

hospitals face great uncertainty as to when they will be paid by health care plans for services rendered. As a result of this uncertainty, doctors and hospitals have no guarantee that they can pay their own obligations in a timely manner. That's unfair. That's bad business.

This week, several congressional committees began the arduous process of considering Medicare legislation. Among the provisions that have received widespread bipartisan support in that legislation are payment updates for hospitals, doctors, and other health care providers. These provisions attempt to address the decrease in Medicare payments to doctors and other providers by 5.4 percent this year. They also help to address similar hospital funding shortfalls, especially in rural areas where hospitals are paid less than their urban and suburban counterparts due to the use of a biased and outdated formula. While these changes will not fully address the decline in payments and the funding shortages from Medicare that our providers face, they are a good first step.

But, addressing the Medicare funding problems is not enough. Doctors and hospitals need to be paid, and paid on time, by the private group and individual health plans. On-time payments are critical for doctors to pay their own bills and for the long-term financial survival of medical practices and hospitals.

Several states have passed legislation to ensure prompt payment for health care claims. However, the shortsightedness of politicians in some states—as in my home state of Texas—has prevented such legislation from becoming law. Even in states where laws are on the books, doctors and hospitals face possible federal ERISA preemption of state laws—meaning that without a federal “prompt pay” law, health plans will continue to be able to manage their cash flow on the backs of doctors and hospitals.

Today, I introduced the Health Benefits Claims Prompt Payment Act of 2002. This legislation will ensure that doctors and hospitals are paid “promptly” for the health care services they provide to participants in private health care plans. Failure to pay such claims on time would result in interest penalties being imposed on health plans.

This bill also specifically protects a state's right to provide doctors and hospitals with even more certainty—allowing states to impose harsher penalties or stricter standards on the payment of claims.

The Health Benefits Claims Prompt Payment Act of 2002 is one way to help ensure that doctors and hospitals can focus on what they do best—treating patients and practicing medicine.

SPEECH BY RACINE EVANS OF
WYANDANCH, NEW YORK

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following words to you and all of our colleagues, Racine Evans of Milton Olive Middle School in Wyandanch, New York delivered this speech on May 13, 2002.

Hello Congressman Steve Israel, Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, my name is

Racine Evans and I'm a six grade student at the Milton L. Olive Middle School. My desire is to be a teacher. I have been inspired by two powerful human beings, my mother, Theresa Johnson and my teacher Mrs. Deborah Charles. Mrs. Charles is always instructing me about the fact that knowledge is power. My mother Theresa is an assistant pastor and is also the Evangelist of my church. She also preaches to me how knowledge is power and knowledge is the key to life. I'm inspired by both my teacher and my mother with their words of wisdom and inspiration. Between church and school, teaching seems to be my calling. When I have the opportunity to become a teacher, I'll make sure that I'll share the wisdom that was passed on to me down to my students. I just want to be able to pass down my knowledge to someone else, because knowledge is a powerful thing. I am determined to be successful. I plan to come back to my community, and set an example for others. When they see that I have reached my goal, then they will know it's possible for them to be successful as well.

NOTRE DAME BASEBALL AND THE
COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, a columnist for the Omaha World-Herald wrote, “What do you get when you cross Notre Dame with the College World Series? Magic is what you get.”

This entire baseball season has been magical for the Notre Dame Fighting Irish baseball team. Behind a spirited team effort, the Irish return to one of college athletics most storied events, the College Baseball World Series in Omaha, Nebraska for the first time since 1957. Not since Jake Kline was coach and Jim Morris batted .714 (10 for 14) in four games, a standing College World Series record, have the Irish traveled to Omaha to compete for the NCAA national championship.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a dramatic season for the Irish. Some people in South Bend have dubbed it the “boomerang season.” After starting 9–10 in the first nineteen games and losing their first four games in the Big East Conference, the Irish rallied with the heart and determination befitting of a championship team. Down 5–0 to the West Virginia Mountaineers, the Irish rallied behind the solid pitching of Drew Duff, Martin Vergara, and Matt Buchmeier and the offensive productivity of Steve Stanley, Paul O'Toole, and Javier Sanchez to win the game 10–6 in ten innings. Following this inspiring comeback, the Irish dominated their competition, winning forty games and losing only six.

The Irish's regular season hot streak served as momentum for the Big East Tournament in Bridgewater, New Jersey three weeks ago. The Irish beat Rutgers University, 3–2, after Steve Sollmann's clutch game-winning hit in the 10th inning to win their first Big East championship title. Ryan Kalita pitched seven shutout innings in relief. Senior clubhouse leader, Steve Stanley, was awarded the Big East Tournament's Most Outstanding Player Award after batting 6-for-16 with one double, one triple, and one RBI in the championship game.

