

While stories like this are telling, we also have a growing body of research to back up the anecdotes. Premier among these studies is a comprehensive report issued by the Institute of Medicine in November 2003 entitled, "Keeping Patients Safe, Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses." The report finds that, "limiting the number of hours worked per day and consecutive days of work by nursing staff, as is done in other safety-sensitive industries, is a fundamental safety precaution." The report went on to specifically recommend that, "working more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period and more than 60 hours in any 7-day period be prevented except in case of an emergency, such as a natural disaster."

Another study published in the July/August 2004 Health Affairs Journal, "The Working Hours of Hospital Staff Nurses and Patient Safety," found that nurses who worked shifts of twelve-and-a-half hours or more were three times more likely to commit an error than nurses who worked eight-and-a-half hours (a standard shift) or less. The study also found that working overtime increased the odds of making at least one error, regardless of how long the shift was originally scheduled. Finally, this article illustrates how nurses are being forced to work more and more overtime. The majority of nurses surveyed reported working overtime ten or more times in a 28-day period and one-sixth reported working 16 or more consecutive hours at least once during the period. Nurses reported being mandated to work overtime on 360 shifts and on another 143 shifts they described being "coerced" into working voluntary overtime.

As these studies show, the widespread practice of requiring nurses to work extended shifts and forgo days off causes nurses to frequently provide care in a state of fatigue, contributing to medical errors and other consequences that compromise patient safety. In addition to endangering patients, studies also point to overtime issues as a prime contributing factor to our Nation's nursing shortage. For example, a 2001 report by the General Accounting Office, *Nursing Workforce: Emerging Nurse Shortages Due to Multiple Factors*, concluded:

[T]he current high levels of job dissatisfaction among nurses may also play a crucial role in determining the extent of current and future nurse shortages. Efforts undertaken to improve the workplace environment may both reduce the likelihood of nurses leaving the field and encourage more young people to enter the nursing profession . . .

We have the voices of nurses and the research evidence to prove that the practice of requiring nurses to work beyond the point they believe is safe is jeopardizing the quality of care patients receive. It is also contributing to the growing nurse shortage. Current projections are that the nurse workforce in 2020 will have fallen 20 percent below the level necessary to meet demand.

We have existing Federal government standards that limit the hours that pilots, flight attendants, truck drivers, railroad engineers and other professions can safely work before consumer safety is endangered. However, no similar limitation currently exists for our Nation's nurses who are caring for us at often the most vulnerable times in our lives.

The Safe Nursing and Patient Care Act would change that. It would set strict, new

Federal limits on the ability of health facilities to require mandatory overtime from nurses. Nurses would be allowed to continue to volunteer for overtime if and when they feel they can continue to provide safe, quality care. But, forced mandatory overtime would only be allowed when an official state of emergency was declared by Federal, State or local government. These limits would be part of Medicare's provider agreements. They would not apply to nursing homes since alternative staffing and quality measures are already moving forward for those facilities.

To assure compliance, the bill provides HHS with the authority to investigate complaints from nurses about violations. It also grants HHS the power to issue civil monetary penalties of up to \$10,000 for violations of the Act and to increase those fines for patterns of violations.

Providers would be required to post notices explaining these new rights and to post nurse schedules in prominent workplace locations. Nurses would also obtain anti-discrimination protections against employers who continued to force work hours for nurses beyond what a nurse believes is safe for quality care. Providers found to have violated the law would be posted on Medicare's website.

As usual, many States are ahead of the Federal Government when it comes to pinpointing problems that need to be addressed. Numerous States are currently considering bills to strictly limit the use of mandatory nurse overtime. Several States—including California, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and West Virginia—have already passed laws or regulations limiting the practice.

The Safe Nursing and Patient Care Act is an important first step, but it isn't the complete solution. I believe that standards must be developed to define timeframes for safe nursing care within the wide variety of health settings (whether such overtime is mandatory or voluntary). That is why the legislation also requires the Agency on Healthcare Research and Quality to report back to Congress with recommendations for developing overall standards to protect patient safety in nursing care. Once we have better data in that regard, I will support broader limitations on all types of overtime. But, we must not wait to act until that data can be developed. The data collection will take years and the crisis of mandatory overtime is upon us now.

I know that our Nation's hospital trade associations will claim that our solution misses the mark because it is precisely the lack of nurses in the profession today that is necessitating their need to require mandatory overtime. Let me respond directly. Mandatory overtime is dangerous for patients plain and simple. It is also a driving force for nurses leaving the profession. These twin realities make mandatory overtime a dangerous short-term gamble at best. We should join together to end the practice.

Mandatory overtime is a very real problem facing the nursing profession and that is why our bill is endorsed by the American Nurses Association, the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, AFT, SEIU, UAN, and UAW—organizations that speak for millions of America's nurses.

Again, our bill is not the sole solution. For example, I supported the Nurse Reinvestment Act, which was passed by Congress and signed into law in August 2002. That legisla-

tion authorizes new Federal investment and initiatives to increase the number of people pursuing a nursing education. Such efforts will help in the future, but it will be years before that law's impact is felt in our medical system.

We need to help now. We must take steps to improve the nursing profession immediately so that today's nurses will remain in the field to care for those of us who need such care before new nurses can be trained. We also need today's nurses to be there as mentors for the nurses of tomorrow.

