

that promotes AIDS awareness and prevention.

A Kansas City, MO native, Christopher Elders graduated from Raytown South High School. This fall, he will matriculate at Oxford University in International Relations.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Christopher Elders for his selfless community service and tremendous academic achievements.

REGARDING THE TESTIMONY OF  
KARL V. FARMER

**HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 13, 2002*

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Karl Farmer, a retiree of the Polaroid Corporation, testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions last week. I would like to take this opportunity to see that Members of the House also benefit from his powerful testimony on the lack of worker and retiree protections under our current pension and bankruptcy laws. I ask my House colleagues to consider his experience, and join with me in enacting new safeguards to ensure retirement security for all workers and retirees.

TESTIMONY OF KARL V. FARMER, BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

Good morning. My name is Karl Farmer, and I am a former Polaroid employee and chairman of the Official Committee of Retirees for Polaroid Corporation. I am also accompanied today by counsel for the Official Committee of Retirees, Scott Cousins, of Greenberg Traurig, as well as Betty Moss, another former Polaroid employee.

I am 55 years old. I have lived in Roxbury, Medford, Bedford and Lawrence, Mass., and I recently moved to New Hampshire.

I started working for Polaroid more than 30 years ago as an engineer and became a retiree after I left the company on September 29, 2001. At the time I started with the company, Polaroid was one of THE places to work. It was an especially good company for minorities, very progressive. Polaroid was doing affirmative action programs before it became fashionable or mandatory. It was a family company with a caring upper management.

Up until 1988, I had begun to save for my retirement by contributing 2% of my pay to the Polaroid 401 (k). Polaroid matched that contribution dollar for dollar so that I was able to start building for my retirement with a diversified retirement plan.

But in 1988 Polaroid started the mandatory ESOP plan which required employees to contribute 8% of their pay to the ESOP plan. I had always understood that most ESOP plans did not require workers to contribute to them, but Polaroid required that we contribute to this one.

Because of the mandatory requirement that we contribute to the ESOP, I was no longer financially able to contribute to my 401(k). As a result, my retirement was then tied up almost exclusively with the ESOP and Polaroid stock. I have not figured out how much money I would now have if I had continued to contribute to my diversified 401 (k) instead of the ESOP, but I am meeting with a financial advisor from Fidelity next week, and I'm sure they'll be able to tell me the bad news.

I didn't really realize the danger of not being allowed to diversify my retirement account until August 2001 when I was told my job was being eliminated, and I was promised a severance package, which included medical, dental and life insurance coverage at employee prices for six months, along with six months severance pay. This transition period actually took me to retirement—where I could count on my ESOP and pension plans.

The day I was to receive my first severance payment I called to verify that it was being deposited. I later learned that many people who were supposed to receive severance payments that day did not, and the next day Polaroid declared Chapter 11. As a result, Polaroid is not paying my severance, or providing the medical, dental or life insurance it had agreed to. I have been left unemployed with no benefits. I had to break a lease and vacate my apartment. I had also taken out two loans on my 401 (k) plan, and I will now be unable to pay those back. As a result, I'm also going to be hit with a huge tax penalty for making withdrawals on my 401 (k).

As for my ESOP plan, I had 3500 shares which, at their peak, were worth about \$210,000. Without asking me, or apparently anyone else, management decided to liquidate these shares for about \$300.

We learned, after the fact, that State Street Bank & Trust, the trustee of the fund, started liquidating Polaroid's ESOP shares in mid November 2001, and completely liquidated the fund by mid-December 2001. After the liquidation was complete, Gary DiCamillo, Polaroid's current CEO, sent out a letter on December 10, 2001 to all employees notifying them that "it was in the best interest of participants in the ESOP fund to liquidate all shares."

Many of us cannot understand how the trustee of a retirement savings plan acted "in our best interest" by selling the ESOP stock when it reached 9 cents a share. Not only that, the liquidation of those shares means the "employee owners" have almost no influence. We used to own almost 20% of the company. Now we cannot even vote on the Polaroid bankruptcy and related matters. We decided to try to influence the process, even if we were disenfranchised former owners of the company. It took a big effort to pull folks together to fight for what's been promised. People are scattered and we do not have lists of everyone who has been affected. Still, we organized. I'm the chair of the Official Committee of Retirees of Polaroid, which was recently recognized by the bankruptcy court. This allows us legal representation with the bankruptcy proceedings.

The offices of both Senator Kennedy and Representative Delahunt have worked very diligently with us in our fight for justice. And recently a letter was sent to Polaroid's CEO from the entire Massachusetts Congressional delegation denouncing Polaroid's actions. Our committee and its constituents thank you and the other members of the Massachusetts delegation for those clear signs of support. In the same spirit, we urge you to change the rules on ESOP programs to allow employees some control of their own destiny.

TRIBUTE TO SABRINA URAN

**HON. BOB SCHAFFER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 13, 2002*

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today to congratulate Sabrina Uran of

La Junta, Colorado. A student at Manzanola High School, Sabrina recently published a poem titled "God Said . . ." in the "Scroll Original Arts Magazine." This piece was the first published for the young author.

Sabrina has always held an interest in the language arts and is very excited one of her pieces has achieved professional recognition. The poem is written in the first person, as a dialogue between the narrator and God. As the Rocky Ford Daily Gazette wrote, "Uran's work is read with a definitive rhythm, which culminates into an impacting finish."

It is an honor for the state of Colorado to have such a young talent recognized for her abilities. It is vital that America encourages all young people to strive for their goals, and Sabrina is a shining example of a young person achieving her aspirations. On behalf of the citizens of Colorado, I ask the House to join me in extending congratulations to Ms. Sabrina Uran.

BURN AWARENESS WEEK

**HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 13, 2002*

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to Burn Awareness Week. The tragic events of September 11th have created many enduring memories. The attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon not only reminded us of our vulnerabilities to acts of terror but have also demonstrated the horrific nature of burn injuries.

Burn injuries are among the most painful and traumatic injuries one can suffer. Historically, few patients survived serious burn injuries, however because of significant advances in treatment over recent years, this is no longer the case.

I am privileged to have one of the leading burn treatment and research facilities in the country in my Congressional District: The Shriners Hospital for Children Burn Unit. One of four in the country, the Shriners Hospital has pioneered numerous breakthroughs in burn treatment. Not long ago, patients with burns over 50 percent of their body would probably not survive. Today, individuals with burns over 90 percent have a much greater chance of survival.

The four national burn centers run by the Shriners Hospitals treat over 20 percent of all pediatric burn injuries in the United States—more than 156,000 children last year alone. These children were treated free of charge and the hospital does not accept insurance or parental reimbursement. These hospitals provide much more than just treatment. They focus on education and prevention to ensure that burn injuries do not occur, as well as on the psychological and emotional care necessary to restore children who suffer burn injuries to full physical and mental well being.

Burn Awareness Week provides an opportunity to educate children and families about certain risks of burn injury that can be avoided. For example, the Consumer Product Safety Commission relaxed the safety standards for children's sleepwear in 1996. This resulted in a sharp increase in the number of children suffering sleep-wear related burn injuries. Shriners Hospitals have led the effort in Congress to restore stricter safety standards for