

my home State of Florida which provides low-income and at-risk children the scholarships and the guidance that they need to obtain a quality college education.

As a former educator and a former Florida certified teacher, I am personally aware of the importance in providing our children a solid education so that they may be successful, productive, and active members of society in the future.

When students receive the support, the mentoring, and the financial assistance necessary to pursue a college degree, they begin to realize that they can achieve their goals, they are capable of reaching their dreams, and there are people ready to say, "We are here to help you."

This is what Take Stock in Children offers to all of these children. It is an opportunity for the kids in our community to take advantage of the education they might not have otherwise been offered.

Take Stock in Children created an ingenious model of operation which provides the structure and the stability that at-risk and low-income students need in order to be guided to be most productive into college and beyond.

With its innovative mentorship, scholarship, case management, and accountability systems, it is no wonder why Take Stock in Children has flourished. The passion and commitment evident in all aspects of the organization is indeed inspiring. Over 94 percent of all funds that they gather go directly to scholarships and services to students. As more funds are made available to Take Stock in Children, they are quickly made available to the students.

Take Stock in Children has been able to expand into a public-private partnership, so that for every \$2 raised for scholarship and student services, they receive a \$1 match from the Florida Prepaid College Foundation, creating millions of dollars worth of resources for our kids.

As all of our Florida families know, the Florida Prepaid program allows them to invest early for their children's college education. Parents lock in the cost of college when they begin paying into the program, saving them years of college rate increases and allowing them several years to save for their children's educational needs.

One in ten Florida children has a Florida Prepaid plan, and over 206,000 prepaid students have already graduated from college. I am proud to say that I was one of the cocreators of this program when I served in the Florida Senate.

Take Stock in Children is actually the largest single purchaser of Florida Prepaid scholarships, and it is a great coordinated victory in the fight to help children achieve their dreams of success. It has been over 21 years since I helped create the Florida Prepaid program, and I am continually proud of its successes.

With Florida Prepaid and Take Stock in Children working together, an educational powerhouse has been created for Florida students, combining financial aid as well as guidance and counseling for enrolled and eligible children.

Over 520 students in my district today are recipients of scholarships from Take Stock in Children, and without the support, finding college tuition for these students would not have been likely.

□ 1845

Today, almost \$109 million have been awarded in scholarships and over 1 million hours logged, with over 11,000 volunteers dedicated to helping these students. It is because of the commitment of dedicated individuals that Take Stock in Children has come to be such a tremendous success. As a Member of Congress and an ardent supporter of giving the best education possible to our youth, it pleases me greatly that organizations like Take Stock in Children exists today. I look forward to hearing about all of the future successes of Take Stock in Children, and I again applaud them for their everyday victories for all of our children.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VERMEL COOK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute a woman of success and pay tribute to Vermel Cook, 95 years old, who passed just this last week, born on November 24, 1913, a woman that has a very special place in my heart, and that of the city of Houston. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine a woman born before the conclusion of World War I, in the midst of a segregated South, who became an important surgical nurse who attended to the surgeries of the famed surgeon, Dr. Michael DeBakey, and Dr. Denton Cooley, at the Methodist Hospital.

What an achievement. And she did that for 30 years. In her 30 years I would imagine she saw some of the first heart transplants. She saw the first opportunities to give new life to patients through the genius of Dr. Michael DeBakey, already passed, and Dr. Denton Cooley, who still lives in our community. I'm very proud that this woman raised beautiful children, 6 children. She has 8 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren.

And one of her wonderful children was a dear friend of mine, the Mitchell family. Her granddaughter, Pam Mitchell, who is saddened by her death, is one of the 8 grandchildren. And her wonderful daughter, surviving daughter, JoAnn Griggs, as well, had the opportunity to live with a great mother and a great father. Her husband, deceased, Leroy Cook, they were married for 50 years and produced great talent

for the Mitchell family. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell and granddaughter Pam and grandson, her young grandson, traveled around the community and provided great music.

She was a woman of religion as well, a member of the Progressive New Hope Church under the Reverend Ennis Brown, and she served at that church for many, many years, a great historic church in the city of Houston. But then as Pastor Brown passed away, she moved to one of the up-and-coming starrng churches under the leadership of my dear friend, Pastor Samuel Ratliff, Brentwood Baptist Church. And I am reminded of my visits to that church when Pastor Ratliff and all of the leadership of that church always rallied around Sister Cook. They always were so grateful of her presence there, and, as well, the spark and the laughter and the smile that she brought to the congregation.

I will always remember her, generous in spirit and heart, a nurturer. And now I know why. A surgical nurse in the midst of a segregated America, living through World War I and World War II, standing at the side of the founder of the veterans hospital system of America, Dr. Michael DeBakey. And then his tutee, Dr. Denton Cooley, two giants in the field of medicine. Now their fallen hero goes alongside of Dr. DeBakey, my very dear friend, Sister Vermel Cook.

As she is buried this coming weekend I would ask that we remember her challenges, but also her spirit. I will always be proud to have known her and to have recognized the greatness of her service and how she pioneered for nurses who now have come behind her. She'll be funeralized on Saturday, this coming Saturday, August 1, 2009, at the Brentwood Baptist Church. Though we are saddened by her passing, we know that this will be a commemoration, a celebration of the pioneering spirit and the successes that she had. We pay tribute to Vermel Cook; yes, fallen, but yet successful, a woman that we can be very proud of in this great Nation that gives us opportunity. God bless you, Vermel Cook, and God bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BIG GUNS HAVE LINED UP AGAINST H.R. 1207

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the big guns have lined up against H.R. 1207, the bill to audit the Federal Reserve. What is it that they are so concerned about? What information are they hiding from

the American people? The screed is: "Transparency is okay—except for those things they don't want to be transparent."

