

For 24 years, Mayor Whitehurst has proudly served Northwest Florida as Mayor of the Hub City with passion and determination. He is a dedicated and loving husband, father, and grandfather. With his wife Annelle by his side, he has earned the respect and support of those around him. This weekend we celebrate his retirement and tireless efforts of giving back to the community. The impact Mayor Whitehurst has made on the city will leave a lasting impression, and Crestview will be forever grateful for his service and truly honored to call him one of her own.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize the achievements of Mayor George H. Whitehurst and his exemplary service to the city of Crestview, Florida—"the gateway to the Emerald Coast."

IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN ANGELA M. CARSTEN

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Captain Angela M. Carsten, an officer in the United States Air Force, who is retiring after 20 years of distinguished service.

I have had the personal pleasure of knowing Angie since she came to DLI in 2004 and I know I speak for the greater DLI community in expressing our best wishes for her continued success.

Throughout her career, both as an enlisted Air Force Airman and as an officer, Captain Carsten has personified the Air Force values of duty, honor, integrity and selfless service. As Project Manager and Associate Dean of the Defense Language Institute's Emerging Languages Task Force, many of us on Capitol Hill have been the beneficiaries of her communication talents as well as her broad depth of knowledge concerning Low-Density High-Demand languages that are critical to our nation's security in the Global War on Terrorism.

Captain Carsten's military service began in 1987, with tours of duty at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, and Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Captain Carsten provided communications and computer support for the local airbases. In 1999, Captain Carsten was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the United States Air Force through Officer Training School at Maxwell AFB in Alabama. From 1999 to 2003, Captain Carsten served in a variety of assignments at Hill AFB, Utah.

Since 2004, she has been an outstanding advocate for the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, located in Monterey, California, the Congressional district I am proud to represent. As Associate Dean of the Defense Language Institute's Emerging Languages Task Force, she has briefed the BRAC Committee, the House Defense Appropriations Committee, HPSCI and HASC Members, numerous Professional Staff of the National Security committees, as well as Service Secretaries, foreign dignitaries, and Department of Defense VIPs.

Most recently, as the Associate Dean, Captain Carsten authored a Concept of Operations to build a surge capability for over nine-

teen Immediate Investment and Stronghold languages to augment the current DLI curriculum.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I thank Captain Carsten for her commitment, sacrifice, and contribution to our National Security throughout these 20 years.

HONORING OMEGA
ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to the Omega Environmental Technologies company. In today's corporate world, they have distinguished themselves as a thriving business that is passionate about helping others.

An eighteen year old company, Omega Environmental Technologies was built from the ground up to become a multi-million dollar corporation. Founded in 1989 in Texas, the company has grown to include a worldwide customer base for their distribution of automobile air conditioner parts. Although they routinely export A/C components to 75 countries, around 75 percent of their products come from the U.S. This helps to support the American economy and has provided a welcome boost to the Dallas/Fort Worth area marketplace. Using a 65,000 square foot warehouse, the business has grown 50 percent in the last 3 years. It is no surprise that Omega Environmental Technologies has been recognized twice as one of the 100 fastest growing companies in D/FW.

Although Omega Environment Technologies serves as a model to those in the business community, the life story and achievement of the company's founder and President, Grace Davis, is an example that all of us would do well to study. Born and educated in Panama, Ms. Davis strived for excellence early on, graduating from college after studying business. After time spent in the finance industry, she looked for a new challenge and attempted to get a job in the banking world. No matter her success or qualifications, Ms. Davis found only disappointment as employer after employer offered her only secretary jobs. In need of a paycheck, she eventually accepted a secretary position only to discover the grim truth of her circumstances later on. After hearing the commercial needs of clients who called the office, she approached her supervisor with a plan to improve their international sales. Regardless of her initiative, she was ignored and told to remember her place as a secretary. Grace Davis went on to leave that company and start her own international sales company. As one of her employees put it, she proved so trustworthy and talented a saleswoman that a company grew up around her.

Today, she serves as a proud role model for minority women who are looking to succeed in life and the business world. For her part, she has made it a point never to discriminate against potential employees because of their nationality or primary language. Omega Environmental Technologies currently employs 14 nationalities with several of them political refugees. They also rely on Catholic Charities as a primary source for employee recruitment

and last year received the accomplishment of being a certified Minority Company.

