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processing in the districts of Long Island and New York, and general manager of the Kennedy International Airport mail facility. He has served as Northeast regional director of mail processing and the general manager/postmaster of the Newark and Florida divisions. He led mail distribution in south Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew and did an extraordinary job that brought him well-deserved national recognition.

I have known and worked with Jim Walton for almost a decade, beginning back in 1984 when I was a member of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee and he was appointed by the Postmaster General to head up a task force that I requested so we could bring much needed improvements to postal operations in the Virgin Islands.

Jim recognized that we had real challenges in the logistics of delivering the mail, both within the islands and off-island. He also realized that our facilities were substandard and needed to be upgraded.

Over the next 10 years, we took on an ambitious modernization program for all three islands. On St. Thomas it included the complete renovation of the Veterans Drive Station in Frenchtown and creation of a new airport sorting station to speed up delivery on all three islands. Earlier this month, a new post office was opened to serve residents of the island's east end.

On St. Croix the Kingshill Station was modernized, the new Gallows Bay Station was built, Sunny Isle was expanded, and the Richmond Post Office was renovated. On St. John, the Cruz Bay Post Office was expanded, doubling its size.

Just 2 weeks ago, Jim Walton instituted a restructuring in Virgin Islands postal operations that I had long pressed the Postal Service to put in place, by removing the Virgin Islands out from under Puerto Rico and placing us directly under his office. He also formalized the reporting system that Virgin Islands postmasters follow.

Now, the Virgin Islands has the direct attention of a man who has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of our operations.

Jim Walton has the ability to assess problems, develop solutions, and implement them. He also recognizes that the post office is, in fact, the Postal Service. Its customers and its employees are people in whom he takes a genuine interest.

There are times when one person can make a real difference in the lives of many, and Jim Walton is one of them.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I recognize Jim Walton and I commend him for all he had done on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands.

THE FEDERAL HEALTH CARE LIABILITY REFORM ACT OF 1994

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 27, 1994

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to establish fundamental tort system reforms. These reforms could be passed immediately and provide relief for mounting health care costs, even if other health system reforms are never enacted.

This legislation will: set a $250,000 cap on noneconomic and punitive damages; eliminate the collateral source rule that allows for double recovery; abolish joint and several liability, so only defendants who are actually at fault are liable; require periodic payment of damages over $50,000 as opposed to lump-sum payment; limit attorneys fees to 25 percent of the first $100,000 and reduce the allowable percentage as the award increases; establish a 1 year reasonable discovery rule and 3 year statute of limitation with special exceptions for minors; and require pretrial dispute resolution to encourage reasonable settlement.

Our current medical malpractice system is not effective in compensating injured individuals or at improving the quality of health care. It is a system with powerful incentives for wasteful spending. Plaintiffs are allowed to sue even if the facts do not merit a lawsuit, and cash payments of 3 to 4 times claimants' medical bills are awarded. The median verdict in medical liability claims was $150,000 in 1989, $450,000 in 1991, and jumped to $646,487 in 1992. The General Accounting Office reported that over half of total health care liability costs are spent defending against claims that result in no payment. A Rand Corp. study found that 57 percent of money spent in health care liability litigation never reaches injured patients.

Physicians and hospitals are forced to provide care, not for the well being of the patient, but to protect themselves from lawsuits. Our physicians are the best trained and equipped, yet they are also the most often sued. Claims against doctors rose from 2 per 100 in the 1960's to 16 per 100 in the late 1980's. Physicians, fearing malpractice suits, are increasingly opting out of high risk specialities and medicine altogether. Those hurt most are disadvantaged pregnant women, rural communities, and senior citizens.

Medical malpractice liability adds at least $15 billion a year to the cost of health care, according to a recent study by the Competitiveness Center of the Hudson Institute. It is driving up the cost of treatments, services, medical devices and pharmaceuticals, and inhibits research and development of new product. It is a detriment to patients, providers and taxpayers, and if we allow medical malpractice suits to continue unrestrained, medical care will continue to become more expensive and there will be less access to care.

REGARDING H.R. 3626 AND H.R. 3636

HON. JIM NUSSLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 27, 1994

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Judiciary Committee have been working very diligently over the past year and one-half to determine the Nation's communications policies for the 21st century. While the Communications Act of 1934 has been successful in many instances, it is evident to me this law needs to be updated to reflect the recent technological advancements in the communications industry. And I commend the members who serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Judiciary Committee for their efforts to determine reasonable policies to reflect the recent changes in the industry.

The Energy and Commerce Committee approved two bills earlier this year: H.R. 3636, addressing the long distance and manufacturing restrictions on the Bell breakup agreement, and H.R. 3636, dealing with competition in the cable television and local telephone markets. The Judiciary Committee approved a slightly different version of H.R. 3626, and it is my understanding a compromise version of this legislation has been agreed to by both committees.

While I am pleased the House is scheduled to debate and vote on these pieces of legislation tomorrow, I want to pause for a moment at the outset of consideration of these bills by the full House of Representatives to raise an important issue which we should keep in mind throughout the debate on these bills. These bills are intended to promote competition and stimulate investment. While some regulatory oversight is needed over the new policies, it seems to me the bills should not be inundated with unreasonable regulations and requirements of the Federal Communications Commission and/or the Justice Department.

Increased competition in the telecommunications industry will led to lower prices and more choices for consumers. Most importantly, rural areas will be better served if there is more competition in the industry. It seems to me the best way to foster more competition to lower prices, increase choices, and improve service to consumers is to minimize, to the extent practicably possible, regulatory requirements and bureaucratic red tape facing the industry.

I look forward to the debate that will ensue on these bills. And I am hopeful Congress will shape communications policies for the 21st century without imposing unnecessary regulations and bureaucratic red tape.

HONORING FRANK R. DUARTE IN RECOGNITION FOR HIS OUTSTANDING DEDICATION TO THE LATINO COMMUNITY

HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 27, 1994

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend a special individual, dedicated community leader, and a dear friend, Frank Duarte, a gentleman affectionately known as the elder of east Los Angeles.

Born in 1910, in Chihuahua, Mexico, at a time of intense civic turmoil, Frank has lived to tell the history of both his adopted country, the United States, and his native Mexico. In 1911, his family emigrated to the United States, fleeing the Mexican Revolution. Frank's father, working on the railroads, eventually brought his family to Los Angeles, where they lived for 9 years before returning to Mexico. An event that left a lasting impression on Frank occurred at the tender age of 13, when he witnessed the death of Mexican Revolution hero, Pancho Villa, on July 20, 1923.

A year later, the Duarte family again moved to Los Angeles, living near Union Station. Having completed his high school education and needing to help his mother raise his younger siblings, Frank took odd jobs in con-

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