THE MORRIS K. UDALL PARKINSON'S RESEARCH ACT OF 1997

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege today to join with Represenatative HENRY WAXMAN and 106 of our colleagues in introducing H.R. 1260, the Morris K. Udall Parkinson's Research Act of 1997. This legislation is designed to expand and coordinate research on Parkinson's disease to speed the discovery of a cure for this devastating disorder.

The bill authorizes $100 million in fiscal year 1998 and such sums as may be necessary in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 to expand basic and clinical research, establish up to 10 Morris K. Udall Parkinson's research centers across the country, provide for a coordinated program of research and training with respect to Parkinson's disease at the National Institutes of Health, and establish a grant awards program to support researchers who demonstrate the potential for making breakthrough discoveries in Parkinson's.

Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive disorder affecting 1 million Americans. In its final stages, the disease robs individuals of the ability to speak or move. Although Parkinson's disease costs society an estimated $26 billion a year in medical and lost productivity costs—costs which will escalate as the baby boom generation ages—Parkinson's research is severely underfunded. The research funding level has essentially been flat for the past 5 years, averaging about $26 million a year, or only $26 per patient in direct research funding.

I encourage my colleagues who have not already done so to cosponsor the Morris K. Udall Parkinson's Research Act and join us in the search for a cure for this devastating disease.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL ELECTRONIC AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE ACT OF 1997

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Federal Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Compliance Act of 1997. This legislation would strengthen current law that requires information technology purchased by Federal agencies to be accessible to their employees with disabilities. It also would continue the existing expectation that States receiving Federal funds for disability programs meet accessibility guidelines in their information technology acquisitions.

There are approximately 145,000 Federal employees with disabilities, and they comprise 7.5 percent of the Federal work force. While they are employed in a variety of agencies, most of them work in the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Department of Agriculture. We can be proud that the Federal Government is offering solid employment opportunities to so many people with disabilities and taking advantage of the talents, insights, and knowledge that they have to share.

Information technology has played a large role in opening jobs in the Federal Government and elsewhere to people with disabilities. For example, an estimated 43 percent of employed people who are blind or visually impaired use computers to write. However, information technology can also shut the door to employment for people with disabilities if isn't accessible to them. Web sites with heavy graphics content, for instance, may not be designed to be compatible with software commonly used by people who are blind or visually impaired to read information on computer screens.

So it is imperative to Federal employees with disabilities for Federal agencies to purchase information technology that gives them a chance to do their jobs instead of cutting them off from full participation in the work force.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act was designed to achieve this goal. It calls on Federal agencies to follow guidelines established by the General Services Administration and the Department of Education to ensure that their information technology is accessible to people with disabilities. Unfortunately, section 508 contains no enforcement mechanism, and many Federal agencies are not in compliance with the guidelines.

The Federal Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Compliance Act of 1997 would add teeth to section 508 by establishing a way to enforce agency compliance with the guidelines. It asks the Office of Management and Budget [OMB] to develop uniform procedures for Federal agencies to use each year to certify whether or not they are in compliance with section 508 guidelines. OMB also is given authority to review agency compliance statements and assist agencies in making their information technology systems accessible to their employees with disabilities.

Additionally, the legislation addresses another problem related to section 508 guidelines. The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1994 contain a mechanism to encourage States to follow section 508 guidelines as a condition for receiving Federal funding for disability related projects. However, this law is expected to expire in a few years. My legislation takes the language from the Technology Act and inserts it into the Rehabilitation Act as one of the expectations for States to meet in exchange for vocational rehabilitation funding from the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will help make the Federal Government a better workplace for people with disabilities. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by supporting the Federal Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Compliance Act of 1997.

CONGRESSMAN MCGOVERN CONGRATULATES LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the following citizens of Massachusetts for their outstanding work in making the St. Patrick's Day parade in Fall River, MA, such a tremendous success. As members of the Fall River St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee their hard work and commitment are keeping the city's once lost tradition of a St. Patrick's Day parade alive and well. The parade has become a multicultural event for all the residents of southeastern Massachusetts and its organizers deserve our recognition.

Chuck Gregory, Chairman, Thomas Murphy, Coordinator, Thomas Quinn, Ambassador, John O'Neil, Treasurer, Brian Burns, Treasurer, Richard O'Neil, Events Coordinator, Ron Boulay, Coordinator, Willie Brown T.V. Commentator, Butch Hyland, David Lown, Paul Donnelly, Charlie Donnelly, Sean Murphy, William Ready, Dan Morris, and Robert O'Neil.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE JUDICIAL REFORM ACT OF 1997

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, along with many of my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, to introduce the Judicial Reform Act of 1997. This necessary legislation addresses one of the most disturbing problems facing our constitutional system today—the infrequent but intolerable breach of the separation of powers by some members of the Federal judiciary.

The first reform contained in this bill was developed originally by a valued member of the committee, Representative BONO of California. Recognizing the unjust effect on voting rights created by injunctions issued in California by one judge against the will of the people of the State as reflected in propositions 187 and 209, this bill provides that requests for injunctions in cases challenging the constitutionality of measures passed by a State referendum must be heard by a three-judge court. Like other Federal voting rights legislation containing a provision providing for a hearing by a three-judge court, the Judicial Reform Act of 1997 is designed to protect voters in the exercise of their vote and to further protect the results of that vote. It requires that legislation voted upon and approved directly by the citizens of a State be afforded the protection of a three-judge court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 2284 where an application for an injunction is brought in Federal court to arrest the enforcement of the referendum on the premise that the referendum is unconstitutional.

In effect, where the entire populace of a State democratically exercises a direct vote on an issue, one Federal judge will not be able to issue an injunction preventing the enforcement of the will of the people of that State. Rather, three judges, at the trial level, according to procedures already provided by statute, will hear the application for an injunction and determine whether the requested injunction should issue. An appeal is taken directly to the Supreme Court, expediting the enforcement of the referendum if the final decision is that the referendum is constitutional. Such an expedited procedure is already provided for in other voting rights cases. It should be no different in this case, since a State is redistricted