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke argues that H.R. 1207, the legislation to audit the Federal Reserve, would politicize monetary policy. He claims that monetary policy must remain "independent," that is, secret. He ignores history, because chairmen of the Federal Reserve in the past, especially when up for reappointment, do their best to accommodate the President with politically driven low interest rates and a bubble economy.

Former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns, when asked about all the inflation he brought about in 1971, before Nixon's re-election, said that the Fed has to do what the President wants it to do, or it would "lose its independence." That about tells you everything. Not by accident, Chairman Burns strongly supported Nixon's program of wage and price controls, the same year; but I guess that's not political. Is not making secret deals with the likes of Goldman Sachs, international financial institutions, foreign governments and foreign central banks, politicizing monetary policy? Bernanke argues that the knowledge that their discussions and decisions will one day be scrutinized will compromise the freedom of the Open Market Committee to pursue sound policy. If it is sound and honest, and serves no special interest, what's the problem?

He claims that H.R. 1207 would give power to Congress to affect monetary policy. He dreamt this up to instill fear, an old statist trick to justify government power. H.R. 1207 does nothing of the sort. He suggested that the day after an FOMC meeting, Congress could send in the GAO to demand an audit of everything said and done. This is hardly the case. The FOMC function, under 1207, would not change. The detailed transcripts of the FOMC meetings are released every 5 years, so why would this be so different, and what is it that they don't want the American people to know? Is there something about the transcripts that need to be kept secret, or are the transcripts actually not verbatim?

Fed sychophants argue that an audit would destroy the financial market's faith in the Fed. They say this in the midst of the greatest financial crisis in history, brought on by none other than the Federal Reserve. In fact, Chairman Bernanke stated on November 14, 2007, that "a considerable amount of evidence indicates that central bank transparency increases the effectiveness of monetary policy and enhances economic and financial performance."

They also argue that an audit would hurt the value of the U.S. dollar. In fact, the Fed, in less than 100 years of its existence, has reduced the value of the 1914 dollar by 96 percent. They claim H.R. 1207 would raise interest rates. How could it? The Fed sets inter-

est rates and the bill doesn't interfere with monetary policy. Congress would have no say in the matter; and besides, Congress likes low interest rates. It is argued that the Fed wouldn't be free to raise interest rates if they thought it necessary. But Bernanke has already assured the Congress that rates are going to stay low for the foreseeable future, and, again, this bill does nothing to allow Congress to interfere with interest rate setting.

Fed supporters claim that they want to protect the public's interest with their secrecy. But the banks and Wall Street are the opponents of 1207, and the people are for it. Just who best represents the "public's" interest? The real question is, why are Wall Street and the Feds so hysterically opposed to 1207? Just what information are they so anxious to keep secret? Only an audit of the Federal Reserve will answer these questions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICANS NEED HEALTH CARE NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because America needs health care, and they need it now. The American people cannot wait. Every day that we wait 14,000 Americans lose their health insurance. 46 years ago, at the March on Washington, I said, "They tell us to wait. They tell us to be patient." We cannot wait, we cannot be patient. People are losing their health, their homes or their very lives because our health system does not work for them. This is not right. It is not just. And we can do better, much better.

It is our moral obligation to lead. The insurance companies do not need our leadership. The drug companies do not need our leadership. They do not need our help. Real, hardworking people need us to lead. We must make sure that in our rush to appease the few, that we do not harm the many. We must adopt a bill that has a strong public health insurance option. We must adopt a bill that makes health premiums affordable to low and middle-income workers. We must not negotiate away our commitment to the working poor and to middle class Americans. This is the kind of leadership Americans need.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." If we do not protect our most vulnerable hard-

working Americans and their families, we will perpetuate this injustice. The time is always right to do what is right. We should not be afraid to do what is right. We must answer the call of history and pass health reform that works for all Americans.

□ 1900

HEALTH CARE AND JOSHUA LOYA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that sharing real stories from people in our communities is the best opportunity to put a human face on the task before us with respect to reforming health care.

We have spoken about costs, tax increases and job losses. We've spoken about access to care and about government-run options. These are all deeply important factors in this equation, and we have a duty to the American people to debate them fully, but there is also a human element that cuts through the debate and the rhetoric and that perfectly crystallizes what is at stake here.

My Republican colleagues and I have tried to impress on the other side the importance of maintaining the doctor-patient decision-making process. I think that Joshua Loya's story says it all.

Brittany Kraft is a constituent of mine from Pearland, Texas. She was 24 weeks pregnant in March of 2002 when her unborn son was diagnosed with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. She was told that he would not be born alive. Her cardiologist consulted with groups of surgeons around the country, but none could offer the help that she needed. Brittany was advised that her child could be put to sleep in utero, and she could go directly to the hospital for a stillbirth. She was unwilling to accept this as her only option, and she decided to fight for her unborn baby.

Brittany made copies of the fetal echocardiograms and sent them to the top five pediatric cardiothoracic surgeons she could find. Only one, Dr. Ed Bove at the University of Michigan's Mott Children's Hospital, said if Brittany came to Michigan, they would do everything they could to save her unborn child.

On June 26, 2002, Joshua Ruben Loya was born. He was immediately intubated and wired. He was in critical condition, and doctors felt that he was not a good candidate for the corrective surgeries available. He was listed for a heart transplant the day after he was born, and after 16 life-threatening days, at 3 in the morning, Brittany got the call that there was a heart for Joshua.

Almost 7 years later, you would never know what Brittany and Joshua went through. He is a happy, growing boy, with medical needs but with no limitations on a good day. He can run,