

killed in the line of duty is entitled to benefits. Whether a 30-year-old firefighter is killed manning a hose, a 60-year-old firefighter is killed directing traffic at the scene, or a 14 year-old firefighter is killed while mobilizing supplies, providing emergency medical supplies or performing many other duties necessary for the suppression of fire, he or she should be entitled to benefits. On May 4th, 2002, like thousands of Junior Firefighters across the country do every day. Christopher Kangas fulfilled his duty and answered the call to a fire emergency. Tragically, while answering that call, he was killed in the line of duty. As a result of DOJ's ruling an entire class of firefighters who serve, protect and die while responding to an emergency are now deemed inconsequential.

Congress never intended for the PSOB Act to make judgment calls about what roles a firefighter must perform to entitle them to benefits. Furthermore, Congress made no distinction with regards to the specific tasks that an officer must be able to perform at the scene of a fire to be considered a public safety officer. In fact, most firefighter fatalities arise from causes other than burns and asphyxiation. Every year, more public safety officers are injured or killed in motor vehicle and other incidents on the highway at the scene of an emergency or while en route or leaving the scene of an emergency than by fire or smoke. The DOJ's ruling completely ignores the every day risks that our first responders face when responding to emergencies. More disturbing, is the thoughtless message the ruling sends to Junior Firefighters across the country that they are somehow less important or meaningful to the fire service than adult firefighters.

Although not surprised by the DOJ's ruling, I am appalled by the lack of understanding displayed by the Department's myopic decision. In response, I will introduce the Christopher Kangas Fallen Firefighter Apprentice Act to retroactively prevent the DOJ from denying firefighter eligibility for PSOB status based on age. When passed, Christopher Kangas and all junior firefighters will be given the status they deserve.

Fighting fires requires preparation, dedication and above all else—teamwork. Each member of the team must perform his individual duty to the fullest extent of his or her ability and accept the inherent risk of their position. Only when each member of the team performs their assigned duty, can the entire team achieve success. The firefighter providing maintenance on the equipment, operating a hose, searching a building, providing first aid to the injured or directing traffic on the scene all assume a risk to their safety and play vital role in the team's success. Firefighters across the country understand the importance of teamwork and heroically accept the risk that their duty requires. Christopher Kangas understood this principle and bravely faced the risk of his position, let's hope his memory will force the DOJ to come to that same understanding and honor those like Christopher that have paid the ultimate sacrifice protecting our communities.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT CARDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today is the first day America's seniors and disabled Americans can use the

new prescription drug discount cards created by last year's Republican Medicare law. The discount card program has not exactly been a smashing success. Nationwide, less than half a million seniors actually chose to enroll in the drug discount card program out of 40 million.

Little surprise, really, since seniors in my State of Ohio and throughout the country have found it confusing, have found it overwhelmingly bureaucratic, and have found it unreliable. With good reason. Under traditional Medicare, all benefits are accessible through just one card, but under this Rube-Goldberg, new Republican program, seniors have to choose literally from a whole deck of cards.

In my State, there are as many as 53 different cards available. One might cover blood pressure medicines but not heart medicine. Another might cover arthritis medicine but not diabetes medicine. Worse yet, the card costs \$30, and it must be kept for a whole year, but the discounts published in the brochure given out might be out of date even before an individual gets to the drugstore.

The Republican bill lets the drug companies change coverage and discounts as often as once a week without notifying the cardholder, who, as I say, has to keep the card for 12 months. That is not Medicare. Medicare, real traditional Medicare is simple, reliable and universal, not this confusing privatized Medicare that the Republicans have foisted on the American public.

The new program is having such problems that even one of its most widely accepted provisions is having trouble signing people up. The new law provides annual subsidies of up to \$600 on drug purchases for some low-income seniors. But that provision is not reaching its targeted audience. Secretary Thompson says he is somewhat concerned that low-income seniors are not signing up.

A lot of us here in the House are concerned, too; and we have offered a solution. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK), the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), and I have introduced a bill that will automatically enroll all eligible seniors in the new law's low-income subsidies program. Like Medicare itself, our proposal is simple, it is universal, and it is reliable.

