

who are so intolerant that they want to silence other people.

Mr. Speaker, if my freedom of speech exists only when everybody around agrees with me, I do not have free speech. If my freedom of religion exists only when I am around people who believe the same things that I do, then I do not have freedom of religion. If I can not express my religious beliefs even when people may disagree with them or express my political beliefs or social beliefs or just flat my opinion, then I do not have freedom any more. The essence of freedom is that we tolerate our differences rather than trying to suppress them, and for the courts to take the First Amendment and twist and distort it, and say this is now a tool for stopping people from expressing their religious belief because they happen to be on public property?

My kids are required to be on public property to be at school. Does that mean they are required to leave behind the teachings that we try to give them at home and at church?

I hear some people say, oh, my goodness, you ought to be happy, you can pray at home and you can pray at school. Well fine. But I happen to believe in a faith that says pray without ceasing, and it does not say that you have to stop praying when you enter onto government property or when somebody else is around that says, "Well, I do not like what you are doing." I say to them, "I appreciate that. I am sure that there are some things that you may do which I may not like either, but I respect and would fight for your right to say and do things with which I may disagree, and I would hope that you would have the same understanding, the same belief in our Constitution and our principles, and that you would say whether I agree with your prayer or your religious thoughts or not, I believe you have a right to express them."

The problem is not with people who want to express the hope and faith of prayers. The problem is with people who are intolerant and do not want to hear it.

Mr. Speaker, the religious freedom amendment protects these freedoms and these rights, whether it be first grader Zachariah Hood who was told he could not read the story of the brothers Jacob and Esau reuniting, or whether it be my children or anyone else's or those of us in this Congress or any place on public property.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that people will support the religious freedom amendment and that more Members will proclaim its necessity.

TRIBUTE TO BELLA ABZUG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. KENNELLY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to one of the greatest women who ever served in the

Congress of the United States of America, Bella Abzug of New York, who died today.

I remember when I first was considering running for Congress I went to New York to seek Bella Abzug's counsel. What I got was one of the most intense question and answer sessions of my life.

Why was I running?

What did I really care about?

Was I willing to fight for women and for families?

Bella wanted to make sure that I could answer those questions to her satisfaction.

Today when I was here in the Congress, we were voting all day, today I stopped down below this Chamber and stopped for a few moments for lunch, and I saw CAROLYN MALONEY, a woman who represents New York City like Bella did, and she said, "Did Bella treat you like she treated me, saying are you tough enough, are you strong enough, do you care enough about representing your people?"

And I said, "CAROLYN, she asked me all those questions that she asked you: Were we tough enough, were we strong enough to represent the people of the United States of America?" And I think that CAROLYN MALONEY and I think that BARBARA KENNELLY could answer those questions yes, we were tough enough, we were strong enough.

Could we do it in the style of Bella Abzug? No.

Could we be so delightful, in how she could fight for those fights for the families of America? Probably not.

But do we look at her as our leader? Yes, we did.

It is worth remembering today what it was about when Bella ran for Congress, about what drew me and dozens of other women to look at her as a touchstone, to look at her as someone who we could look to and then run for Congress. It was her strength, her commitment, it was her passion, Bella Abzug's conviction about what she believed in.

Yes, many of us who entered public life after her, we wanted to be in her footsteps, but we found different ways to get where she wanted to go, different ways to express ourselves, different ways to approach issues. But our differences were of style, not of substance.

Bella was, for many of us, our inspiration.

I would have to say to you today that I think about Bella, I think about where she was and where I was, where so many of us were that come to this body, work so hard from early morning until late night. We have to say that she was always our conscience. We always wanted to work as hard as she did, to care as much as she did, to really be as committed as Bella Abzug was for the families of the United States of America.

Today we should not only mourn her death, but I stand here tonight, Mr. Speaker, and say to you we should re-

commit ourselves to her vision of an America where men and women have equal chances, where ordinary citizens could hold their government accountable.

Bella Abzug would say, what is happening, where are we, what are we about? And she would demand answers. She knew that the men and women and their families had to have those answers.

Did we ever live up to what Bella thought possible? I stand here tonight feeling very badly about her death. Talked to Bella over the years, talked to her so often. Did I ever reach to where she thought I should reach? Probably not. But I have to say to you that she was there for all of us, especially for we women who came to the Congress, to make sure that we understood that we had to care about what we were representing. Everybody in our districts, we all, every man and woman that comes to this body represents everybody in their districts. But when we women come, we have to make sure, because there are many fewer of us, that we represent women and families. And she understood that so clearly, and she made that so clear to us. Because we were so few, we had to make our argument to be so absolutely on the mark.

And I have tried to do that, and I used to say to Bella, "Look, I don't talk like you, I'm not as extreme as you, I'm not as exciting as you, I'm not as compelling as you. But I am here, like you, to represent all the families, all the children of the United States of America."

