

drug plan. The problem of increasing prescription drug costs is not limited to our seniors. Individuals enrolled in HMOs, employer sponsored insurance plans, or private insurance plans are seeing their coverage of prescription drugs diminish and/or their co-payments rise as the insurer tries to keep pace with the rising cost of prescription drugs. Hospitals and state Medicaid programs are struggling with the cost of prescription drugs. We must look at ways to ensure prescription drug are available at reasonable prices for all Americans.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

**HON. JOHN COOKSEY**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 8, 2002*

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to congratulate the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)—its 4,200 volunteers and Department of Defense (DOD) staff—in celebrating 30 years of service to this Nation.

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) was established in 1972, the year the United States ended the Selective Service System and established an all-volunteer military force. DOD realized that support from employers and communities would be instrumental in maintaining Reserve component membership. ESGR was created to obtain employer and community support for the National Guard and Reserve and to promote the role of Reserve forces in the national defense.

ESGR has lived up to the task and accomplished much more. Since 1972, with the help of the Advertising Council, Inc., ESGR has benefited from nearly \$1 billion in pro bono advertising reaching the six million employers with one or more employees in the United States.

Employers have, in turn, signed ESGR Statements of Support, publicly committing to support the National Guard and Reserve. The former Chairman of the Board and CEO of General Motors, Mr. James H. Roche signed the first Statement of Support in the Office of the Secretary of Defense on December 13, 1972. The next day, President Richard Nixon signed a Statement of Support covering all Federal civilian employees. Since the inception of this program, Presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton and President George W. Bush have all signed Statements of Support, along with hundreds of thousands of employers, including Dell Computer Corporation, Xerox, the Society for Human Resource Management and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. To date, over 300,000 employers have signed statements of support. Additionally, the strategic alliance formed in 1998 between ESGR and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce resulted in more than 1,200 chambers of commerce nationwide signing a Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve.

ESGR offers Ombudsman services designed to provide information to employers and Reservists regarding their rights and responsibilities under the law, and to resolve conflicts through informal mediation. These

services operate in cooperation with the Department of Labor. ESGR volunteers in 54 U.S. states and territories contribute thousands of hours of effort representing millions of dollars of volunteer service in support of ESGR programs, its services, and the men and women of our nation's Reserve forces.

Mr. Speaker, the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is smart government in action. The small ESGR staff in Arlington, VA, under the direction of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs provides guidance and support to a network of 4,200 volunteer business, civic, and community leaders.

ESGR educates employers on their rights and obligations under the law and recognize employers who actively support employee participation in the Guard and Reserve. ESGR also educates members of the National Guard and Reserve in regards to their rights and responsibilities to the value of their employers support. Committees can be found in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

With the end of the cold war, the Reserve components have been called with increasing frequency. During the Gulf War in 1990–1991, more than 250,000 Reserve component members were called to active duty to support military operations in the Persian Gulf. Since the start of Operation Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, more than 80,000 National Guard and Reserve troops have been activated and are playing a critical role.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of employers, local and state government officials, Active and Reserve component leaders, and military members from across the nation and around the world request ESGR's employer support expertise on a daily basis. When Guardsmen and Reservists return home following mobilization, ESGR committee members are there to provide information and support services to those in need.

The U.S. Congress passed the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, (USERRA) of 1994, and updated it in 1996. This law completely revised the Veterans Reemployment Rights Act of 1940. USERRA articulates the rights and responsibilities of Guard and Reserve members with regard to job protection and explains employer rights under federal law. ESGR helps employers and Reservists understand this law and helps them informally resolve any employment conflicts that may arise.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to congratulate ESGR and its 54 ESGR committees on their 30 years of service and commend this network of over 4,200 volunteers' patriots for their time and talent. They are serving their country and maintaining the much needed support of our employers and communities for the Guard and Reserve. Through the efforts of agencies like ESGR, we can call on our Reserve forces to answer our nation's call without the fear of job loss.

Thank you Mr. Speaker, and thank you ESGR.

VOLUNTEERS OF THE CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

**HON. MICHAEL FERGUSON**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 8, 2002*

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and recognize the volunteers of the Chaplaincy Committee of the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey.

The Chaplaincy program provides services to Jewish residents in nursing homes and patients hospitals in central New Jersey. The committee also works with the nearly 100 volunteers doing either Bikur Holim (visiting the sick) or Kabbalat Shabbat (a service to welcome the Sabbath) for residents in area nursing homes. The volunteers range from all over central New Jersey.

On May 8th, the Chaplaincy Committee plans to recognize and thank the volunteers for their hard work, as I am here to do the same today.

I commend the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey for the good works they have helped to provide to central New Jersey, and to the volunteers themselves—they have my deepest gratitude. There is no greater gift to the community than your time and service.

TRIBUTE TO MS. FARAH M. WALTERS

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 8, 2002*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Farah M. Walters for her masterful leadership of University Hospitals Health System and University Hospitals of Cleveland. As President and Chief Executive Officer of University Hospitals Ms. Walters has presided over UH's expansion from a \$400 million hospital to a nearly \$2 billion health-care system serves patients at more than 150 locations in Northeast Ohio and is the region's largest private sector employer.

Ms. Walters graduated from the executive MBA program at Case Western Reserve University Weatherhead School of Management and holds a Masters of Science In Nutrition from Case Western Reserve University. She has consulted and lectured for major health organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization, American Hospital Association, National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Army, and various hospitals and universities. Ms. Walters has received numerous prestigious awards for her work. For example, in May 2001 she was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations Foundation; in February 1999 she became the first woman to receive the Business Executive of the Year award from the Sales & Marketing Executives of Cleveland; and in May 1998 she became the first woman to receive Business Statesmanship Award from the Harvard Business School Club. In January 1993, Mrs. Walters was appointed to Hillary Rodham Clinton's National Health Care Reform Task Force, and in 1993