After winning the Big East championship, Notre Dame was rewarded as the host team

for the NCAA South Bend Regional. The Irish made quick work of the South Bend Regional field beating Ohio State (8–6), South Alabama (25–1), and Ohio State again (9–6). The 25–1 drubbing of South Alabama was easily the most impressive victory margin of the year. The Irish batters swatted thirty-two hits, one hit shy of tying an NCAA tournament record for hits. Steve Sollmann went 6-for-7, Paul O'Toole batted 5-for-5, and Steve Stanley was 4-for-5 during the offensive explosion. The offensive dominance during the South Alabama game should not overshadow the brilliant pitching performance by freshman Grant Johnson. Johnson faced only thirty batters while allowing one walk and one hit. Johnson became only the thirteenth pitcher in NCAA history to post a no-hitter or one-hitter.

With the NCAA South Bend Regional title in tow, the Irish advanced to the Super Regional in Tallahassee, Florida to take on the top ranked team in the nation, the Florida State Seminoles, in a best of three series. Against all odds, the Irish prevailed by upsetting the Seminoles in game one (10–4) and game three (3–1). The Irish halted Florida State's twenty-five game winning streak which was one of the longest in NCAA history and earned a place in the College World Series.

Upon arrival in Omaha, Notre Dame became a crowd favorite as the underdog of the College World Series. After losing a close game to the Stanford Cardinal (4–3) in the opening game of the double-elimination tournament, the Irish trailed in their second game to the Rice Owls 2–3 with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning. A loss to Rice would end the season for the Irish. With the bases empty, consummate team leader Steve Stanley ripped a triple down the baseline. The next batter, Steve Sollmann, hit a clutch game-tying RBI single. With Sollmann on first base, Brian Stavisky belted a game winning two-run homer. Coach Mainieri summed up the spirited comeback best, “I'm not sure I can adequately describe what we just witnessed. I'd like to say I'm surprised at what happened in the bottom of the ninth inning, but I'm really not. I've watched these kids do it for the last three or four years.”

Notre Dame has head coach Paul Mainieri and his exceptional assistant coaches, Brian O'Conner, Dusty Lepper, and Wally Widelski, to thank for this successful season. Through the course of his eight years at Notre Dame, Coach Mainieri has won the right way by recruiting student athletes who represent our university in a positive light. Coach Mainieri has compiled a 353–140–1 (.716) record at Notre Dame making him one of the most successful skippers in Big East Conference history.

The eight seniors on this record breaking Irish baseball team must also be commended for their dedication and leadership. Matt Bok, Andrew Bushey, Paul O'Toole, Steve Stanley, Ken Meyer, Matt Strickroth, Matt Buchmeier, and Drew Duff compiled a four year record of 187–65–1 that ranks as the fourth-best four year winning percentage in school history.

I would also like to acknowledge the other members of the baseball team who have brought the University of Notre Dame's students, faculty, and alumni so much excitement this season: Geoff Milsom, Zach Sisko, Kris Billmaier, Chris Niesel, Matt Macri, Jay Molina, Matt Edwards, Brent Weiss, Brian Stavisky, Peter Ogilvie, Joe Thaman, Mike Holba, Cody

Wilkins, Mike Morgalis, Scott Bickford, Matt Laird, Tyler Jones, George Howard, Mike Milligan, Brandon Vilorio, J.P. Gagne, and John Axford.

Mr. Speaker, although the Irish fell short of winning the College World Series this week, the players and coaches should be proud of this exceptionally successful season. I am reminded of when Hall of Fame pitcher, Bob Feller said, "Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way baseball is." After watching the determination and spirit of the 2002 Fighting Irish baseball team coached by Paul Mainieri, I am certain that college baseball fans across the country will come to know what Notre Dame fans already appreciate; a new baseball power is emerging from Eck Stadium in South Bend, Indiana. Thanks for a great season and go Irish! Watch out next year!

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY RECOGNIZES AND HONORS SMITH COLLEGE GRADUATE ANNE MARTINDELL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the career and commitment of Former ambassador and Smith College graduate Anne Martindell.

Ambassador Martindell's involvement in government is notable in itself. Her early support for women's rights and principled objection to the Vietnam conflict were part of a long career of public service. She served four years in the New Jersey State Senate before being appointed director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. In 1979 she was appointed Ambassador to New Zealand and Western Samoa. She continues her involvement in US-New Zealand relations as founder of the United States-New Zealand Council.

Anne Martindell's friends have always known her as a determined, energetic, and extraordinarily capable person. What brought these qualities to the attention of the general American public was her decision a few years ago to return to college to obtain her long-delayed degree—after nearly 7 decades. She was admitted to Smith College in 1932, but her parents removed her after her freshman year. Despite a lifetime of achievement, she felt this lack of a college degree, and returned to Smith College in the fall semester of 2000. She graduated this May 19th with a Bachelor of the Arts degree and received an Honorary Law Doctorate, certainly an unusual combination.

