

Aaron Helmbrecht

Communications and Media Relations Portfolio

Samples of Published Writing

News

[“Academy Work on ACA Gets National Notice”](#)

Actuarial Update

Washington, D.C.

OP-ED

[“American Board helps certify state’s teachers”](#)

Richmond Daily News

Richmond, Mo.

Feature

[“Be a virtual veterinarian”](#)

Science News

Washington, D.C.

Press Release

[“Nonprofits Unite to Help Florida Latinos Transition to Teaching”](#)

PR Web

Speech

[“Celebrating the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation’s 50th Anniversary”](#)

Congressional Record

Washington, D.C.

Ghostwritten by Aaron Helmbrecht for Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.)

New Leadership and Academy Traditions

Moving Forward and Honoring the Past

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ACTUARIES' ANNUAL MEETING featured many time-honored rituals: the passing of the gavel from the outgoing to the incoming president, the bestowing of the presidential medal on the incoming president, the presentation of awards to Academy volunteers, and the annual meeting of Academy members at which the Academy announces the member election results for regular directors.

The Academy's 2013 Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon in Minneapolis on Nov. 4 was a forum for all these traditions and a stage on which Academy leaders reviewed past achievements and discussed how the Academy will be leading the U.S. actuarial profession in the coming year. The meeting took place in conjunction with the Casualty Actuarial Society's annual meeting.

Incoming 2014 Academy President Tom Terry spoke in his [inaugural address](#) about two lessons learned from a meeting with Sen. Kent Conrad



Former President Cecil Bykerk (right) congratulates his successor, Tom Terry.

(D-N.D.), former chair of the Senate Budget Committee, during the Academy's 2013 Summer Summit.

To help address the financial issues facing mandatory spending programs like Social Security and Medicare, actuaries must become better communicators, speaking "in relevant, understandable ways," Terry said. They must also preserve their cred-

ibility by continuing to foster a culture of objectivity. "Sen. Conrad ... talked about credibility. He told us that we actuaries have credibility as truth-tellers. He said, and this is a quote, 'You have a great brand. You are actuaries. You have a chance to help educate my colleagues and the American people.

SEE **MEETING**, PAGE 11

Academy Work on ACA Gets National Notice

THE ACADEMY'S PUBLIC POLICY WORK got nationwide attention this month as federal lawmakers and the national press discussed proposals that would dismantle two critical components of risk management built into the Affordable Care Act (ACA): the individual mandate and minimum coverage requirements for the individual and small-group insurance market.

An increasing number of federal lawmakers called for postponing the ACA's individual mandate provision after the troubled launch of the government's health care exchange website in October. In November, President Obama announced that his administration would not enforce the ACA's minimum coverage provision requiring

non-ACA compliant policyholders to update their coverage.

The Academy's Health Practice Council [addressed](#) both of these [issues](#) in separate letters to Congress, warning lawmakers that a delay or repeal of either provision could cause an upheaval in the insurance risk pool composition, resulting in higher premiums to consumers and greater costs for the federal government.

The Academy's letters ignited a frenzy of attention in Washington and among news organizations across the country. (See [Page 3](#) for links to articles.) As events unfold, the Academy will continue to provide policymakers and the media with expert actuarial opinion and advice to ensure the stability and sustainability of U.S. health insurance markets. ▲

Maintaining Professionalism

Academy letter to the NAIC

2

Seminar

Life and Health Qualifications explored

9

Code and ASOPs

Webinar delves into key professionalism concerns

9

2014 Board of Directors

A handy guide

10

GUEST OPINION

American Board helps certify state's teachers

By Aaron Helmbrecht

We are the American Board. If you don't know who we are, you should, because we are the group tasked with making sure your child's teacher is highly qualified. Since 2008, we have approved over 650 Missouri teacher certification applications. Over 1,700 more are pending or have been denied.

Before the American Board, there were only two ways to become a teacher in Missouri. One was to know you wanted to be a teacher by age 18 and earn your bachelor's degree in education. The only option for everyone else was to earn a teaching certificate by taking about 30 additional semester hours. Factoring the cost of tuition, fees, books, and transportation, it would cost over \$10,000 and require two years of college classes just to earn the necessary credentials to be hired as a Missouri teacher.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education needed a more efficient way to hire new teachers while still verifying they were experts in their subject area and they were qualified to lead a classroom. That is where the American Board comes in.

