

percent of the base salary of head coaches of men's basketball.

This disparity in women's pay in many fields is the reason I introduced the Fair Pay Act that would prohibit discrimination in the payment of wages on account of sex, race or national origin. While this law will help prevent discrimination in the pay of the women working in sports, it will not get them the recognition women athletes deserve. As an accomplished women's basketball coach has said in a recent interview, "It is really frustrating to have a championship team and get two-inch stories in the paper while some average men's team gets pages written about them." This is slowly—too slowly—changing. It is my hope that tomorrow's events commemorating National Girls and Women in Sports Day will, by its own recognition, help women gain equality in sports.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL GIRLS
AND WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating February 6, 1997, as National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

Mr. Speaker, who can forget the thrill of seeing the U.S. women's Olympic gymnastics team win the gold medal in Atlanta last year? There is also much enthusiasm about the establishment of not one but two women's professional basketball leagues. What ties together these accomplishments are how they inspire young women across America to become involved in sports activities, to get in the game.

That's the motto behind the 1997 National Girls and Women in Sports Day. I'm proud to be an honorary cosponsor of this 11th annual event. A bipartisan group of Members of Congress and Senators support an early morning walk on the Washington Mall to highlight the achievements of women athletes and draw attention to the importance of sports and fitness activities for all girls and women.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day [NGWSD] is celebrated in New Hampshire and all across the country during the first Thursday of every February. It is organized by Girl Scouts of the USA, Girls Inc., the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, the Women's Sports Foundation, and the YWCA of the USA.

The First NGWSD was organized to honor Flo Hyman, the Olympic volleyball champion who brought women's volleyball in the United States to the forefront in 1984. That's when she helped lead the American team to a silver medal at the Los Angeles Olympics. Flo Hyman died suddenly while playing volleyball in Japan in 1986. She was found to have had Marfan syndrome, a connective tissue disorder that led to a faulty aorta. Annually, the Women's Sports Foundation's Flo Hyman Award is presented to a female athlete who exemplifies dignity, spirit, and commitment to excellence in women's athletics.

Indeed, women's athletics are one of the most effective avenues available for women of the United States to develop self-discipline, initiative, confidence, and leadership skills. While in the past there has been little national recognition of the significance of women's athletic achievements, we are starting to see the opposite occur. Routinely, you will find larger crowds as women's college basketball games and the new women's professional basketball games will be carried on nationwide television. These occurrences can only serve to encourage young girls to become involved in sports at early age. This type of involvement in athletics, however, has less to do with recognition than with promoting lifelong habits of physical fitness.

I am very proud of the many fine women athletes at our schools in New Hampshire. We all read about their accomplishments in the newspapers every week. National Girls and Women in Sports Day serves to remind us that we should encourage athletic participation and competition for women of all ages, especially in the formative years. It is my hope that we see more girls and young women get in the game this year. After all, our children, girls and boys, need strong bodies as well as strong minds.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the 11th annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL GIRLS
AND WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 11th Annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day, Thursday, February 6, 1997. This day has been set aside to show the Nation's commitment to promoting the physical well-being and mental health of women and girls through physical activity.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day is instrumental in encouraging females of all ages to participate in sports. Regular exercise increases physical condition by lowering levels of blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure. In addition, sports has been shown to help women feel greater confidence, self esteem and pride.

As the celebration of Black History month begins, it is my hope that this day will open the eyes of many African-American women who are twice as likely to be overweight as white women and 20 percent less likely to exercise regularly. Compared to white Americans, African-Americans under the age of 64 are 10 percent more likely to get heart disease, 30 percent more likely to have diabetes, and over 50 percent more likely to suffer from hypertension.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for my participation in today's events to serve as a model of the dedication to physical fitness that should be exhibited by other women, particularly African-American women. Finally, I would like to applaud the organizations whose combined efforts made this day possible: Girl Scouts, Girls Inc., the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, the Women Sports Foundation, and the YWCA.