

Orgullo Latino" celebration, Our Latin Pride, which honors Hispanics in the western New York area that have achieved professional success in the passing year.

This year the event will recognize 16 individuals that have achieved various accomplishments. The honorees include an international author, legal professionals, educators, municipal employees and private business owners.

This year's honorees are: Cesar Cabrera, Tamara Pozantides, Lorraine Clemente, David Rodriguez, Nestor Hernandez, Eugenio Russi, Lourdes T. Iglesias, Melissa Sanchez, Olga Karman, Denise Gonez-Santos, Elizabeth Martinez-Fildes, Betty Calvo Torres, David Mauricio, Maria Cruz Torres, Doris Carbonell-Medina, and Roddy Torres.

This event is presented by Hispanics United of Buffalo, an organization that provides services to thousands a year in Buffalo's west side. The event is also organized by the Hispanic Alliance of Western New York, a civic association that is committed to community affairs for Buffalo's Latino community.

Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I stand here today joining many others in commending the honorees of this year's event for their accomplishments and wishing them a continually prosperous and successful future.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG
PRICE NEGOTIATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVAN PEARCE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, over 90% of people with Medicare, that's 38 million Americans, get their prescription drugs through Medicare Part D. These seniors are satisfied with their coverage and are finally receiving the drugs they need at costs they can afford.

Consistently, 80% of beneficiaries report they are satisfied with their current coverage and drug plans. Those include seniors known as dual-eligibles, the poorest seniors eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, because they are seeing more choices and paying less money for quality care.

My constituent, Nancy Santheson of Roswell, New Mexico, was spending almost \$800/month on one drug to treat osteoporosis. She had zero coverage the first year her doctor prescribed it. Once she signed up for her Medicare Part D plan, it went down to only \$60/month. This drug is not listed on the Veterans' Administration's national formulary. Had Nancy been dependent on the price negotiations the VA administrators and the Democrats have proposed, she would not have had coverage of this drug, a new treatment that has shown great promise in reversing bone loss.

Democrats say they will fill in the donut-hole, a cost estimated to be \$450 billion over 10 years, with the savings they claim will incur through government interference in price negotiations. Yet the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have stated that they predict government involvement in price negotiations will not lead to lower costs for taxpayers or seniors.

Seniors want choice, not government controlled access to their vital prescriptions. The

leverage needed to negotiate low prices is volume buying and the ability to walk away from a deal the government decides is too expensive. This means the government will have to walk away from a deal with a drug company, and seniors would not have access to those drugs. Negotiating low prices will take priority over getting the most quality, effective drugs in our seniors' medicine cabinets.

But seniors are already getting negotiated discounts. Private insurance plans already have a strong incentive to negotiate low prices for seniors: they want to control their own costs and compete for new enrollees to choose their plan. Premiums for the drug basic benefit are offered at an average of \$22/month for seniors in 2007, down from \$23 in 2006. This is \$15 less than the \$37/month coverage premiums were originally projected to cost. In fact, Democrats wanted to set premiums on seniors at a static \$35/month, \$13 more than average beneficiaries will pay next year. This proves that competition is working and our seniors are receiving benefits cheaper than ever imagined.

Democrats point to the Veterans' Administration as a model for this government price controlled plan. But the latest information from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services suggests that almost 40% of veterans eligible for both VA and Medicare benefits choose to get their prescriptions through Medicare Part D, the plan with more choices.

Time and again, veterans in my district have been frustrated that in order to receive the best benefits, they must get their drugs through an impersonal mail order program. In fact, 76% of veterans' prescriptions are distributed through mail order. And year after year efforts are made to encourage more veterans to get their prescriptions through mail order. Why put seniors in this position when we do not have to? Our seniors will face threats to their ability to purchase drugs from local pharmacies, just as veterans face, and may have to retrieve their drugs through an impersonal mail-order program, not their trusted pharmacist.

Mr. Speaker, our seniors deserve to have access to the drugs they need at the lowest costs possible. They are getting both now, and Democrats want to take that away. We must continue to fight for our seniors and I encourage my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 4.

MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION TO
THE MEMBERS OF HITRON

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 16, 2007

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Joint Interagency Task Force, the Navy and the Coast Guard drug interdiction forces for their role in seizing more than 43,420 pounds of cocaine during operations over the last several months in the Pacific. In particular, I would like to commend the Jacksonville based Coast Guard Helicopter Tactical Interdiction Squadron, HITRON, for their critical role in missions which intercepted 8,850 pounds of cocaine that was headed for our Nation's shores. These actions represent a crucial victory in keeping drugs off our streets, out of our schools, and away from our children.

HITRON is the Coast Guard's premier airborne law enforcement unit trained and authorized to employ Airborne Use of Force. With an historic record of success, HITRON consists of eight leased AgustaWestland MH-68A StingRay helicopters. These helicopters are extremely fast and maneuverable, and they are armed and cutter-deployable. They have proven very effective at intercepting the go-fast boats favored by drug runners on both coasts.

Prior to HITRON, drug runners would simply ignore our orders to cease and desist.

HITRON now has the ability to shoot out the engines of these drug boats, preventing them from reaching our shores. During a House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security hearing the Commandant of the Coast Guard told me that HITRON is batting a thousand—every time the HITRON aircraft went after a go-fast drug boat it had stopped the drug runners cold.

America is continuing to fight the war on drugs, and these are the kinds of successes we need to win. For their contributions the HITRON unit has a lot to be proud of, and our Nation owes them a great debt of gratitude.

IN RECOGNITION OF MASSACHUSETTS STATE REPRESENTIVE
KATHLEEN M. TEAHAN FOR
FOUR DECADES OF PUBLIC
SERVICE TO THE MEN, WOMEN,
AND CHILDREN OF MASSACHUSETTS

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 16, 2007

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of a woman who has dedicated both her personal and professional life to the men, women, and children she has so thoughtfully served. Massachusetts State Representative Kathleen M. Teahan has served the citizens of Abington, East Bridgewater and Whitman for the last ten years. The impact of her work has been felt not only throughout the great Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but throughout this great Nation as a whole.

Known to be an always positive leader in both the classroom and legislature, Representative Teahan began her public service as a teacher after graduating from Bridgewater State College in 1969. Over the next three decades, she taught at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School and Gordon W. Mitchell Middle School in East Bridgewater. Yet her passion to help others and invest in the community was not limited to just the classroom. Representative Teahan's commitment to Habitat for Humanity, the Whitman Democratic Town Committee, and the Whitman Library are just a few examples of her devotion to the citizens of Massachusetts.

Encouraged and supported by her late husband Robert, Representative Teahan decided to expand her efforts to help others and was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in November 1996. Since that time, she has not only made an impact on the citizens within the 7th District but has been a national leader and role model through her involvement with issues involving health care, education, employment, and the environment,