IN MEMORY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS LEADER JUSTIN DART, JR.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a fallen leadership in the disability and human rights community. Justin Dart, Jr., recognized by many as the father of the Americans with Disabilities Act, died this past Saturday, June 22. Mr. Dart was known by many Members of Congress and by millions of Americans for his inspirational leadership and determined efforts to open the doors of opportunity wider for all Americans.

The grandson of the founder of the Walgreen drugstore chain and the son of a wealthy businessman, Justin was born in Chicago into a life of privilege. At age 18, however, his world view as well as the world's view of him was to change. Mr. Dart contracted polio and became a wheelchair user.

His concern for the civil rights of all people first became apparent when he founded an organization to end racial segregation as a student at the University of Houston. Justin also experienced the misunderstanding people have regarding the capabilities of people with disabilities when he was denied a teaching certificate upon completing college.

In 1966, Mr. Dart traveled to Vietnam to investigate the conditions of its rehabilitation system and had an experience which caused him and his wife, Yoshiko, to dedicate the rest of their lives to the advancement of human rights for all. Instead of rehabilitation centers for children with polio, he found squalid conditions where children had been abandoned on concrete floors. He was confronted with a young girl who reached out, held his hand and gazed into his eyes as she lay dying. ''That scene,'' he would later write, ''is burned forever in my soul. For the first time in my life, I understood the reality of evil, and that I was a part of that reality.''

After several years of building a grassroots movement and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in Texas, Justin Dart was appointed in 1981 by President Reagan as Vice Chair of the National Council on Disability. He and his wife embarked on a nationwide tour at their own expense during which he met with activists in all 50 States and helped lead the Council in drafting a national policy that called for civil rights legislation to end the centuries-old discrimination of people with disabilities. This policy laid the foundation for the eventual passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Mr. Dart held leadership positions in both the Reagan and Bush administrations, first as Commissioner of the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration and then as the chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.

As Chairman of the President's Committee, he directed a change in focus from its traditional stance of urging people to hire the handicapped to advocating for full civil rights of people with disabilities. Justin is best known for the pivotal role he played in ensuring passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

As Co-chair of the Congressional Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities, he once again toured the country at his own expense to build grassroots support for his landmark civil rights legislation.

The sight of Justin in his trademark Stetson hat and cowboy boots was a familiar sight to all Members of Congress. He made what he called a very difficult decision of conscience in 1996 and campaigned for the reelection of President Clinton, telling his followers to get into politics as if your life depended upon it, because it does.

In 1998, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian award. The revolution of empowerment Mr. Dart talked about extended far beyond the rights of people with disabilities to making the world a better play for all humanity.

Please hear, as I close, some of the words that Mr. Dart addressed to a group of us in his final public statement a few weeks ago at a rally for the passage of the Micassa bill. ''Listen to the heart of this old soldier. As with all of us, the time comes when body and mind are battered and weary. But I do not go quietly into the night. I do not give up struggling to be a responsible contributor to the sacred continuum of human life. I do not give up struggling to overcome my weakness, to conform my life, and that part of my life called death, to the great values of the human dream. Let my final actions thunder of love, solidarity, protest, of empowerment. I adamantly protest the richest culture in the history of the world which still incarcerates millions of humans with and without disabilities in barbaric institutions, back rooms and worse, windowless cells of oppressive perceptions, for the lack of the most elementary empowerment supports. I call for solidarity among all who love justice, all who love life, to create a revolution that will empower every single human being to govern his or her life, to govern the society and to be fully productive. I die in the beautiful belief that the revolution of empowerment will go on. I love you so much. I'm with you always. Lead on. Lead on.''

Mr. Speaker, Justin Dart was truly a great American, and I join with millions around the country who are interested in the empowerment of people with disabilities to extend condolences to his wife and family.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about an issue that is very important to the First Congressional District of Oklahoma and all across America: the need for a prescription drug benefit for our seniors.

During the last few weeks, the Republican plan has been criticized by my Democrat colleagues with a number of half-truths about our plan. I have received several calls from constituents and family members who are scared about the Democrats' misstatement about higher prices for their prescriptions. They are using this issue for political gain during an election year.

I ask the other side of the aisle to please stop scaring my grandmother and millions of seniors who buy prescription drugs. For the past few months, I, along with several Members of Congress of this body, have been visiting with seniors about their wants and needs and a prescription drug benefit. From these conversations, the House Republicans have developed a plan in line with helping seniors receive coverage immediately. I ask the Democrats to stop scaring my grandmother and my constituents for political advantage.

The House Republican plan is the only plan that lowers drug costs for seniors through best-price competition and the promotion of generic drugs. Recently, the Health and Human Services Department released a study that shows an average senior would save nearly 70 percent of the money spent on their current coverage under the GOP plan. The liberal Democrats say our plan is a meaningless benefit that protects the pharmaceutical industry, but studies done on this issue say just the opposite.

The Republican plan uses a best-price competition model that will lower the dollar amount through competition, cutting into the pharmaceutical company's bottom line. I ask Members on the other side of the aisle to stop scaring the Nation's seniors.

The House and Senate Democrat plans fail to use any competition measures. Instead, the Senate plan calls for a copayment on the prescriptions. Seniors would pay $10 for generic drugs, $40 for name-brand drugs, and the government would pick up the rest of the cost, regardless of the price.

Without price competition, the drugmakers will be able to dictate and raise their price whenever they want. And of course the Democrats want the American taxpayer to pick up the tab on the price difference. This could potentially cost Americans more than a trillion dollars. I call on the Democrats to stop scaring my grandmother and millions of seniors in our Nation who are looking for a workable plan from Congress. This is not a political issue.