I could not be more proud that Omega Environmental Technologies chooses to call the Dallas/Fort Worth area home, and I congratulate them on receiving this prestigious award.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FEDERATION OF CLEVELAND

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the American Hungarian Federation of Cleveland, and Mr. John Juhasz, for their many years of service to the Hungarian-American community.

The Federation, since its founding in 1906, has been a symbol of the strong relationship between America and Hungary, a relationship that has existed since the birth of the American nation. Before former Hussar Officer Colonel Commandant Mihaly Kovats died fighting for a free America in the Battle of Charleston, South Carolina in 1779, he sent a letter to Benjamin Franklin with the words: "Fidelissimus ad Mortem", which means Faithful Unto Death. This expression has become the motto of this great organization.

For more than one hundred years the American Hungarian Federation has worked to unite and to support Americans of Hungarian origin in the United States, regardless of political, religious, or other affiliation. It has also been a strong supporter of freedom both at home and abroad. They played an integral role in providing aid for a Hungarian people in need after World War II, as well as efforts to aid refugees of The Revolution of 1956.

Under the faithful stewardship of President John Juhasz, The American Hungarian Federation continues to fulfill their mission by advocating for Hungarian causes and providing information to second and third generation Hungarian Americans. Additionally, the Federation sets an example for all Americans, who have a love for their heritage and a desire to help their people.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring John Juhasz and the American Hungarian Federation of Cleveland for their contribution to the rich cultural heritage of Northeast Ohio. May the Hungarian community continue to thrive under their leadership.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JUDI D. STEELE

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend Judi Steele, a dedicated educator, consultant, and advisor whose outstanding work in the classroom and throughout the community has motivated the Clark County School District to name an elementary school in her honor.

Judi began her distinguished career as an educator in 1965 when she taught 5th and 6th grade at P.S. 171 in East Harlem, New York.

In 1969, Ms. Steele began her long career with the Clark County School District as a teacher at C.V.T. Gilbert Prestige School. Throughout her career with the Clark County School District, Judi's work proved vital as she was integral to the implementation and the success of several educational programs designed to improve academic achievements and opportunities for students of all abilities.

During her time with the Clark County School District, Judi served as an integration consultant with the Intergroup Education Department, team leader for Teacher Corps, the first teacher of CCSD's Academically Talented Program and coordinator of the district's first Child Find. Judi was also the director of the Special Education Programs and Services for the Clark County School District. Among her achievements in this capacity, Ms. Steele created and executed district-wide procedures and staff development activities for principals, teachers, parents, and special student services staff to allow these educators to better serve students. She also devised district-wide programs to cater to the specific needs and requirements of the visually, orally and emotionally handicapped, learning disabled and academically talented students.

Judi also worked as the manager of the Officer of Development and Education Improvement for the Clark County School District while serving as the executive director of the Clark County Public Education Foundation, which is a non-profit corporation dedicated to improving the quality of Clark County's public schools. In 2001, Judi retired from the Clark County School District to become the president and chief professional officer of the Public Education Foundation. Under her guidance, the Foundation has raised approximately \$40 million and has instituted numerous vital programs including: Clark County READS, the Interact Online Learning Community, and the Teacher Exchange.

Judi's excellence in the field of education has gained widespread recognition as she has served on the board of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. She was also a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the Council of Exceptional Children, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the National Council of Administrative Women in Education, the Committee to Eliminate Racism in the Public Schools, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In Nevada, Judi has served on the board of directors of the Allied Arts Council, the National Alliance for Arts Education, the Nevada Association for the Handicapped, the Nevada Institute for Contemporary Arts, the New Horizon Academy, the Southern Nevada Administrative Women in Education, and the Summerlin Children's Forum.

Today, Judi continues to actively serve the community as the founder and president of the Arts Council of Henderson. She also sits on the advisory councils of the Nevada Ballet Theatre, the Nevada Public Education Foundation, CLASS! Publications, and the Clark County School District's School Community Partnership Program. Judi's distinguished career has earned her numerous awards and honors including the James Stuart McPhee Memorial Intellectual Freedom Award, the Governor's Arts Recognition Award, the Com-

munity Leaders of America Award, and the City of Henderson Community Achievement Award.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor my friend Judi Steele and her many achievements. Her dedication to the community is commendable and I wish Judi continued success in her future endeavors.

COMMENTARY FROM DAVE
DURENBERGER

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to read the column below from our former Senate colleague Dave Durenberger from Minnesota. Dave continues to be a leader in health policy, having founded the National Institute of Health Policy which promotes health policy dialogue in the Upper Midwest. He also serves as a member of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MEDPAC).

