CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE
SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE ABL AND THE WNBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. Brown] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a bill that I will be offering later this week that honors the beginning of two new women's professional basketball leagues: the American Basketball League and the Women's National Basketball Association, also known as the ABL and the WNBA.

Historically, women's basketball has come a long way. Even though the first national women's tournament took place in 1926, college educators opposed basketball for women. They believed that women were not adequately prepared for such a rough game and that the game of basketball was not an appropriate sport for women.

The stereotype of women's inability to play basketball carried into the second half of the century. By the 1970s, only 1 out of every 27 women participated in any kind of organized sport. It was not until 1972, with the passing of title IX to the Higher Education Act, that women's participation in basketball began to increase. It was this amendment that guaranteed the success of women's sports and created a fair, level playing field for sports equity.

Now in 1997, it is the 25th anniversary of title IX of the Higher Education Act. One out of every three high school girls participates in organized sports, and women's basketball is recognized by girls as the most popular youth participant sport in the nation. In college, participation and attendance at the women's basketball games have been at the highest ever since 1982, women's attendance at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball games has increased from 11 million to 42 million.

Because the female student-athlete participation rate is at its highest ever, there were 102 women's basketball teams in the 1995-96 season, all of which are recognized by girls as their favorite basketball team. Women's basketball participation is recognized as the most popular youth participant sport in the nation.

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