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But instead of actually fixing the program as they could, fixing the problem, the Bush administration has decided to spend more tax dollars on advertising. The Republican Medicare bill has always been more about image than substance. This bill written by and for the drug companies, written by and for the insurance companies, this Medicare privatization bill written by and for the HMOs has made America's seniors even more confused, and it simply is not working.

When HHS auditors said the Republican bill would cost \$134 billion more than the White House said, the Bush administration suppressed the estimate and gagged the auditor. When the initial reaction from seniors was less than enthusiastic, the Bush administration announced plans to spend \$80 million of taxpayer dollars to educate America's seniors on why the bill is not really as bad as seniors think it is.

When news coverage of the program was not favorable enough, the Bush administration, undaunted, spent more money on advertising. They rolled out their own news stories complete with fake anchor, phony interview and bogus reporter. It is not about substance; it is about image.

Let us do it right. The House Republican leadership should take up the Dingell bill this week which will help low-income seniors get access to the \$600 benefit. They should take up the Dingell bill this week, we could pass it and get it over to the other body in plenty of time to have it on the President's desk by next week. Just once, instead of our government always coming down on the side of the drug industry and on the side of the insurance companies, some of the President's biggest contributors, instead of the government always coming down on the side of the drug companies and the insurance companies and the HMOs, Congress just this once could do the right thing.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING IN A CONFUSING WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, Newsweek magazine this week had a cover story calling Mr. Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress, the INC, our con man in Iraq. Newsweek claims the INC gave the U.S. poor information about Saddam Hussein's weapons programs despite millions in funds received from the U.S. Government, including the DIA and the Department of State. Stories say Chalabi is linked with Iran, and members of the INC have been engaged in fraud.

First of all, we need to understand some basic concepts that people who provide intelligence to the U.S. from tyrannies and dictatorships often risk their lives. They are what we would call tainted, probably unsavory. It is not as if a number of the members of the Governing Council in Iraq are not connected to Iran. The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq gets \$1.2 million a month from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards whose head is Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, and he is on the Governing Council. The members of the Dawa Party and the Kurds also engage in commerce with Iran and are linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

But let us look at the facts that differ from what the press tells us and what our friends on the other side of the aisle are saying. This is some of the help we have received from the INC. When we are being told that aluminum tubing was being procured that violated the sanctions, this turned out to be true. We were told that Saddam Hussein had buried much of his weapons programs or hidden them in dual-use facilities. This information from as early as 1991 and throughout the 1990s turned out to be true.

We were told Saddam Hussein had unmanned drones that could deliver bio or chemical weapons, and this turned out to be true. We are told by the INC and others that weapons were being shipped to Syria; and Dave Kay confirms that he agrees with that assessment, although the exact nature and amount of the weapons that were shipped to Syria still have to be determined.

The INC said that al Qaeda and its affiliated terrorist groups were being trained and harbored in Iraq, and this has been confirmed. We only have to review the terrorists caught recently in Jordan who admitted they fled Afghanistan to Iraq before the war to liberate Baghdad, and while in Iraq they received training and assistance in the use of poisons and bombs from Iraqi intelligence.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs said that the INC gave U.S. and coalition forces intelligence on a daily basis that saved American lives, stopped attacks, and deactivated roadside improvised explosives.

There are examples in the past that have failed to be covered by our friends on the other side of the aisle or by the press; but I think if we take just a moment, we can see the difficult nature of providing help to other countries and to people in other countries.

First of all, the U.S. Government provided hundreds of millions of dollars to the Taliban during the late 1990s in the hopes they would turn over Osama bin Laden. What did we get for our dollars at that point, and what did the Clinton administration explain to us?

The U.S. Government and others provided between \$3 billion to \$5 billion to the Aristide government in Haiti, and what did we get for our money? Haiti's gross domestic product declined by one-third, and crime and murder rates hit levels not seen since the Duvalier family ruled the country. Haiti became one of the major transshipment points for illicit drugs into this country, and now Aristide has left the country after robbing the treasury of every last dime.

During this great Haitian robbery by Mr. Aristide, a former Democratic congressman received a retainer of \$50,000 from the Haitian Government and Aristide to provide cover for this looting. The Haitian Parliament could not even meet during Aristide's rule for fear that he would have them killed.

