

confusing to the patient, leading them to think that they can only go to those pharmacies.

The insurance companies have created problems on the business side of my practice. There is no "negotiation" between pharmacists and drug plans on reimbursement rates. If I am going to continue serving my patients, I am forced to accept the low rates offered by insurance companies. Plans are slow to pay claims, and my drug wholesaler requires that I pay for drugs much more quickly than the plans pay me. My pharmacy has over \$45,000 in unpaid claims from Medicare Part D.

Pharmacist and pharmacy technician salaries are climbing because of the shortage of available personnel. I am not sure how long independent pharmacies will be able to stay in business with the low reimbursement rates.

I wish that before this program started on January 1st that Medicare and the insurance companies would have taken the time to truly consider the elderly. If the people setting up the program had thought about the needs of their own elderly parents, I am sure this plan would be different.

Chairman GRASSLEY, Senator BAUCUS and Members of the Committee, thank you again for inviting me to appear before you here today. I will now answer any questions you may have.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNITION OF THE CALIFORNIA TEAMSTERS HISPANIC CAUCUS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the important work and accomplishments of the California Teamsters Hispanic Caucus. I am also pleased to commend International Brotherhood of Teamsters, IBT, General President James P. Hoffa, and General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Keegel for their continued support of the California Teamsters Hispanic Caucus's efforts in awarding educational scholarships and conducting community improvement and community education programs.

The California Teamsters Hispanic Caucus, formed in 1989 as a nonprofit organization, has experienced phenomenal growth and success. Since the Hispanic Caucus' early beginnings, membership has grown to include more than 250 active members. The support that the caucus has provided to its members has also grown throughout the years. In nearly two decades of service, the Hispanic Caucus has increased the number of its educational scholarships from 3 to nearly 20 and has distributed more than \$200,000.

Both General President Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer Keegel have shown tremendous support for the California Teamsters Hispanic Caucus through their involvement in increasing the availability of educational scholarship funding and participation in annual Hispanic Caucus events. Their work, in combination with the fine work of the Hispanic Caucus, has allowed the children of Teamsters to continue their education and pursue their dreams.

I invite all of my colleagues to join me in commending the California

Teamsters Hispanic Caucus, International Brotherhood of Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Keegel for their continued support for education, for strong communities, and for all working people.●

IN MEMORIAM OF CORETTA SCOTT KING

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Coretta Scott King, who peacefully left this world on Monday, January 30, 2006, at the age of 78.

Coretta Scott King was born on April 27, 1927, in Marion, AL, during a time of great social injustice. Despite the many barriers that society had placed in front of her, she refused to let hate and prejudice stand in the way of her dreams. She was valedictorian of her graduating class at Lincoln High School and went on to receive a B.A. in music and education from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH. She also earned a degree in voice and violin at Boston University's New England Conservatory of Music. It was during this time that she met Martin Luther King, Jr., who was then studying for his doctorate in systematic theology at Boston University. They married on June 18, 1953, and began their lives together in Montgomery, AL.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began his civil rights work, Mrs. King worked closely with him by organizing marches and arranging sit-ins at segregated restaurants to draw attention to the unfairness of Jim Crow laws. She also played a central role behind the scenes of many of the major civil rights campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s. She was by her husband's side when he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and walked by his side during the infamous march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 that eventually led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. Mrs. King also performed in "Freedom Concerts" where she would sing songs and read poetry to help raise money for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the organization that Dr. King led during the civil rights movement.

Following her husband's death on April 4, 1968, Mrs. King demonstrated remarkable strength and courage by continuing the struggle to bring equality to all Americans. She established the Atlanta-based Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change as a living memorial to her husband and his dream of social equality. During the 1980s, Mrs. King participated in a series of sit-in protests to highlight the inequality of South Africa's racial policies.

Mrs. King also led the campaign to establish Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday. In 1983, Congress instituted the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission, which she chaired during its duration. And on January 20, 1986, the Nation celebrated

the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal holiday.

Mrs. King has received honorary doctorates from more than 60 colleges and universities, has authored three books and has served on, and helped found, dozens of organizations including the Black Leadership Forum, the National Black Coalition for Voter Participation, and the Black Leadership Roundtable.

I rise today to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Mrs. Coretta Scott King. As wife, mother, social activist, musician, and author, she used her words and actions to spread the message of racial equality and justice throughout the world. I hope that her vision, as well as the vision of her late husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will continue to live on in all of us through our work and our deeds.●

A TRIBUTE TO GEORGE WEEKS

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, for the past 22 years, George Weeks' column for the Detroit News has been required reading for anyone interested in Michigan politics. It has been the gold standard for fair, insightful commentary, and I am proud to have known and worked with George over these years. Our mornings—and our public life—won't be the same without him.

George Weeks' life and career have been spent in service to the people of Michigan. In a journalism career that took him to Lansing, MI; to Washington, DC; and around the world, George Weeks always put his responsibility to his readers first. And although we are honoring him today for his legendary accomplishments as a reporter and columnist, George also served his State as chief of staff to Governor William Milliken and his country in the U.S. Army.

In his work as a political columnist, it has seemed at times that George knows everything that is happening or has ever happened in Michigan. He reports on which candidate wowed the crowd—or otherwise—at a recent dinner, what issues are resonating with voters, and who he thinks has the right stuff to go all the way—or the other kind of stuff. His column is a treasure trove of political information. And not only does he have great information, he is also able to put it into perspective. George has a deep knowledge of history. He has written a history of Michigan through the lens of its governors as well as several works on Michigan's Native Americans. Although I admire his trove of knowledge, I do wish he would quit reminding me—and his readers—of how many years I have served in the Senate, a metaphor for the aging process.

