

As a traffic engineer, Joe has always been a valued resource to the community and surrounding areas. He has worked from day one with Cal Trans to widen Whitmore Avenue Overpass and to revise the Mitchell Road interchange. In spite of funding delays, Joe has continued to provide technical expertise on these projects and have kept them as a focal point for the local Council of Governments.

Joe has continued to be responsive to the public and its concerns by hosting public hearings and meetings to allow for public input. It is not unusual for Joe to personally respond to the residents on matters of concern to them.

In addition to public works infrastructure projects, Joe has maintained a vision for acquisition of land for parks and city owned buildings. He worked closely on the design of the public safety building and the new fire stations.

Joe continued to find unique ways to fund the community's growth and needs. He was very proactive in establishing special assessment districts to bring additional funds to the city—the establishment of street lighting and landscape maintenance districts. These districts were established in Ceres at a time when few cities had special district fees.

Outside of city hall, Joe has continued his commitment to the community; Joe has diligently volunteered his time to pruning the beautiful roses at Smyrna Park and to the restoration of the Daniel Whitmore Home.

Throughout his career with the city of Ceres, Joe Hollstein has been a consummate public servant. He has utilized his skills and experience for the betterment of the community. Joe has not limited his work to his own department but worked to provide facts and figures for other city projects.

I am honored to rise today to recognize the work of Joe Hollstein and to honor him for his many years of distinguished service to the Ceres community. I wish him the very best in his retirement.

IN SUPPORT OF THE VETERANS'  
CARE ADVOCATE ACT

**HON. PETER WELCH**

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2007*

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will ensure that recovering veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have access to a strong patient advocate should they encounter bureaucratic road blocks to their recovery.

This legislation is in response to the appalling stories that have recently come to light regarding substandard outpatient care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. On March 5, I participated in an oversight hearing at Walter Reed of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs where we heard from recovering soldiers coping with filthy outpatient living conditions and a needlessly cumbersome bureaucracy.

One of the conclusions I reached from this hearing is that veterans are, in some cases, on their own once they leave the excellent Department of Defense inpatient health care system. These men and women are being forced to navigate an onerous bureaucracy and man-

age their own outpatient care—even after traumatic brain injuries. This is an unacceptable betrayal of the men and women who have so bravely answered the call to duty.

The legislation I am introducing today, The Veterans' Care Advocate Act, would create an ombudsman in each military medical facility to assist in the care and overall well-being of recovering service members. The ombudsman will help patients overcome bureaucratic entanglements and ensure they receive the care they need. If the system breaks down, the ombudsman will go to bat on their behalf and cut through the bureaucracy.

Numerous accounts at Walter Reed describe patients not understanding where to obtain services and assistance and not knowing what services are available to them. The ombudsman will provide a forum for service members and their families to formally appeal to or seek review from the Department of Defense, receive information about services, and obtain help with paperwork.

My bill would also require the Secretary of Defense to effectively advertise the services of the ombudsman so that service members and their families know who to turn to for help with the bureaucracy. Finally, this bill would require regular reports to Congress on the status of the ombudsman program, including a description of the number and location of ombudsman positions established, a description of the services being provided by the ombudsman, an analysis of the effectiveness and timeliness of the services provided, and the adequacy of Federal resources for the ombudsman to carry out its entire mission.

Madam Speaker, I strongly believe that the cost of the war must include the care of the warrior. The Veterans' Care Advocate Act is just one step of many that will be required to ensure that recovering soldiers receive the care they were promised and the care they deserve.

Later today, as part of the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act, I will offer an amendment that will improve the medical care case manager and service member advocate provisions in the legislation. The underlying legislation creates two new positions as part of the team of doctors, nurses and staff caring for recovering soldiers: a medical care case manager and a service member advocate.

First, the medical care case manager will assist in understanding the service member's medical status and conduct a review, at a minimum of once a week, of the soldier's medical status to ensure that he or she is receiving the necessary medical care. Second, the service member advocate assists the service member in cutting through the bureaucratic red tape and looking out for the service member's overall welfare and quality of life.

My amendment requires that the Secretary of Defense conduct outreach to all service members and their families, advising them that the medical care case manager and service member advocate positions are there to help. The Secretary must also describe the nature of their services and how they can be contacted. The purpose of my amendment is to help assure that recovering members of our military are made aware of the resources available to them.

Furthermore, the amendment ensures that the medical case manager and service member advocate have the resources they need to expeditiously carry out the responsibilities and duties of their position.

I am pleased that the Wounded Warriors bill takes a number of important steps to improve the management of medical care, personnel actions, and quality of life issues for our soldiers. Combined with the hospital-based ombudsman created by my bill, the creation of these two positions will help ensure that our soldiers get the quality care they deserve.

A TRIBUTE TO PETRUCCI E.  
HARRIS, MSW, LCSW, DCSW

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2007*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ms. Petrucci E. Harris. Petrucci Harris was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and is the younger of two daughters born to Timothy and Bessie Hardy. Her family moved to Long Island, New York, while she was still a child. After graduating from public school in New York, she attended Morgan State University in her hometown of Baltimore.

Ms. Harris' first professional job was with the Suffolk County Head Start Program as a teacher, then a center director and later the county program coordinator. It was the experience of working with economically disadvantaged preschool aged children and their families which provided her with the motivation to return to school.

Ms. Harris was granted a fellowship by the National Institutes of Health which assisted her in earning a Masters of Social Work from the State University of New York's School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook. She also studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Health Planning; Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy; New York University Ehrenkranz School of Social Work Post Masters Certificate Program; and the Mind/Body Institute of Harvard Medical School's Continuing Education Program.

Petrucci Harris has been employed in various areas of mental and behavioral health throughout her career. This includes the University of Louisville's Medical School Department of Psychiatry; Bingham Child Guidance Clinic; and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Newark Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine where she was an adjunct faculty member as well as Coordinator of Social Work Services for many years. She worked on many projects for the inclusion of cultural content into the curriculum for immigrant psychiatric residents.

Ms. Harris served as a field instructor for graduate students at the New York University Ehrenkranz School of Social Work for several years. She was also an adjunct professor and faculty advisor for students at the NYU Wagner College where she taught the ethno cultural issues in social work practice course. She is currently a field instructor for Rutgers University's School of Social Work.

Ms. Harris is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, Academy of Certified Social Workers, Diplomat in Clinical Social Work, and a Certified Supervisor of Clinical Social Work. Her commitment to improving the general quality of life through service to others is carried out in her pledge to community service as a Golden Life Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.