Mandatory nurse overtime is a very real quality of care issue for our health system and I look forward to working with my colleagues, enact the Safe Nursing and Patient Care Act. It will start us down the right path toward protecting patients and encouraging people to remain in—and enter—the nursing profession.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND
RETIREMENT OF ALLEN LI

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a valued professional staff member of the Government Accountability Office—Allen Li—who is retiring from GAO after more than 28 years of service. During that time, he has provided invaluable oversight assistance to the Congress, and in particular to the Committee on Science and Technology.

As Director of the Acquisition and Sourcing Management Team, Mr. Li has been responsible for leading GAO's work related to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Examples of his recent oversight efforts include NASA's efforts to develop and build the International Space Station (ISS), Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV), the James Webb Telescope, and shuttle alternatives for supplying the ISS; the agency's management of its Deep Space Network (DSN); and NASA's implementation of its financial management system. He also has been a strong advocate for better cost estimation and project management at NASA and has aided the Committee's efforts to seek improvements at NASA in those areas. Mr. Li appeared before the Committee to testify on a range of NASA issues over the years, and we always found his testimony to be serious and thoughtful. He also testified before the *Columbia* Accident Investigation Board following the tragic loss of the Shuttle *Columbia* and its crew.

Prior to assuming the aforementioned duties, Mr. Li was an Associate Director in GAO's Energy, Resources, and Science Issue Area where he directed work on research and development, nuclear safety, and Department of Energy management issues. However, those assignments represent only a part of his service to Congress and the Nation. Over the past 28 years at GAO, he has worked in several other units in GAO, including the Transportation Issue Area where he specialized in aviation safety and air traffic control modernization. Mr. Li has also frequently testified before Senate and House Committee and Subcommittees on civil and military issues, such as the F-22.

The quality of Allen Li's service has been recognized by GAO, and he has received the

Comptroller General's Distinguished Service Award, two Comptroller General's Meritorious Service Awards, and Director and Outstanding Achievement Awards from several GAO units.

Those who work at GAO make important, though often unheralded, contributions to improving the performance of our government. As Allen Li retires from GAO, I know that my fellow Committee members join me in wishing him well and in thanking him for his decades of dedicated public service.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO TAMMY
MATHIEWS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Tammy Mathews, who has been named the Small Business Association's Small Business Person of the Year for the State of Nevada.

Tammy, the owner of Puppy Enterprises Dog Salon and Bakery and Small Town Dog Vacation Villas, turned a \$50,000 Small Business Association loan into two successful businesses which have flourished over the past several years. Between the two businesses, Tammy's staff consists of more than 20 employees, has a client base of over 1,000 customers, and projected gross sales of nearly \$1,000,000. Tammy's company has garnered widespread press attention and her novel approach to pet care has ensured continued patronage from her many clients. Tammy uses her company's success as a vehicle to give back to the community she serves and has worked to raise money to place shelter dogs and abandoned dogs in permanent homes. In addition to the recognition she received from the Small Business Association, Tammy was also named a 2004 finalist for the most innovative company of the year for the Stevie Awards for Women Entrepreneurs.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Tammy Mathews. Her innovative spirit and hard work are commendable and I wish her every continued success.

TRIBUTE TO FORT GEORGE G.
MEADE AND THEIR SECOND
PLACE FINISH IN THE ARMY
COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE
COMPETITION

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the men and women who serve at Fort George G. Meade for their second place finish in the Army Communities of Excellence competition. The Communities of Excellence award program recognizes top installations from all over the world that demonstrate organizational maturity and outstanding capabilities. Brigadier General John Macdonald, Deputy Commanding General of the Installation Management Command, called the winning installations the "flagships of performance excellence for the Army."

I have the pleasure of representing Maryland's Third Congressional District in the House of Representatives, which neighbors Fort Meade and includes many of the surrounding communities. I am therefore acutely aware of the exciting and difficult work that is done at Fort Meade.

Colonel Ken McCreedy, garrison commander at Fort Meade, is a tremendous leader. He is charged with management of one of the Army's most important installations and has taken command at a time of great upheaval due to the impact of the 2005 BRAC. Despite these tremendous demands on his time, Colonel McCreedy has also involved himself in the community off post. He certainly deserves this recognition and I congratulate him on his fine work.

The men and women who serve with Colonel McCreedy at Fort Meade are exceptional individuals. For 90 years, they have worked to keep our Nation safe. Most people know that the National Security Agency, our military's foremost intelligence agency, is located at Fort Meade but there are many other organizations inside and outside of the intelligence community that contribute to our national security. One example is the Fort Meade Freedom Center, where they are housing soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. They stepped up to assist Walter Reed in housing these soldiers and provide shuttle service so they may receive their medical treatments.

Madam Speaker, I've been fortunate to visit Fort Meade twice in my first few months in Congress. The more I learn about this facility, the more I am impressed. They truly deserve this honor and I congratulate the entire Fort Meade community on their achievement.

WELCOMING EMILIA HAYWARD
DECK

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 3, 2007

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce the birth of Emilia Hayward Deck on May 2, 2007 at St. Vincent's Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida.

Emilia is the daughter of Wiley and Elizabeth Deck who are both part of our Florida 7th District Congressional Staff. The former Elizabeth Buckles and Wiley Deck met as staff members in our Washington office. Both moved to our Florida District Office in St. Augustine, in 2003. They married and have now expanded our Congressional Family with the arrival of Emilia Hayward Deck. Emilia's proud grandfather is Tony Buckles, Chief of Staff for Representative BOB FILNER of California.

To the Deck and Buckles families we extend our warmest congratulations.