

this summer. We need your input on how the Department can better utilize the Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stops to make sure we meet the needs of both public and private providers, as well as job seekers.

The paraprofessional long-term care workforce—from nursing assistants to home health and home care aides to personal care workers and attendants—is the cornerstone of America's long-term care system. They provide hands-on care, supervision, and emotional support to millions of Americans with chronic illnesses and disabilities.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, or BLS, the number of home health and personal care aides is nearly equal to the number of nursing assistants, roughly 750,000.

As you know, with an aging population and other industry challenges, the future availability of frontline direct care workers does not look promising. In fact, BLS estimates that by 2006, personal and home care assistance will be the fourth-fastest growing occupation with a growth rate of 84.7%.

Between 1998 and 2008, America needs around 750,000 more personal care and home health care workers. Unfortunately, many of these positions will go unfilled, unless we take action.

The solution is not simply one of supply. The more fundamental, long-term challenge is how to develop a committed, stable pool of workers who are willing, able, and skilled to provide quality care. I am committed to addressing both the short and the long-term challenges, so we can design quality systems of care for people with disabilities.

The Department is making significant progress, but we still need your input on issues concerning earnings opportunities, employment status, and labor supply of personal assistants and other community workers.

Here are some actions that are either planned or are currently underway at the Department:

The Office of Disability Employment Policy, or ODEP, led by Dr. Roy Grizzard, is working to identify options and to develop an inter-agency/inter-department plan that will increase the availability and quality of personal assistants and identify other options for education, training, and career advancement for these workers and other direct care staff.

More specifically, the Department of Labor and HHS are taking a detailed look at the challenges to the industry, as well as providing recommendations on how to address the worker and skill shortage.

ODEP and its partners will convene a listening session for people with disabilities. A similar listening session will be held for service providers and other direct care staff and community service workers. Your organization, ANCOR, certainly will be a part of these sessions.

ODEP and ETA are working to increase access to personal assistance supports through the One-Stop Centers.

And ODEP is expected to establish an on-line registry, similar to America's Job Bank, where local or community-based organizations, like yours, can help locate more workers.

The Administration is listening to ANCOR, and we still have a lot left to do. I know we will continue to work together to provide stable community infrastructure for the future of individuals with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. Much of that relies on a quality, highly-trained direct support workforce, and we are committed to making it happen.

Thanks again for inviting me to be here today. I look forward to working with ANCOR and its members to expand your sup-

ports and services in the years to come. When government, associations, business, and individuals work together, we can build a more welcoming and promising future for all Americans.

THE TV CONSUMER CHOICE ACT OF 2002

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will nullify the Federal Communication Commission's mandate that will force all televisions to have a digital TV receiver by 2007. The TV Consumer Choice Act of 2002 will give consumers the ability to choose whether or not they want a TV that includes an expensive—and often unnecessary—digital TV tuner.

While digital TV may present new and exciting options to viewers, these tuners should not be forced upon hundreds of millions of Americans, many of whom do not want or need this expensive device. Digital TV tuners are only used to receive over-the-air signals. For those households who choose alternate services, such as cable or satellite, the device is completely worthless. According to the Consumer Electronics Association, the tuner mandate will increase the cost of the average TV by \$250 for a device that less than 13% of consumers will use. This is unacceptable.

My legislation will ensure that individual consumers—not the federal government—decide which TV options are best for them. I am hopeful my colleagues will support this legislation and the House will act on this proposal expeditiously.

OFFICERS OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, today to request that the following speeches given by Officers of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) be inserted into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The first speech is the welcoming remarks by John E. McInerney, the President of the District of Columbia State Board of the AOH. The second is a tribute to the work of the Congressional Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs by Ned McGinley, the new National President of the AOH.

A TRIBUTE TO THE PEACEMAKERS

(By John Edward McInerney)

Ladies and gentlemen of the Congress, Mr. Ambassador, fellow Hibernians, and honored guests. Welcome.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians is gathered here this evening to pay tribute and to thank a very special group of legislators. We Hibernians are here to thank the 89 women and men of the United States House of Representatives who are serving as members on the bipartisan Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs. After twenty-five years of service, the members of the committee have done so much to bring peace with justice to Ireland.

For centuries before the United States was formed as a nation, Ireland struggled and fought for her freedom. Since 1921, Ireland has strived to be one nation united taking its rightful place among the family of nations. In that long struggle for the cause of an united Ireland, the Irish American community never received support by a large organized group of members of the American Congress.

However, twenty-five years ago that situation changed, thanks in large part to so many people, especially Congressman Mario Biaggi. It was during this very month on September 27, 1977 that the Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs was born. Initially, it did not meet with universal acclamation on both sides of the Atlantic. But in time it became a valuable resource to all parties on both sides of the Ocean as it focused on the important issue of peace with justice in all of Ireland. From the onset, it focused on encouraging the United States to help broker peace initiatives. The progress that has been achieved so far is due in part to the tireless efforts of this bipartisan Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs.

In time, this committee became the pre-eminent Congressional Caucus dedicated to fostering a closer relationship between the people of Ireland and the United States Congress. It was organized with the help of the national board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and other groups. It has been an unflinching proponent of the Peace Process in the north of Ireland by hosting members from both sides of the government of the North as well as the Republic of Ireland. In doing this it has served as a valuable source of education for all the members of the United States Congress on Ireland.

This ad hoc committee was there for Ireland and the Irish American community at critical moments during the past quarter century—such as persuading President Clinton to grant Gerry Adams a visa. That bold move alone set off the current peace process in the north of Ireland—a process that is still developing and unfolding today. It was a member of this ad hoc committee namely Peter King of New York—who was a liaison between President Clinton and some of the parties in helping shape the Good Friday Agreement—even to the point of waking the President of the United States up in the middle of the night to intervene at critical moments.

Each member of the Ad Hoc Committee has made valuable—or should I say significant—contributions. In decades to come when the history of these uncertain times—the history of the “troubles” and the history of the current struggles over the Good Friday Agreement—will be written, historians will record that the Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs played a critical role in achieving peace with justice in Ireland. Not only the role of Mario Biaggi will stand out, but the names of the current Co-Chairs of this bipartisan committee—Benjamin Gilman, Peter King, Richard Neal, and Joseph Crowley—will be not be lost in the annuals of history, especially the history of Ireland.

But, for each of you individually, you will know in time as you look back upon your years of service in the Congress, that your interventions and efforts—both personally and collectively—played an important role at critical times in Ireland's history today. You will have achieved the personal satisfaction of having played the role of peacemaker. And to each of you, may the promise of Scripture come true in your own lives and in exercising your responsibilities as lawmakers—“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall inherit the earth.”

This evening, the Hibernians—the oldest Irish American fraternal organization in the