

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Today we take urgent action to prevent a critically important immigration program from expiring.

No one disputes that there is a health care crisis in this country. With our population aging, there can be no doubt that the demand for health care will only increase.

The problem is made worse by the fact that many people in communities across America lack access to health care because of a shortage of medical professionals, including doctors. H.R. 5571 will reauthorize the program, the Conrad 30 J Waiver program, that has been successful in helping medically underserved communities attract highly skilled physicians. If Congress does not act, the Conrad program will expire on June 1, 2008.

And how important is this program? Well, to take just one example, a little more than a year ago, in early May 2007, a powerful tornado tore through a Kansas prairie, destroying 95 percent of the town of Greensburg and killing 11 people. Because of the Conrad 30 program, doctors were available in Greensburg to serve this community in need. The Conrad 30 program allows States, like Kansas, to recommend that doctors who have received medical training in the United States on a J-1 visa and who now want to work in medically underserved areas receive waivers from the general requirement that doctors first return to their home countries for 2 years. This is too important a program to let expire.

I want to commend the gentlewoman from California (Ms. *Zoe Lofgren*), the Chair of the Immigration Subcommittee, for her leadership on this issue. I also want to thank the ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr.

*Smith*

); and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms.

*Jackson-Lee*

) for their efforts to make sure that this bill came to the floor.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.