Mr. Speaker, what is this fight all about? For the past 25 years, there has been serious disagreement in the U.S. Government and amongst our allies about the nature of Islamic fascism and the terrorist means we face. This problem was accentuated when the Oslo Peace Process was begun. Particularly during the Clinton administration, it was assumed that terrorism directed against the U.S., the Trade Center in 1993, the Khobar Towers in 1995, the Kenyan and Tanzanian embassies in 1998, the USS *Cole* in 2000, it was assumed those attacks were the work of a loose band of terrorists unconnected to any state sponsor or government. The Clinton administration assumed, therefore, that this was a problem of law enforcement, a point reiterated by many leading Democrats today.

The Peace Process was assumed to require the agreement of the Islamic regimes in the Middle East: Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq and Jordan. Mr. Speaker, these assumptions were proved incorrect. President Bush changed those assumptions into fighting the war against terror. Mr. Speaker, we need to have the facts.

The assumption was that once Israel made an adequate offer to the PLO, that the PLO in turn would reign in the terrorist groups attacking Israel.

General Zini, for example, in his latest book makes this very assumption that the PLO and Arafat were not responsible for the terrorist attacks against Israel in the first and second Intifadas. He says that once a peace deal is put on the table by Israel, Arafat will take care of the security issue.

The assumption was that none of these Islamic/Arab governments were supporting terrorism against the United States and the terrorism would stop once a deal was made between Israel and the PLO.

The Peace Process featured Secretary of State Christopher making some 70 visits with President Assad of Syria to negotiate Syria's support for the "Peace Plan".

The United States could not on the one hand be negotiating a peace deal with Syria and other Arab regimes, while at the same time holding them accountable for terrorism aimed at the United States and Israel.

President Bush fundamentally changed this paradigm.

In June 2002, the President said the PLO had to have new leadership that agreed that Israel had a right to exist as a sovereign country, something Arafat has never agreed to; just today, the Egyptian government is reportedly asking that Arafat resign and new PLO leadership be appointed.

The President also drew a strong link between states such as Iran and Iraq that support al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

The Wall Street Journal reported last week that new intelligence reveals that a Lt. Col. in the Iraqi intelligence service met with the pilots of the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia in January 2000 where the 9/11 plot was begun; additional evidence connects Mohammed Atta, one of the key conspirators and pilot of one of the planes on 9/11, met with Iraqi intelligence in Prague, the Czech Republic on April 8, 2001.

If these states are training, financing and providing sanctuary, documents and weapons to these terrorist groups, then they have declared war on the United States. As National Security Adviser Rice has noted, "they are war with the United States, but we were not at war with them."

Even as we fight to protect this country, we have bureaucrats fighting an internal, inside the Beltway battle that is distracting from the larger and more important effort.

DRUG DISCOUNT CARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, today is the first day that older Americans and the disabled can use their brand new prescription drug discount cards. Medicare beneficiaries, however, should use caution. Like everything else promised by the Bush administration and the Republican majority in this House, the prescription drug benefit is not all it was cracked up to be. Most seniors will find the benefits they already had through a State drug program, a Medigap plan, or coverage from a former employer may save them more money than the Medicare discount card.

Seniors' savings from the Medicare drug card will be negligible. Bush administration officials and Republican leaders have said that the Medicare drug cards would provide recipients with discounts of up to 25 percent on prescription drugs, but their friends in the pharmaceutical industry have corrected that. They say the savings will be no more than 17 percent.

But a more balanced study by the U.S. General Accounting Office pegged the savings even lower. The GAO found that the average savings produced by the Medicare drug cards was about \$5 per prescription. GAO's results also reveal that seniors could usually find a better deal by shopping around. Why should seniors be asked to pay a \$30 premium for these cards when they can get better deals by comparison shopping?

The meager benefits offered by the Medicare drug card were confirmed by another study, this one conducted by the minority staff of the House Committee on Government Reform, which demonstrated that the drug discount cards provide far less benefits to seniors than three simple alternatives: purchasing drugs in Canada, allowing the government to negotiate bulk purchases for seniors, and ordering through Internet pharmacies. The study found that drugs purchased with the Medicare drug card are an average of 72 percent more expensive than they would be if those same drugs were purchased in Canada. If the Federal Government negotiated the purchase of these drugs in bulk for Medicare beneficiaries, as it does for the Veterans Administration, prices then would be 75 percent less expensive than they would be with this Medicare drug card.