

went on to receive her Master's degree in Teaching Mathematics from Purdue University, West Lafayette. Prior to her work with the Gary Teachers Union, Sandra was a mathematics teacher for the Gary School Corporation from 1961 to 1971. Following her ten years in the classroom, Sandra was elected President of the Gary Teachers Union, a position she held until her recent retirement on June 30, 2008. During those years, she served in many other capacities, not only with the Gary Teachers Union, but with the Indiana Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers as well.

Sandra has also participated in numerous civic and community organizations, including: the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Lake Area United Way, the Lake County Mental Health Association, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the YWCA, and the Gary Educational Foundation. For her outstanding efforts, Ms. Irons has received many accolades and awards. To name a few, she was awarded the Viola Briley Service Award by the Gary Teachers Union, the Adam Benjamin, Jr., Advocacy Award by the Mental Health Association, the Labor Leader of the Year Award by the Calumet Project, and the United Way of America's Joseph A. Beirne Community Service Award.

Marvin Setzer, Jr., completed his Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education at Winston Salem Teachers' College in North Carolina in 1962, followed by his Master's degree in Elementary Education from Indiana University, Bloomington. From 1962 to 1981, Marvin was employed by the Gary Community School Corporation as an elementary school teacher. During that time, he began his career as the Working Conditions Committee Chairperson for the Gary Teachers Union. He held this position for more than 30 years before his recent retirement on June 30, 2008. During this time, he has also held other positions with the Gary Teachers Union, including the Coordinator for the Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar, as well as several other posts with the Indiana Federation of Teachers, where he served as its president, the Northwest Indiana Council of Teachers Unions, and the American Federation of Teachers' Progressive Caucus.

Throughout the years, Marvin has also donated much of his time to various community and civic organizations, including: the Lake Area United Way, the Referral Emergency Agency, the Northwest Indiana Open Housing Center, Tots and Teens, and Saint Timothy Community Church.

Madam Speaker, Sandra Irons and Marvin Setzer, Jr., have given their time and efforts selflessly to the teachers, as well as to the students and the community, in Gary, Indiana. Throughout the years, and through their efforts, the quality of life for their colleagues has improved, and the pair has served as true role models to their peers and as true friends to Northwest Indiana. I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending Sandra and Marvin for their outstanding contributions and in wishing them well upon their retirement.

ASSISTANCE NEEDED FOR CAREGIVERS SUPPORTING CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a looming crisis. I have been involved in finding ways to address the growing nursing workforce shortage that threatens access to quality health care for retiring members of the baby boom generation. There is another workforce crisis with which we should also be concerned, which is that facing direct support professionals, often referred to as personal assistants or home health aides. These dedicated individuals provide the kind of daily assistance that allows people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the option to live in home or community-based settings rather than institutions when appropriate. This not only saves taxpayer dollars through the Medicaid program but dramatically improves quality of life for these Americans.

However, wages for direct support professionals have historically been low, particularly those in private non-profit settings. Vacancy rates for direct support professionals are rapidly increasing as other service and health care sector jobs become more competitive. In my home state of Iowa the annual turnover rate at non-profit service providers ranges from 20 percent to more than 40 percent.

It takes individuals with special skills and compassionate motivation to be direct support professionals. For example, Pete Faust has been working at Opportunity Village, a home and community-based services provider in Clear Lake, Iowa, for over 31 years. Although Pete must work extra hours just to pay his bills, he continues to work at Opportunity Village because he understands that consistency and familiarity are what his clients need. Many direct support professionals like Pete would like to continue in this field but are faced with hard choices when there are opportunities to earn more money for their families in other occupations.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the demand for this workforce will increase 41 percent by 2014, and the number of people needing personal assistance services will double by 2050. The current crisis will soon grow exponentially. That is why I strongly support measures like H.R. 1279, the Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act, which creates federal-state Medicaid partnerships to find innovative ways to provide incentives such as increased wages for these workers on a sustainable basis.

I urge my colleagues to support this effort by cosponsoring this legislation and urging the leadership of the House of Representatives to move this and similar proposals forward.

IN RECOGNITION OF HERSCHEL ELKINS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 2008

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, the consumers of California and our nation will lose

their premier protector when Herschel Elkins retires from the California Attorney General's Office this month. Mr. Elkins has devoted his entire career to public service and protecting California's consumers. He is the most senior attorney and longest-serving employee in the AG's office, having celebrated his 50th anniversary in December, 2006.

Herschel Elkins received his J.D. from UCLA in 1956 and began work the same year as a Deputy Attorney General, where he served briefly in the criminal section before transferring to the civil division. Following the Watts riots in 1965, a report commissioned by Governor Pat Brown cited a contributing factor as frustration in the community with merchants taking unfair advantage of the poor. The legislature acted by bolstering the Attorney General's nascent Consumer Fraud Unit and Mr. Elkins was appointed to lead the effort, a position he occupied until 2004 when he was appointed Special Assistant Attorney General for Consumer Policy, Coordination and Development.

During his long tenure with the Consumer Law Section, Herschel used all the arrows in his quiver—litigation, legislation and education—to protect the rights of consumers and push California to the forefront of consumer protection. Mr. Elkins drafted or shepherded many of our state's vital consumer protection laws, including anti-pyramid statutes, the establishment of the Bureau of Auto Repair, laws providing for a "cooling off period" for home solicitations, and mandating civil penalties for unfair competition. As a litigator, Mr. Elkins has represented the Attorney General in more than 150 appellate cases. He has also publicized the Section's work and educated the public about their rights on hundreds of radio and television programs.

Madam Speaker it was a distinct privilege to work side-by-side with Herschel on consumer issues during my time in the California legislature. His knowledge, passion and creativity improved every piece of legislation he reviewed and made those of us whose names were on the bills look that much smarter. I am just one of hundreds of legislators who owe him a sincere debt of gratitude.

After so many years looking after the public welfare, Herschel and Miriam, his wife of 48 years, will enjoy a retirement devoted to their inspiring and growing family. They will travel to Israel, New York and Pennsylvania to spend time with their three sons, David, Jeremy and Joel and their families. Herschel, known as much for his storytelling ability as his legal brilliance, will entertain his grandchildren and, no doubt, pass along his commitment to community and his profound sense of justice. Our state's loss is the Elkins family's well-earned gain.

But Madam Speaker, a dedicated public servant like Herschel Elkins doesn't just walk away from his life's work. Something tells me that Herschel will make himself available to members of the Consumer Law Section and others devoted to the public good who seek his help and guidance.

On behalf of the many millions of protected consumers in the State of California, I ask that the United States House of Representatives join me in saluting Mr. Herschel Elkins for his long career devoted to protecting and guaranteeing a vibrant, just and equitable marketplace.