The American Board is an independent non-profit teacher certification organization established by the U.S. Department of Education. The group took all the content stu-

dents would be expected to learn in a university certification program and converted it into a self-paced online training program. By doing this, they reduced the cost burden on new Missouri teachers from \$10,000 to about \$1,995. By making it self-paced, faster learners or people who have education experience could complete the program and earn certification in a few months where others can study in their own time.

After the studying is finished and the tests are passed, the last part of the process is a practicum. Except where a university would use a student teaching program, the American Board uses a mentorship program. In this style of practicum, the newly-certified teacher is the lead instructor (and paid as the lead instructor) but works on a temporary license and is assigned a faculty mentor as a guide for the first two years in the classroom. In the following two years, the teacher works independently. This gives the school up to four years to evaluate the teacher's performance before deciding to approve full licensure.

So does this method of certification really work? A 2011 Georgia State University study found American Board-certified teachers performed just as well as their traditionally certified counterparts and performed "substantially better" in mathematics and retention rates.

The study found while approximately two-thirds of traditionally certified teachers passed the math portion of the licensure exam the first time, almost all American Board teachers did. Looking at retention rates, 87 percent of American Board teachers were still teaching in their school after five years compared to 67 percent nationwide.

The American Board program is not intended to replace teacher colleges. In fact, the vast majority of Missouri teachers are still certified through university coursework. The American Board is designed to work in tandem with the university system to diversify the teaching culture. People who opt for an American Board certification tend to be career-changers who have practical experience using the subject they wish to teach. Including a reasonable path to certification allows engineers to teach math or novelists to teach English. Combining this with teachers primarily trained in education, students now receive instruction from both an academic perspective and a practical (when am I ever going to use this in real life?) perspective.

To find out more about how Missouri teachers are certified or if you are interested in becoming a teacher and want to find out what it takes to earn your certification, visit our website at www.abcte.org.

Aaron Helmbrecht is the director

SAY WHAT?

Brûlé \BROO-lay\ n.

A vegetation-free zone that forms around a tree sharing a symbiotic relationship with certain species of truffle. Brûlés get their name from the burnt appearance of the ground that develops as the truffle wages biochemical warfare against plants and other fungi growing near the tree. The compounds released by the truffle may even have an impact on bacteria lurking in the soil. An international team of scientists analyzing the dirt around four French brûlés produced by the black truffle *Tuber melanosporum* (left) found different microbial communities living inside and outside the dead zone. While some types of bacteria may thrive on compounds produced by the truffle, others retreat, the team suggests April 30 in *PLOS ONE*. —Allison Bohac



Need iPad rights for truffles



50 YEARS AGO

August 24, 1963

FDA Says Enovid 'Safe'— the birth control pill Enovid is safe enough to stay on the market, but its use by women over 35 is risky, the Food and Drug Administration reported in Washington, D.C.... Enovid, first oral contraceptive approved by the FDA for sale in the U.S., came again to FDA's notice through reports that women taking the pills had developed serious or fatal blood clots.... After a thorough review of the available evidence on Enovid and after conducting studies and surveys of their own, the committee found that women under 35 taking Enovid face no greater risk of death from blood-clotting than non-pregnant women in the general population, but that Enovid users ages 35-44 face a greater risk of death from the thromboembolism than non-users. Enovid is currently recommended for short term use only (two to four years), and primarily in cases where pregnancy is not advised.

UPDATE: The FDA approved Enovid as birth control in 1960, and it was first sold containing 0.15 milligrams of estrogen and nearly 10 milligrams of progesterone. Further research confirmed a link between the pill and blood clots, and hormone doses were lowered to reduce that risk. Today's pills typically contain 50 micrograms or less of estrogen and 1 milligram or less of progesterone.