Ambassador Martindell's commitment to education and public service should serve as a model for us all. In her unwavering commitment to education lasting 69 years, she should inspire us all to similar commitments to higher education. In the words of her Smith College advisor Prof. Daniel Horowitz "At the most profound level, Anne is a testament to the importance of education." It is an honor to represent Ambassador Martindell in congress.

Once again, I rise to commend Ambassador Anne Martindell for her long career of public

service and her commitment to education. I wish her much success in her future endeavors, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 18, I was honored to be the keynote speaker at my daughter Jessica's eighth grade graduation ceremony and was therefore absent from this chamber during the last two votes of the day. I would like the Record to show that had I been present in this chamber, I would have voted "yea" on roll call votes 237 and roll call vote 238.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN KAZAKHSTAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a resolution that expresses deep concern about ongoing violations of human rights in Kazakhstan. President Nursultan Nazarbaev, the authoritarian leader of this energy-rich country, has been flagrantly flouting his OSCE commitments on democratization, human rights, and the rule of law, and thumbing his nose at Washington as well.

In the 106th Congress, there was a near unanimous vote in the House for a resolution I introduced voicing dismay about general trends in Central Asia. We sent a strong signal to leaders and opposition groups alike in the region about where we stand.

Since then, the overall situation has not gotten better—throughout the region, super presidents continue to dominate their political systems. But their drive to monopolize wealth and power while most people languish in poverty is finally producing a backlash. Today in Central Asia, things are stirring for the first time in a decade.

Even in quasi-Stalinist Turkmenistan, an opposition movement-in-exile led by former high ranking government officials has emerged which openly proclaims its intention of getting rid of dictator Saparmurat Niyazov. In Kyrgyzstan, disturbances in March, when police killed six protesters calling for the release of a jailed parliamentarian, were followed by larger demonstrations that forced President Akaev in May to dismiss his government. The iron-fisted Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan, under considerable pressure from Washington, has made some limited concessions to domestic and international public opinion, sentencing policemen to prison terms for torturing detainees and formally lifting censorship.

In Kazakhstan, however, President Nursultan Nazarbaev has reacted differently to domestic pressure and to Washington's calls for reforms to keep repression from breeding terrorism. Since last fall, Nazarbaev has cracked down hard, when his position became a little shakier. First we saw squabbles within

the ruling—or should I say, "royal"?—family burst out into the open when Nazarbaev demoted his powerful son-in-law. Then a new opposition movement emerged, headed by former officials who called for urgent reforms. Two of the leaders of that movement are now in prison. Subsequently, Kazakhstan's prime minister had to acknowledge the existence of \$1 billion stashed in a Swiss bank account under Nazarbaev's name. Some of the few opposition legislators allowed into parliament have demanded more information about the money and about any other possible hoards in foreign banks.

This would be a scandal in any country. But with a consistency worthy of a nobler goal, Nazarbaev's regime has for years stifled the opposition and independent media. And as detailed in a recent Washington Post story, which I ask to be inserted for the Record, Kazakh authorities have recently intensified their assault on those few remaining outlets, employing methods that can only be described as grotesque and revolting. In one case, the editor of an opposition newspaper found a decapitated dog hanging outside her office. Attached to a screwdriver stuck into its body was a message that read "there won't be a next time." On May 23, the State Department issued a statement expressing "deep concern" that these assaults "suggest an effort to intimidate political opposition leaders in Kazakhstan and the independent media and raise serious questions about the safety of the independent media in Kazakhstan." That statement did not have the desired effect—last week, someone left a human skull on a staircase in the building where the editorial office of another newspaper is located.

Mr. Speaker, after September 11, the U.S. Government moved to consolidate relationships with Central Asian states, seeking cooperation in the battle with terrorism. But Washington also made plain that we expected to see some reform in these entrenched dictatorships, or we would all have to deal with consequences in the future. Nursultan Nazarbaev has ignored this call. Increasingly nervous about revelations of high-level corruption, he is obviously determined to do anything necessary to remain in power and to squelch efforts to inform Kazakhstan's public of his misdeeds. But even worse, he seems convinced that he can continue with impunity as his goons brutally threaten and assault the brave men and women who risk being journalists in a country so hostile to free speech.

Mr. Speaker, against this backdrop, I am introducing this resolution, which expresses concern about these trends, calls on Kazakhstan's leadership to observe its OSCE commitments and urges the U.S. Government to press Kazakhstan more seriously. I hope my colleagues will support this resolution and I look forward to their response.

[Washington Post Foreign Service, Mon., June 10, 2002]

NEW REPRESSION IN KAZAKHSTAN
JOURNALISTS TARGETED AFTER PRESIDENT
IMPLICATED IN SCANDAL

(By Peter Baker)

ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN.—The message could not have been clearer even without the note. In the courtyard of Irina Petrushova's opposition newspaper office, a decapitated dog was hung by its paws, a green-handled screwdriver plunged into its torso with a computer-printed warning attached to it.