We can all learn from Dave who looks at our health system from a policy perspective, not a purely party perspective.

He is an example for us all.

[National Institute of Health Policy, Mar. 22, 2007]

(By Dave Durenberger)

NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY

MEDICARE "UNFAIR" ADVANTAGE

House Ways and Means Health Committee Chair, Pete Stark, accused AHIP of "lying, using false information" last week when the organization stated the impact that reductions in Medicare Advantage (MA) reimbursements would have on minorities.

When the GOP and AHIP cut a deal to privatize Medicare and set up a formula (benchmarks), AHIP members were positioned to set the annual "defined contribution" Congress must make to private health insurance plans to keep them in the Medicare market. That subsidy today averages 112 percent above what Congress pays for traditional fee-for-service Medicare.

Unfortunately, Republicans asked nothing in return for the subsidy. No cost containment, quality or outcome improvement, no care coordination or service integration, no equity across practices or counties or regions; no value for money. So the plans continue to employ marketing strategies to compete on increasing "benefits" (services access) and reducing beneficiary cost-sharing in "competitive" insurance markets. Both are antithetical to improving "consumer-driven" healthcare cost containment and to improving value for money paid.

When Democrats cry "foul," the AHIP rallies all those folks who now get "more for less," to preserve their unfair advantage over traditional Medicare as well as their insurance companies' profit margins. All of this at the expense of Medicare trust funds, the next generations of tax payers, doctors and hospitals whose payments will be reduced or frozen, and the road to value in medicine on which the AHIP talks a good game but has shown no good-faith effort to "walk their talk."

My suggestion to Pete Stark is that he and his colleagues focus not their anger, but their hearings on the issue of value for money from Medicare Advantage, Private, Fee-for-service Plans, Special Needs Plans,

and all the other hybrid models the financial services industry is putting into the Medicare program.

GOP PREPARES ANOTHER SERIOUS FIGHT

Democrats—and a lot of health economists—have always questioned the value of public subsidies for high-deductible health insurance financed with tax-sheltered Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). Bad tax policy, bad health policy, and bad economics. A December 2006 amendment even expanded the amount of money that can be contributed to HSAs, costing the government \$1 billion in lost tax revenue over the next 10 years.

The new majority in the House is talking about repeal or serious changes, and Republican health policy leader Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah through an aide has declared "there will be a serious fight from Senate Republicans if there is any effort to roll back these provisions." He goes on to claim proof that HSA-driven health insurance plans have reduced health care costs and made American businesses more competitive.

No doubt about it. Bigger deductibles mean cheaper health insurance, but not economies in the big-ticket medical services. HSAs are a totally tax-free wealth-enhancement vehicle and Democrats are serious about finding money to cover all kids, not just the well-born. The bank and financial services industry loves this new product and will help Republicans make a real "serious" fight out of this one.

MEDICARE'S FUTURE

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) chair, Glenn Hackbarth, found varying Congressional reception of MedPAC recommendations for change in physician payment and on-going payment reform initiatives. Because four congressional hearings followed quickly on release of a 300-page summary of nearly two years of work, members of Congress had difficulty finding a path through a forest of recommendations. They eventually will, of course, because they have little other choice given the huge financial consequences of living with the current SGR reimbursement-reduction formula.

MedPAC staff recommendations for changes in the physician payment formula relative to practice expense (54 percent of payment base) ran into fairly stiff resistance from physician members. The Commission is seeking ways to more accurately reflect direct and indirect costs since current formula seems to drive the growing disparity between cognitive and procedural. In another effort to more accurately reflect Medicare policy goals, the staff and commission members were uniformly critical of the MMA policy which drives growing subsidies for Medicare Advantage (MA) insurance plans beyond the payments for traditional Medicare provider expense reimbursement.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The Board of Trustees of the American Hospital Association (AHA) has restated its position on what qualifies as community benefit for purposes of preserving tax exempt status for not-for-profit hospitals. "Charity care, bad debt, unpaid cost of Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, indigent care and other safety net programs," which make up 90 percent of most non-profit hospital reports, continues to be a qualifier. The Catholic Health Association (CHA) of the United States will report to the public by April 1 on a different kind of measure—all audited data. These were developed with the VHA over the past couple years and reflect FY 2006 performance data on 95 percent of CHA hospitals.

Everyone knows that for-profit hospitals—large and small, urban and rural—operate in much the same markets as not-for-profits and have the very same under-pay and no-