FOR DAILY USE Man's empathetic best friend

Here's something for dog owners to try: Offer a big yawn and see if Fido yawns back. In humans, contagious yawning activates neural circuits involved in social skills and empathy. Domestic dogs, known for their ability to pick up on human social cues, seem to pick up on human yawns as well. Researchers at the University of Tokyo found that dogs often yawn after a human yawns. What's more, dogs were more likely to yawn in response to their owner's yawn than to a stranger's. This bias toward familiar people suggests that a rudimentary form of empathy may be at work in dog brains, the researchers conclude August 7 in *PLOS ONE*. —Allison Bohac

SCIENCE SURFING

Be a virtual veterinarian

Who didn't have "veterinarian" in their list of childhood fantasy jobs? In [AVMA Animal Hospital](#), a new app by the American Veterinary Medical Association, users step into the shoes of a first-year veterinarian to diagnose and treat little friends. Developed for users as young as 4, the game introduces would-be vets to the basics of veterinary medicine by having players match symptoms to common pet illnesses such as mange or infections and then recommend the appropriate treatment. Perfect for kids aspiring to be vets or adults who missed their true calling, the app can be downloaded free through Apple's AppStore, Google Play, and AVMA's website. —Aaron Helmbrecht



Non-Profits Unite to Help Florida Latinos Transition to Teaching

LULAC and The American Board to Host Joint Events in Orlando and Miramar to Recruit Latin American Teachers

Orlando, FL ([PRWEB](#)) September 07, 2012 -- LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) along with partner organization The American Board (American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence) will host joint events in Orlando and Miramar this month to help recruit and certify new Florida teachers from the Latino community.

Census data shows that Latino students make up 22 percent (11 million) of the total student population in K-12 public schools today. However, only 5 percent of teachers are identified as Latino.

"Latinos must take their future into their own hands and level the playing field for Latino students by becoming teachers," said Adrian Rodriguez, LULAC Education Committee Chairman.

A recent Pew Center study found Latino teachers and administrators have a positive impact on the academic achievement of Latino children. Without school-based advocates, Latinos have limited access to advanced courses and as a result are less prepared for college. Although Latino students are 25 percent of the population in districts offering gifted and talented programs, they are only 16 percent of the students enrolled in these programs.

The LULAC/American Board events will educate Latinos on the process of becoming a Florida teacher – how to earn a certification, what financial aid options are available, the possible pitfalls that can occur and how they can be avoided, and what to expect as a new teacher.

Florida Teacher Certification Specialist Zayra Alicia Fosse, who arranged the partnership between LULAC and The American Board, will lead the event. The first event will begin at 5 pm Wednesday, September 12, at the Ana G. Mendez University, 5601 S. Semoran Blvd. in Orlando. The second event will begin at 5 pm Wednesday, September 19 at the Miramar Park of Commerce, 3520 Enterprise Way in Miramar. The event is free and open to the public.

Visit www.abcte.org for more information on becoming a teacher.

The American Board:

The American Board is a state approved teacher certification non profit that certifies career changers, substitute teachers, paraprofessionals and out-of-field teachers. Founded in 2001 via a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the American Board's focus is building rural communities through education and employment. The American Board's program allows highly-knowledgeable individuals from within their community to earn certification without additional class time, student teaching or state exams. Through improving the accessibility and affordability of certification, schools now have the opportunity to hire highly-qualified teachers from within their community.

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Services International, or ARCSI, of Ohio's 3rd Congressional District, as I rise to acknowledge National Spring Cleaning Week which took place March 18–24, 2013.

As many people around our country prepare for spring cleaning, on behalf of the organization, I want to remind those who will begin going "out with the old and in with the new" to recycle.

Recycling what you have stored in your basement, closet and garage and instead learning to reduce, reuse and recycle those items is efficient, sustainable and time-saving.

With advice from our cleaning industry professionals at ARCSI, they are helping everyday American families live healthy, clean and green lives.

So let us remember to re-use, re-purpose and whenever possible recycle items we already have in our households as we begin our spring cleaning.

HONORING DAVID CURSON

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my dear friend, David Curson, on the occasion of his retirement.

Many of you know David from his seven weeks of service in the House during the 112th Congress representing Michigan's 11th district. He was elected with the help of community activists, including his beloved United Auto Workers, to fill a vacancy for the shortest term in recent memory. While he was here, David unflinchingly stood up for working American families, always remembering his roots back in Michigan and Ohio. His time in the House was not wasted: His was a key vote in avoiding the fiscal cliff this past January. It was a tough one to take, but David did so with the greater good in mind, as he has always done. His service here was nothing short of honorable, and the Michigan Delegation is better off for his having a part of it.

