jump more than 7 feet, Thomas went on to break his own record twice. He represented America in the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome, medaling in the high jump. In addition to his athletic activities, Thomas served his local community as a leader in several organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Dorothy West was heralded as "the last living member of the Harlem Renaissance" until her death in 1998. Despite her ties to the New York artists' movement, her roots in Massachusetts run deep. Ms. West was born near Martha's Vineyard and spent nearly her entire life there. Ms. West became an award-winning writer when she was still a teenager, and she started and edited several literary magazines that focused on black writers of the era. She returned to Martha's Vineyard to finish her first novel, *The Living is Easy*, published in 1948, and to write her second novel, *The Wedding*, later published in 1995.

These stories provide meaningful snapshots of how African Americans have contributed greatly to Massachusetts and our Nation. Their triumphs, along with the everyday achievements of African-Americans in my state, should be applauded. I am proud that my State has such a richly diverse history and I'm pleased we have set aside this month to commemorate these accomplished individuals. I hope as a Nation we will remember these achievements not only this month, but everyday.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of this year's Black History Month theme, "Creating and Defining the African American Community: Family, Church, Politics and Culture." I would like to note that while we take time in February to recall the contributions, accomplishments and services that our fellow citizens have rendered, it is important to remember that the contributions of African Americans to America happen everyday in every walk of life.

Moreover, in our review of these vital contributions, we are called upon to acknowledge the courage, talent, determination, leadership and vision of those men, women and children who made an impact in the face of incredible obstacles.

This year's theme, I believe, is fundamental not only in defining the African American community, but the American community at large. The struggle for a better America begins with each individual and his or her call to civic