



WEEKEND IN PHOTOS...Top, Cranford fireworks blast on July 4 lights up the crowd by Paul Lachenauer; center, families enjoy July 4 celebration in Cranford by Susan Dougherty; bottom, biker girls line up in patriotic style in Cranford by Christina Hinke. See the many weekend photos at www.goleader.com/photos.

Lance and Payne Discuss Healthcare Reform Proposal

By JOSEPH GABRIEL AUBOURG
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WASHINGTON, D.C. — About 50 million Americans are uninsured in the United States, according to statistics provided by the government and Medical Billing Advocates of America, a group that wants to lower the cost of healthcare. This data has President Barack Obama pushing for a reform to have all Americans insured by expanding coverage, improving quality, lowering costs, honoring patient choice and holding insurance companies accountable.

Reps. Leonard Lance (R-7th, Union) and Donald Payne (D-10th, Essex) told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that they agree that Americans should have the option to choose between a government-backed, private or employer-backed health insurance plan. They also agree that hospitals across the United States should update their medical data and technology to save money on waste and insurance fraud. Also, both Congressmen want to find a way to pay for this reform without putting the burden on American taxpayers.

Mr. Lance, along with a group of centrist house Republicans called the "Tuesday Group Political Action Committee," is trying to find a compromise to competing bills by Senators Chris Dodd (D-Conn.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and the House Republican version. The "Tuesday Group" has some 30 members, including Mr. Lance, Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-11th, Morris) and Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-2nd, Salem) from New Jersey.

The group has unveiled its own healthcare reform proposal, the "Medical Rights and Reform Act." Charlie Dent (R-Pa.), part of the "Tuesday Group," said this provision, among other things, would establish an "independent cures acceleration network" to fund and research promising discoveries such as cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, AIDS, and other life threatening diseases, and make grants available to applicants with or without access to private matching funds. The Tuesday Group Republicans co-leader Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) has said this could lead to the development of life-saving cures for the above life threatening diseases.

"New Jersey's workforce and companies are on the cutting edge of the development of medical treatments and biotechnology," Mr. Lance told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*. "We must close the innovation gap and help speed up the process of turning breakthrough discoveries from the laboratory into life-saving treatments."

Mr. Lance's second provision included in the act would allow young people up to age 26, who otherwise might not choose to purchase insurance, to have access to their parents' health insurance. The measure, he said, would help reduce the number of the uninsured American citizens by at least seven million.

The "Medical Rights and Reform Act" includes an innovative program of tax benefits and funds for states to

develop and implement universal access programs to provide greater coverage for the uninsured. It also contains provisions that emphasize prevention and wellness, expand options for small businesses and individual purchasers and extend coverage for dependents, provisions that the public think tank, The Heritage Foundation, supports.

Mr. Payne, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, said the provision he would like to see in healthcare reform is the removal of "the financial barrier for healthcare in terms of dental vision, mental and physical care."

"We must [in addition] lower the cost of prescription drugs for all Americans," Mr. Payne said.

Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-6th, Monmouth), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, said in a statement on June 23 that, "The ranks of the uninsured continue to swell [while] the cost of insurance and medical care continues to skyrocket."

The American Medical Association (AMA), a group that advocates the rights of physicians, told *The Leader/Times* that the AMA "supports health system reform alternatives that are consistent with AMA principles of pluralism, freedom of choice, freedom of practice, and universal access for patients."

A majority of House Republicans said that the Democratic health reform bill, which would cost more than \$1 trillion over 10 years, is too costly, a point backed up by both the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and supported by Greg D'Angelo, a healthcare analyst with the Heritage Foundation.

While the GOP alternative "Medical Rights and Reform Act" might cost less in the long run than the Democratic bill, the CBO said they still do not have a final price tag on the proposal.

Lance Announces Mobile Office Hours

WESTFIELD — Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th, Union) and his staff will host a series of mobile district office hours throughout the month of July in an effort to bring the services of his office directly to his constituents.

Any one who needs assistance with a federal agency or would like to offer a comment about any issue pending before the Congress, is asked to stop by for assistance. The locations are as follows:

Saturday, July 11, Scotch Plains Farmers Market, 10 a.m. to noon, Scotch Plains Municipal Parking Lot, 430 Park Avenue.

Monday, July 13, Springfield, 2 to 4 p.m., Jonathan Dayton High School, 139 Mountain Avenue.

July 22 New Providence, 2 to 4 p.m., on Wednesday, July 22 at the New Providence Borough Hall located at 360 Elkwood Avenue.

Wednesday, July 29 Roselle Park, 2 to 4 p.m., at the town Gazebo located at Chestnut and East Grant Streets.

Mr. Lance's mobile office's are free and open to the public. Residents with questions call the Westfield office at (908) 518-7733 or the Flemington Office at (908) 788-6900 for more information or visit www.lance.house.gov.



MEETING OF POLITICAL MINDS...The grand opening of Senator Tom Kean, Jr.'s new District 21 legislative office on North Avenue in Westfield attracted a large crowd throughout the evening last Wednesday. Pictured, left to right, are: Roselle Republican Chairman Roger Strycki, Mountainside Councilman Glenn Mortimer, State GOP District 22 Assembly candidate Bo Vastine of Scotch Plains and Tom Sloan, an attorney in Scotch Plains.



LET FREEDOM RING...Frank DeCicco of Colonia, and raised in Cranford, plays Independence Day-themed music on his boom box and thanks America's armed forces for their fight for freedom. He sits with his wife, Gail, July 4 at Nomahegan Park in Cranford. Their son, David, is a senior airman for the New Jersey Air and National Guard.

Rolling Thunder Ride for Freedom Set for Sept. 20th

AREA — This year's annual *Ride for Freedom* will be held on September 20th, 2009. As is the past, this freedom ride will be in honor of POW/MIA Recognition Day — a day of remembrance and hope for the speedy and safe return of American Prisoners of War, and those still missing in Action. It also seeks the return of the

remains of fallen Soldiers.

The first official commemoration of POW/MIAs was July 18, 1979. It was the result of resolutions passed in Congress. The first national ceremony was held on this date. Over the next several years, it was held in varying dates of the year. Finally, in 1986, The National League of Families proposed the third Friday in September as a day to recognize and remember POW/MIAs. This date was selected, as it is not associated with any wars. Each year, the president of the United States issues a proclamation on this day.

Barn Dance at Stable Includes BBQ Dinner

MOUNTAINSIDE — The Trailside Nature and Science Center will hold an outdoor barn dance and barbecue dinner at Watchung Stables in Mountainside on Saturday, July 25 from 7 to 10 p.m. This program is part of Trailside's series of activities for adults, ages 18 years and older.

Rusty Burns will call out basic square dance steps while a fiddler gets everyone's feet moving. A line dance instructor will teach some new dance routines.

Pre-registration before July 22 is preferred, but walk-ins will be welcome. The admission fee is \$25 per person for Union County residents and \$30 per person for out-of-county participants. For additional information and directions, call Trailside at (908) 789-3670 or visit us ucnj.org/trailside.

The assembly area for the ride is: Warinanco Park in Roselle. The destination will be the N.J. Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Holmdel. The ceremony will include wreath laying, guest speakers, food vendors (no alcohol permitted). Registration is 8 a.m. Departure is 11:30 a.m. The registration fee is \$3 to cover tolls, expenses and donation to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation & Vietnam Era Educational Center. The event is sponsored by Rolling Thunder(R), Inc., New Jersey Chapter 2, New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation. For More Information, contact: Rolling Thunder at (609) 971-3544 and see rollingthunder-nj2.org.

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