David's service to his fellowman far predated his time in Congress. He proudly served his country as a Marine in Vietnam. When he returned to the United States, David started a life-long career at Ford and with the United Auto Workers, particularly Local 898 in Rawsonville, Michigan. David has held nearly every imaginable position in the Union, from chairman of the Local UAW/Ford Joint Apprenticeship Committee to Director of Special Projects and Economic Analysis to Executive Assistant to the UAW's President, Vice President, and Secretary Treasurer. He led contract negotiations that saved thousands of American jobs and helped set the standard for job security agreements in North America. In short, David has devoted his life to his fellow working men and women and done a magnificent job for them.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled and grateful to call David my friend. His dedication to social justice and public service are example to us all, and one which I hope we will all heed. I know David's entire family—from his wonderful wife Sharon, to his children David Jr., Lisa,

David II, and Kathryn, to his grandsons Peyton and Parker—all appreciate David's extraordinary life of service and are thrilled to be able to spend more time with him as he retires. To my good friend, David, and his family, I wish health, happiness, and long life.

CONGRATULATING THE DUNCANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL PANTHERETTES

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Duncanville High School Pantherettes varsity basketball team for winning the 2013 5A state championship for the second consecutive year. The Pantherettes beat Cibolo Steele Lady Knights 59–36, ending their season with a record of 42–0, the first 5A school to achieve this record in a single season.

I also want to commend the coaching staff for their hard work and dedication to their team. In the past 13 seasons, head coach Cathy Self-Morgan has led the Pantherettes to three state championships with a record of 957 wins. Coach Self-Morgan received a number of prestigious honors this season, including the Dallas Morning News SportsDay's Girls Basketball Coach of the Year.

This year, the Pantherettes were ranked the number one high school girls basketball team in the Nation by the USA Today Super 25 Poll and the Max Preps Freeman Poll. The ESPN Power Rankings ranked the Pantherettes second among all U.S. girls teams. The Pantherettes were also crowned 7–5A district champions, 62nd Annual 2012 Sandra Meadows Tournament champions, and the 2012 McDonald's Pasadena Tournament champions.

I applaud the team's outstanding efforts and commitment to a flawless return to the state championship. The Pantherettes legacy includes eight state championships, 22 tournament appearances, and 33 regional tournament appearances. Congratulations again, Pantherettes, on an incredible season.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, yesterday morning the State of Israel came to a standstill as a siren signaling one minute of silence pierced through the daily lives of Israelis. For one minute, highways came to a standstill and phone conversations fell silent. This moment of silent reflection occurs every year on Yom Hashoa, Holocaust Remembrance Day, in order to honor the memory of the six million Jews systematically murdered at the hands of the Nazis.

Yom Hashoa serves as more than just a day of remembrance, though. Each passing

year the remaining number of survivors becomes fewer and fewer. South Florida has seen this first hand. Just last month, Holocaust Survivors of South Florida—once one of the nation's largest survivor groups with a peak membership at over 1,400 survivors—was forced to close its doors due to a rapidly dwindling number of members.

At its final board meeting, the group gave \$15,000 to the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, highlighting the importance of teaching the lessons of the Holocaust to our future generations. The organization's president expressed her hope "that through education, history would not repeat."

So today, I commit myself to learning the lessons of the past. I join my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives by honoring the living memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Together, we will stand against any resurgence of anti-Semitism, and against all forms of hatred and prejudice.

CELEBRATING THE MEXICAN AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY FOUNDATION'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation on celebrating their 50th anniversary. For 50 years MAOF has worked to improve the quality of life for millions of Latinos in the Los Angeles area. From education and daycare services for children, to job training and English-language classes for adults, to medical and social services to seniors, MAOF has provided poor or disenfranchised Latinos with opportunities for social and economic advancement.

In 1963, a little known community and labor leader named Dionicio Morales had the idea to create a foundation dedicated to Mexican-American community development. He started at the top, with a call to President John F. Kennedy. Morales did not get to speak to the President, but through his perseverance, he was able to speak with Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. Together they secured the funding for what would become the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation.

Today MAOF is the largest Latino human services provider in the nation and the Los Angeles Times has credited Morales with being one of the original leaders of the East Los Angeles Latino civil rights movement, along with United Farm Workers leader Cesar Chavez, journalist Ruben Salazar, and my father, Congressman Edward R. Roybal.

Although Dionicio Morales passed away in 2008, his legacy lives on within the work of MAOF which provides essential services to over 100,000 people, 8,000 of whom are children.

Once again I congratulate MAOF President and CEO Martin Castro, members of the board of directors, and all MAOF employees. I thank them for 50 years of dedicated service to the Latino community, and I wish them well as they continue their great work in the years to come.