

of the Central Valley upon its 25th anniversary of service to the community and the families of patients at Children's Hospital Central California. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Ronald McDonald Charities many years of continued success.

HONORING GABRIEL AND LOUISE AMATO AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to join the many family and friends who have gathered to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Gabriel and Louise Amato—quite a milestone for this wonderful couple. Gabe and Louise are more than just my dear friends—they are family—and I am so happy to have this opportunity to congratulate them on this golden anniversary.

Gabe and Louise met as teenagers—Gabe was 17 and Louise was 14—at a Catholic Youth Organization. It was kismet and the two soon became inseparable. They later married on Halloween in 1959. Louise was an educator for more than 25 years and Gabe, after serving in the United States Army for 2 years, worked for the APA Transport Company for nearly 30 years. Together they raised three beautiful children, Laurie, Cheryl, and Marc.

Some of my fondest memories include my cousin Gabe and his wife Louise—they are both so energetic, vibrant, and full of life. Gabe continues to be an active athlete playing basketball and bowling every week. He once won the golden ring for bowling a 300 game and just last week came close to repeating that feat when he bowled a 299. And, though she retired a few years ago, Louise is still engaged in the community.

Anyone who knows them can tell you that Gabe and Louise are a special couple. They are fierce friends—never far from those who need a helping hand. I cannot think of a time when I could not turn to them when I was in need and I have no doubt that you would hear similar stories from all of those fortunate enough to have benefitted from their friendship over the years.

Today, as Gabe and Louise celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary and reflect on the life they built for themselves, they can be proud of the many ways in which they have touched the lives of others. Parent, friend, mentor, and, most importantly, spouse, Gabe and Louise have supported each other and all of those around them with a generosity, kindness, and compassion that is impossible to describe—it can only be felt.

It is with the warmest of hearts that I rise today to join their children, Laurie, Cheryl and Marc; their eight grandchildren, Christopher, Lindsey, Justin, Sydney, Erica, Sera, Marc, and Katie; as well as the multitude of family and friends who have gathered today to wish them a very happy 50th wedding anniversary and all the best for many more years of love and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO A CALIFORNIA WATER ICON: THOMAS J. GRAFF

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Thomas J. Graff, who passed away on November 12, 2009, after a courageous battle with cancer. Tom will be remembered as the dynamic force that helped shape the way that the State of California and the Federal Government manage water and protect the environmental resources of the State. Tom worked for and founded the California office of the Environmental Defense Fund in Oakland. His water achievements were based on an ability to work effectively with water users, legislators, conservationists, economists, and the public. He was known for his insightful thinking, writing and ability to translate complex water issues into understandable dialogue that legislators and the public could understand.

The water and environmental communities have lost a valuable champion, a true leader and a good friend. In a world today where hard feelings and rhetoric seem to capture the headlines, Tom worked to find the common ground and opportunities for sound water management. Tom's shoes will never be filled, but we can set a path to continue to follow his philosophy of finding solutions for our complex water issues.

"Along with much of California, I have been informed and inspired by Tom Graff since the mid-1970s," said Tim Brick, chairman of the board of directors for Metropolitan Water District, Los Angeles, California. "Tom truly recognized the value of water and fought to ensure that the environment gets its rightful share. Long before others, he was a beacon in promoting conservation, water transfers and environmental protections as solutions for California's great water systems, the Colorado River, the Central Valley Project, and the State Water Project. The development of policies and programs to ensure a sustainable Bay-Delta will be his greatest legacy."

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr. Graff, and I wish to express my sincere sympathy to his family as well as the extended family who have endured the loss of their loved one. I ask that all Members join me to honor this icon for his life's work.

INTRODUCTION OF PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD ACT OF 2009

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will expedite the adoption of electronic medical records throughout the health care sector nationwide. Creating an interoperable information technology network for health care will decrease health care costs and increase patient safety. While the implementation of electronic medical records were an internal feature of this act, another new and innovative technology, the personal health

record (PHR), has emerged to further strengthen the health care system by engaging individuals directly in their health care experiences. Active consumer engagement promises better patient health outcomes, reduction in health care costs, and greater patient safety. For these reasons, I am proud to introduce the Personal Health Records Act of 2009 today with my colleague Representative DAVID REICHERT.

We are all concerned with rising health care costs. Portable, Internet-based PHRs can be a critical piece of the process of improving the quality and efficiency of the health care system in this country. With PHRs, patients can both electronically import and export pertinent medical information to their health care providers. As a patient travels between multiple health care facilities, the patient's complete medical record can be easily accessed at the nearest computer, thus decreasing health care cost through limiting the number of repeated laboratory and diagnostic tests.

PHRs also engage patients in their medical care decisions by allowing them to personalize their medical history, medication lists, and allergies from a click of their mouse at their home. Patients can avoid repeatedly having to fill out the proverbial office room clipboard repeatedly. Additionally, PHRs can give patients a vehicle for personalized communication with their providers, thus allowing them to receive reminders, as an example, for preventive care, or receive information about medications they have been prescribed.

In order to maximize the potential of PHRs, the Personal Health Records Act of 2009 would define the critical components to be included in PHRs, including past medical and surgical history, medications, and allergies. The legislation also requires the Office of the National Coordinator to develop guidelines regarding the technological standards for interoperability between PHRs and electronic health records, and makes recommendations for the incorporation of PHRs into community and behavioral health programs. As health care provider adoption of PHRs is paramount to their success, Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act would be available for providers that demonstrate meaningful use of electronic medical records through the interoperability of electronic medical records with PHRs.

Since PHRs will change the landscape of how confidential, health care information is obtained across the nation, issues of privacy, security, and patient safety are incorporated into PHR development from the onset. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 addresses many of these issues, the Personal Health Record Act further evaluates issues pertaining to PHR privacy, utilization, and patient safety.

The Personal Health Record Act aims to empower individuals to have a greater involvement in their medical care decisions. This engagement will lead to better health outcomes, not only by giving health care providers a more complete picture of a patient's medical history, but also by providing a tool through which the consumer can actively engage in their health care.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this legislation.