George has earned both the loyalty of his readers and the respect and admiration of those he covers. His approach is impartial, issue-oriented, and assumes good faith on the part of public figures. He starts from a belief that public officials of both parties are motivated

mostly by good intentions, not petty politics. He takes the view that politicians are like other people—no better and no worse—and that public service is a worthy calling. We in public life are grateful for that, believe me.

It is a great loss that George is retiring from the News because we need that attitude now more than ever. In recent years, there has been a coarsening of political life. These are meaner streets these days, with more personal attacks and sharp edges. With his civility and his moderation, George has been in the vanguard of smoothing out those rough edges.

In his farewell column, George referred to me as his “most-interviewed Senator.” That is a distinction I will wear with honor, and I want to thank him for the professional way he has treated our conversations. George is a man of his word, whom you can talk to with confidence that he will get the story straight and whom you can talk to in confidence from time to time as well. I don’t know if George is counting in his tally our informal chats, including annually at the Cherry Festival in his beloved Traverse City. But I do know that I have come to look forward to those talks, and I still will.

Thank you, George Weeks, for your years of service and for your magnificent, ongoing career. ●

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

LORING COMMUNITY SCHOOL, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Loring Community School, in Minneapolis, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Loring Community School is truly a model of educational success. This neighborhood elementary school, which educates children in kindergarten through fifth grade, is named for the distinguished Charles M. Loring, father of the Minneapolis Park System and first president of the Park Board.

Loring Community School prepares children for lifelong learning in a respectful environment that nurtures their growth into knowledgeable, skilled, responsible, and confident citizens capable of succeeding personally as well as professionally. The school is 45 percent African American, 29 percent white, and 22 percent Asian. Seventy-two percent of the children are from low-income families.

The school’s success is firmly rooted in basic community values. Each child is treated like an important person, in the classroom and in the school, which sets high standards and expectations for all children, in order to foster growth academically, socially, and personally. Loring School also emphasizes the importance of family involvement, to encourage the educational success of their children.

Loring School goes well beyond the basics, offering a number of enrichment programs, including accelerated math and reading programs, a Math Master competition, a science fair, an art fair, band, and a fifth grade environmental camping experience. A special feature is the student-run radio station, KBEM Radio. All Loring pupils have opportunities to participate in dance, music, theater, and visual art enrichment programs.

Much of the credit for Loring School’s success belongs to its principal, Jane Thompson, and her dedicated teachers. The children and staff at Loring School understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Loring School should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Loring Community School in Minneapolis, MN, for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota. ●

HERMANTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, HERMANTOWN, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Hermantown Public Schools, in Hermantown, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

The Hermantown Public School District is truly a model of educational success. Mr. Brad Johnson, superintendent of Hermantown Public Schools, was hired last summer to lead the district. Upon his arrival in July, he was greatly impressed that the community demonstrated such strong support for education and such tremendous pride in its schools.

The success of Hermantown Public Schools is evidenced by the large number of students from surrounding districts who have enrolled. The schools have a waiting list of additional families that would like to enroll. Further, 95 percent of the parents of students at Hermantown participate in parent-teacher conferences.

Much of the credit for Hermantown Public Schools’ success belongs to its superintendent, Brad Johnson, its principals, Lois Backscheider, Dave Radovich, and Dennis Nelson, and their dedicated teachers. The students and staff at Hermantown Public Schools understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must provide a nurturing environment where students can develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a lifetime of success. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Hermantown Public Schools should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Hermantown Public Schools in Hermantown, MN, for winning the Award for Excellence in Edu-

cation and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota. ●

BAY VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PROCTOR, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Bay View Elementary School, in Proctor, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Bay View Elementary School, a neighborhood school for 450 pupils in kindergarten through fifth grade, is truly a model of educational success.

Earlier this year, in their campaign to raise money to construct a boardwalk through their school’s greatly prized forest, Bay View pupils collected 2,000 box tops. With the proceeds from the box tops, they were able to purchase \$200 worth of lumber for the boardwalk. When someone absconded with the lumber, however, the children were not foiled by the theft; instead, turning a challenge into an opportunity, Bay View fifth-graders staged a publicity event and held placards urging the thieves to return the ill-gotten lumber. Their skillful tactic, combined with newspaper stories describing how hard the students worked to raise the money, generated an outpouring of community support. Over \$5,000 in contributions from citizens and corporations streamed in; not only that, but the lumber was returned.

Bay View’s school forest, which merited such avid initiative, truly offers an academic highlight, serving as an active, environmental learning laboratory for children in all grades. In January, I toured the forest and saw for myself its many opportunities for hands-on learning. Last summer, eight Bay View teachers used their own personal staff development days to take part in an Audubon Center training program, learning to integrate environmental education into their daily lessons.

Two other notable features are Bay View’s artist-in-residence program and its student-run television studio, which affords opportunities to learn live-television production skills through a local, public access television production and broadcast studio. Students’ daily news broadcasts are televised in classrooms throughout the school.

Much of the credit for Bay View Elementary School’s success belongs to its Principal, Jon Larson, and his dedicated teachers. The children and staff at Bay View Elementary School understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and children at Bay View Elementary School should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Bay View Elementary School in Proctor, Minnesota, for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota. ●