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### House Fails to Override President's Children's Health Care Veto

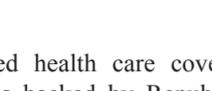
While a House majority voted to support the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and override the President's veto of bipartisan legislation to provide health care to 10 million children, the effort still fell short.

During the past decade, the joint federal-state program known as SCHIP has provided millions of children with needed medical coverage, including some lifesaving procedures. In 2006, SCHIP covered 248,366 children in North Carolina. Still, 274,783 children remain uninsured. The reauthorization of SCHIP offers an opportunity to get many more of these children covered.

Across the country, SCHIP covers about 6 million children from low-income families not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid. And while there are 6 million children served, there are more than 6 million more American children who remain uninsured.

Families depend on SCHIP and I will continue to do everything I can to provide health insurance to the millions of children who depend on SCHIP.

SCHIP is not a program exclusively for the poor – Medicaid already provides health care for children who are indigent. SCHIP was created to provide relief for middle-income Americans whose earnings are too high to qualify for Medicare and too low to afford private health insurance.



The legislation vetoed by the President provided a \$35 billion expansion of the SCHIP program and would have provided health care coverage to 10 million children. The legislation was backed by Republicans and Democrats in both houses of Congress and enjoyed support from Governors of both parties. Additionally, a series of new polls indicated overwhelming public support for SCHIP, with as much as 81 percent of the country backing the bipartisan Congressional plan.



Providing access to quality health care to these children is a moral issue. I vow to continue to fight to enact legislation to provide health care for 10 million children this year. Within the next two weeks, Congress is expected to consider legislation to meet this goal and provide for our nation's children.

## Applauding EC's Coast Guard

This week I entered a statement into the Congressional Record recognizing a Coast Guard Rescue Team from Elizabeth City that lifted a Navy pilot to safety after ejecting from his F-18 jet about 80-miles southeast of Cape Henry.



This is the statement I entered into the Congressional Record:

Madame Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I rise today to pay a sincere tribute to the Search and Rescue Team of Lieutenant Marc Tunstall, Ensign Jason Evans, Petty Officer 2nd Class Mike Ackermann and Petty Officer 3rd Class Steven Acuna. These men of Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City rescued a downed Navy fighter pilot from the Atlantic Ocean this past Thursday.

At 6 pm on October 11, 2007, Lt. Marc Tunstall and Ensign Jason Evans, pilot and co-pilot of a Coast Guard HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter found the downed F/A-18 Hornet nearly 80 miles off Cape Henry, Virginia. Rescue swimmer Perry Officer 2nd Class Mike Ackermann was dispatched to retrieve the pilot from the ocean, whereupon the rescued pilot was hoisted in the helicopter by flight mechanic Petty Officer 3rd Class Steven Acuna. The rescued pilot was transported to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital where he is in stable condition, with only minor injuries from the crash.



Madame Speaker, this successful rescue is one of nearly 360 search and rescue missions executed every year by the men and women of Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City. In the last 60 years, the Air Station has rescued or assisted over 10,000 people. I am proud to have Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City in my district, and prouder that their hard work and bravery saves lives every year. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the exemplary work of Lieutenant Tunstall, Ensign Evans, Petty Officer 2nd Class Ackermann and Petty Officer 3rd Class Acuna. Thank you Madame Speaker.

## Digital Television Transition Legislation

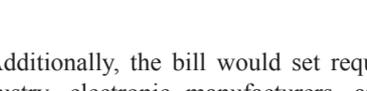
This week Maryland Congressman Albert Wynn and I introduced legislation aimed at ensuring that America's seniors are prepared for the upcoming transition from analog to digital television. The bill, the Preparing America's Seniors for the Digital Television Transition Act of 2007, is a companion to Senate legislation introduced by Wisconsin Senator Herb Kohl.



On February 17, 2009, television stations will cease broadcasting analog signals, at which point analog televisions will stop working unless they are connected to a converter, cable or satellite. The legislation would formalize a partnership between the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and the Administration on Aging (AoA) to craft a national consumer education campaign targeting older individuals who depend on over-the-air analog television signals.

