

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Washington [Mrs. LINDA SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. ALLEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. ENGLISH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. ENGLISH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SANDERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. McNULTY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. McNULTY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### H.R. 135 AND BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. MALONEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, as October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I rise to reflect on those loved ones we have lost to breast cancer and to offer my support to those who are struggling with the disease. I also rise to strongly urge an important legislative response to this killer disease.

Whether we are aware of it or not, all of us know at least one person who has been affected by breast cancer. The prevalence of this disease is underscored by some truly alarming statistics. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women in the United States. And as was mentioned a minute ago, one in eight women will be diagnosed with the disease in her lifetime. In my home State of Connecticut alone, 2,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997 and approximately 480 women, unfortunately, will succumb to this illness.

Finding a way to eradicate breast cancer must be a national priority. It is imperative that the public and private sectors continue to devote sufficient resources for research activities aimed at finding a cure. I would like to commend my colleagues for their efforts to pass the fiscal year 1998 Labor, Health and Human Services Education Appropriations bill, which provides a \$764.5 million increase over last year's level for the National Institutes of Health and \$124 million more for the National Cancer Institute.

Until we find a cure, however, we must ensure that those living with breast cancer have access to quality health care services. New drugs and therapies are being developed to ease the suffering of breast cancer victims and help them lead normal lives. However, as my colleague, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] eloquently stated on the floor of this House the other night, some managed care organizations are providing inadequate coverage for hospital stays after women undergo mastectomies.

I find it unconscionable that managed care staffers whose knowledge of medicine is often limited and whose decisions are influenced by financial considerations are forcing women out of hospitals in their time of need. The results of a study conducted on this matter by the Connecticut Office of Health Care Access are stunning. The report revealed that the average length of a hospital stay for breast cancer patients in Connecticut and across the Nation is decreasing, and it is falling faster for mastectomies than for other inpatient discharges. We must act to halt this unacceptable trend. Breast cancer patients face life-and-death decisions, and they should be afforded the peace of mind that comes with adequate coverage of services.

The gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] and I, together with 194 of our colleagues, have introduced legislation to address this problem. I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act, critical legislation which provides important safeguards for those afflicted with breast cancer. This measure will guarantee coverage of a maximum hospital stay of 48 hours for a woman having a mastectomy and 24 hours for a woman undergoing a lymph node removal. This is the least we can do for patients who have just endured a traumatic and painful surgical procedure. And consistent with other efforts to regulate managed care plans, and ensure quality health care, this legislation helps to empower women to make their own health care choices, and gives doctors the ability to make appropriate medical decisions.

Unfortunately, the Congress has not taken action on this legislation. The Sapien Health Network has created a web page and is asking people to sign their "Breast Cancer Care" petition urging Congress to schedule hearings on the Breast Cancer Protection Act. Thousands of Americans have contacted that website to express their support for this critical legislation.

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This web site also contains a number of testimonials from breast cancer survivors, patients, and family members of victims.

I would like to close by reading the moving statements of two Connecticut residents whose lives have been touched by breast cancer. One reads: "I am a breast cancer survivor who was fortunate enough to have my reconstruction covered by my insurance company, thanks to some careful wording by my plastic surgeon. I had my mastectomy and reconstruction at the same time just 4 years ago, and my surgeon said that I would be in the hospital 4 to 5 days. I can't imagine going home any sooner, especially with the drains still in me. Unfortunately I developed an infection and stayed 21 days. What if that infection hadn't shown up before I was sent home?"

Another Connecticut resident writes: "In May of 1997, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Fortunately it was detected through a mammogram at a very early stage. I've had a lumpectomy, lymph node dissection, and radiation. The laws need to be supportive and realistic. These are our mothers and sisters and wives and daughters that we're talking about."

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for us to intensify our efforts to eliminate breast cancer. I urge my colleagues to support the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act.

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