

Most shocking is that these disparities contribute to our higher death rates from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and other life-endangering conditions.

Mr. Speaker, the disparities are real and frightening. In fact, of the 46 million uninsured Americans, at least 60 percent of Hispanic Americans and more than 43 percent of African Americans are uninsured. Further, while African-Americans comprise only 12.3 percent of the population, we account for half of all of the newly diagnosed HIV/AIDS infections. Statistics also indicate that non-Hispanic whites have a higher 5-year cancer survival rate than minority populations.

For this reason, I also would like to recognize National Minority Cancer Awareness Week which is an important effort held during the week of April 16–22. During the week, education is used as the weapon to empower the nation about the shocking disparities that are found within the population of individuals suffering from cancer.

Mr. Speaker, through these statistics, coupled with both the Satcher-Woolfe and the Institute of Medicine's 2002 indictments of our nation's health care system, it is safe to say that health and healthcare disparities are not only factual, but they also have an overwhelming negative impact on minority populations.

That is why dedication to keeping the harsh reality of health care disparities in the public spotlight is essential. For it should be mission of this Congress to raise the expectations of this society—it should also be our mission to assure that all Americans receive the health care they deserve.

If we are to bring about this change—if we are to substantially improve the health and life expectancy of all Americans, we must first fully appreciate the enormity of the challenge that we are confronting. We must also fundamentally change the way that this nation addresses our public health challenges. In fact, too many Americans of every race are dying before their time.

Mr. Speaker, we still have a difficult road to travel before universal health care is recognized as a basic civil right in this country. I have been working on these health care problems for quite a while now, and I am convinced that the acceptance of universal health care as a fundamental civil right will aid us in ending the debilitating health care system that is crumbling before us. In my mind, both sides of the aisle can provide part of the answer to this very big issue hampering our nation.

IN HONOR OF THE CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HONORABLE ELEANORE NISSLEY

### HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 27, 2006*

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a true leader and visionary, the Honorable Eleanore Nissley of Ridgewood, New Jersey. Eleanore is being honored for her outstanding civic contributions by the Center for Civic Responsibility next week. It is an honor richly deserved and long overdue.

Eleanore Nissley has been a shining star in New Jersey politics and community life for 40

years. She served as Bergen County's Republican Committeewoman and has offered her talents and political acumen to candidates and campaigns at every level. In fact, given the integral role Mrs. Nissley has played in New Jersey politics, the New Jersey Federation of Republican Women named her Woman of the Year. Her longtime friend and President of the NJFRW, Dot Romaine calls Eleanore "the epitome of the Republican woman."

A native of Rutherford and an avid sports fan, Eleanore has served on the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. Eleanore also gives her time and energy to the Boy Scouts, and she serves on the Board of Directors for the Interchange Bank.

One would think, Mr. Speaker, with all that Eleanore Nissley gives to her community that she hasn't a spare moment to herself. But, in fact, Mrs. Nissley's business abilities are equally renowned. And, Eleanore is committed first and foremost to her family. The mother of four and grandmother of many, Eleanore always finds time to devote to her loving lineage.

I am pleased beyond words, Mr. Speaker, to take this opportunity to add my thanks and praise to this chorus as well. Eleanore Nissley has time and time again given me advice and counsel that is priceless. I value Eleanore's friendship. And, I look forward to years of working with her to make North Jersey an even better place to live and work and raise a family.

HONORING THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA FOR ITS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO ITS CITIZENS SERVING IN AND RETURNING FROM OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM AND OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

### HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 27, 2006*

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I wish every employer in America was able to follow the lead of the County of Santa Clara, California. County employees who are on active military duty in direct connection with an armed conflict receive a salary augmentation which, in combination with their military pay, provides 100% of their base salary. Their employee benefits are also continued while they are deployed. Employees receive this salary augmentation and benefits for an indefinite period as long as they are involved in military service. The effort to support those in military service, guard and Reserves, doesn't end there.

The Veterans Service Office is a county funded agency established in 1946, assisting veterans and their families to obtain the benefits and services they have earned through their military services. The Veterans Service Office works closely with the Santa Clara County Employment Committee (VEC). The mission of the VEC is to promote the employment of veterans within the county by assisting local employers in recruiting veterans for job openings as well as providing employment-related assistance services for job-seeking veterans.

Each month, the California Department of Veterans Affairs forwards a list of returning veterans to the County VSO. This list includes on average the names of 50 to 100 veterans who have indicated an interest in receiving information on the services available for them from the county. Upon their return each veteran receives a letter from the VSO and a copy of the county's "Welcome Home" pamphlet, which includes information on veterans' services, health care, employment assistance and other benefits.

The Veterans Service Office, working in collaboration with the Peninsula Veterans Center, explores every opportunity to speak to returning veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. These talks occur as frequently as weekly, or whenever the officials are invited to address groups, such as new Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees—veterans who have recently returned home.

I have heard from families that, even though there is understandable worry about a loved one in a combat zone, at least that worry is not joined by worry about financial disaster. For those deployed, the strain and stress of separation from family is not compounded by financial worries.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to draw attention to the efforts of the Government of Santa Clara County and its employees as they serve the needs of our returning veterans and those currently serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Many in our country disagreed with the decision to invade Iraq, but no American should disagree with the need to support our troops and their families while they serve and to assist veterans after their active service is complete.

Santa Clara County, like other local governments in California, faces a fiscal bind. State and Federal governments have shifted costs to local government but in California, local governments have no ability to raise taxes in response. That means fiscal crunch time.

Despite that, the people of Santa Clara County, led by its Board of Supervisors and professional staff know this: the time of deployment should not be fiscal crunch time for the service member and family.

Let all employers, both public and private, look to Santa Clara County as a model of employer behavior.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of efforts of the Government of Santa Clara County and its employees as they serve the needs of our returning veterans and those currently serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. I am proud of the citizens and taxpayers of Santa Clara County who stand behind these fine efforts.

NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2006

### HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 27, 2006*

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to introduce the Native American Languages Act of 2006. This is a reintroduction in revised form of my bill, H.R. 2362, from the 108th Congress.