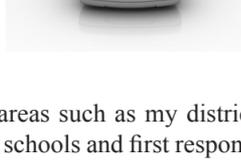
The bill would also establish a grant program to support non-profits and state and local government agencies, such as area agencies on aging, as they help seniors and other vulnerable populations navigate the transition and the coupon program. The coupon program was created by NTIA to help subsidize the cost of a converter box for analog televisions.

The legislation also modifies the coupon program to ensure that households relying solely on over-the-air television sets are prioritized and that residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities are eligible to participate.



Additionally, the bill would set requirements for the broadcasting industry, electronic manufacturers, and electronic retailers which include mandatory public service announcements; placement of easily identifiable labels on coupon-eligible converter boxes; and the maintenance of toll-free phone lines to help individuals with converter box installation. Finally, the legislation would set specific reporting requirements for both the NTIA and FCC in order to monitor the overall progress of the transition and the implementation of the coupon program.

Without this legislation, it is likely many seniors could find themselves unable to watch television and they won't even know why or what to do to fix the problem. This legislation provides a commonsense approach to ensure that there is a plan of action in place to keep millions of seniors from experiencing a blank screen when the transition to digital television occurs.



The transition could help close the digital divide; increase access to health care for rural areas such as my district; and widen the communication capacity for our schools and first responders. This represents an enormous opportunity, but everyone must be ready for the transition. This legislation ensures everyone can be ready.

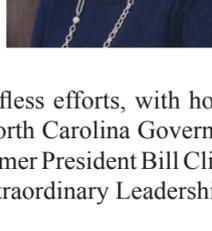
## Honoring Alice Ballance

This week I had the opportunity to honor Mrs. Alice Eason Ballance of Winsor with the following statement entered into the Congressional Record:

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing and congratulating Alice Eason Ballance of Winsor, North Carolina. Mrs. Ballance was recently named as this year's recipient of the Experience Works Prime Time Award for North Carolina. This national award program honors individuals over 65 who continue to make meaningful contributions in the workplace, and who best reflect the characteristics of leadership, learning, mentoring and contributing to the nation and their local communities.

Mrs. Ballance is highly deserving of this honor after a lifetime centered on helping others, particularly those who need help the most. She continues to work hard each day to help the poor and disadvantaged in eastern North Carolina and she has had many successes along the way.

Mrs. Ballance understood the power of voting and mounted a highly successful voter registration drive where she personally taught people to read to enable them to overcome literacy tests. Among her many accomplishments, she has helped displaced sharecroppers find housing. She has worked to open the welfare system to anyone who needed assistance, and developed programs to assist those living in poverty to secure employment.



She has been recognized many times for her selfless efforts, with honors including the Long Leaf Pine from former North Carolina Governor James Hunt, a Community Service Award from former President Bill Clinton and the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award for Extraordinary Leadership.

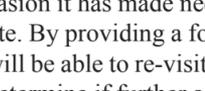
Today, the 88-year-old Mrs. Ballance still works nine hours a day as the Director of Kiddie World/Mary Alice Day Center, overseeing the delivery of daycare services to 150 children and 25 adults. She is an energetic inspiration to all who know her. Mrs. Ballance embodies the true spirit of commitment and compassion; she has given all that she can to her community.

The communities in eastern North Carolina are better for Mrs. Ballance's efforts, so it is a great honor for me to recognize the success and achievements of this outstanding resident of the First District of North Carolina.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## Extending the Internet Tax Moratorium

This week the House voted to extend the moratorium on state and local taxes on Internet access for four years – to November 1, 2011.



The House voted 405 to 2 to amend the Internet Tax Freedom Act, H.R. 3678, to ensure that there is no lapse in the moratorium. The bill also includes several needed adjustments to the current moratorium statute, including clarifying the definition of "Internet access" and clarifying the treatment of gross receipts taxes in certain states.

The bill gives much-needed clarity to the communications and Internet industries. Providing an extension that is four years long allows companies a sufficient amount of time to plan their investments.

The Internet tax moratorium was first enacted in 1998. Congress has extended the moratorium twice before – in 2001 and 2004 – and on each occasion it has made needed adjustments to the statute. By providing a four-year extension, Congress will be able to re-visit the moratorium in 2011 and determine if further adjustments need to be made.



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