Do we win some of those fights? Of course we did. We have absolutely won many of those fights, and what we cared about she cared about, and I look at Bella now and I think that she held a standard for me all these years, a standard to make sure that I could do as well as I can do. Did I do ever as much as she wanted me to do? Of course I did not. Anybody who served in this House, we could never do as much as Bella wanted us to do. But what Bella Abzug made us do was know that we could do better, that we could work harder, that we could get up early in the morning, that we could work later in the day, that we could take care of the families of the United States of America, that we could take care of the children.

I can remember one day when I did not know Bella. It was a day that I feel like I feel today, I feel so badly about this woman who was so wonderful. Bella Abzug was an absolutely wonderful woman.

I had another wonderful woman in my life, and her name was Ella Grasso, Governor of the State of Connecticut. I was Secretary of State in her administration, and she always made me feel wonderful like Bella did. She always also wanted me to do better, to work harder, to get more done, and I kept trying. But she was the first Governor that ever served, the first woman in

the United States of America who served as Governor of the State of Connecticut in her own right, and she knew Bella Abzug because they served together in the Congress, and Ella died earlier than she should have died. She died of cancer when she was Governor of the State of Connecticut. And of course Ella was Governor, and I do not even think Bella was Congresswoman at that time. But I can remember I was Secretary of the State of Connecticut, and I was very involved in Ella's funeral, and there was not a lot of Congress people at Ella's funeral. But guess what? Bella Abzug came to Ella's funeral. She understood a good woman. And I am standing here tonight telling you we had a wonderful woman with Bella Abzug, and I say with sadness, but with great pride, we needed her when we had her, we will miss her.

Bella Abzug, I loved you. I just hope I can do as much as you want me to do

HMO CRISIS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago I met a woman who killed a man. I did not meet her in prison; she was not on parole. She had never even been investigated by the police. In fact, for causing the death of a man she received congratulations from her colleagues and moved up the corporate ladder.

The woman, Dr. Linda Peeno, was working as a medical reviewer at an HMO. In testimony before the Committee on Commerce on May 30, 1996, she confessed that her decision as an HMO reviewer to deny payment for a lifesaving operation led to the preventable death of a man she had never met.

Since then Dr. Peeno has regretted her HMO deeds every day of her life. In contrition she has blown the whistle on the ways that HMOs deny payment for health services. She showed how plans draft contract language to restrict access to benefits. She showed how HMOs cherry-pick healthy patients, and she showed how HMOs use technicalities to deny necessary care.

□ 2000

Dr. Peeno also told Congress about the most powerful weapon in an HMO's arsenal; to hold down costs. HMOs generally agree to cover all services that are deemed "medically necessary." But because that decision is made by HMO bureaucrats, not by the treating physician, Dr. Peeno called it "the smart bomb of cost containment."

Hailed initially as a great breakthrough in holding down health costs, the painful consequences of the managed care revolution are being revealed. Stories from the inside, like those told by Dr. Peeno, are shaking the public's confidence in managed care. You can now read about some of

Dr. Peeno's experiences in the March 9 edition of U.S. News & World Report.

The HMO revelations have gotten so bad that the health plans themselves are running ads touting the fact that they are different from the bad HMOs that don't allow their subscribers their choice of doctors, or who interfere with their doctors practicing good medicine.

Here in Washington one add says, "We don't put unreasonable restrictions on our doctors. We don't tell them that they can't send you to a specialist."

In Chicago, Blue Cross ads proclaim, "We want to be your health plan, not your doctor."

In Baltimore, the Preferred Health Network ad states, "As your average health plan, cost controls are regulated by administrators. At PHN, doctors are responsible for controlling costs."

This goes to prove that even HMOs know that there are more than a few rotten apples in the barrel. The HMO industry has earned a reputation with the public that is so bad that only tobacco companies are held in lower esteem.

Let me cite a few statistics. A national survey shows that far more Americans have a negative view of managed care than a positive view. By more than 2 to 1, Americans support more government regulation of HMOs.

The survey shows that only 44 percent of Americans think that managed care is a good thing. Do you want proof? Well, recently I saw the movie, "As Good As It Gets." When Academy Award winner Helen Hunt expressed an expletive about the lack of care her asthmatic son gets from her HMO, people in the audience clapped and cheered. It was by far the biggest applause line of the movie.

No doubt the audience's reaction was fueled by dozens of articles and news stories highly critical of managed care, and also fueled by real live experiences.

In September 1997, the Des Moines Register ran an op-ed piece entitled "The Chilly Bedside Manner of HMOs" by Robert Reno, a Newsweek writer.

Citing a study on end-of-life care, he wrote, "This would seem to prove the popular suspicion that HMO operators are heartless swine."

The New York Post ran a week-long series on managed care. Headlines included, "HMOs' cruel rules leave her dying for the doc she needs."

Another headline blared out, "Ex-New Yorker is told get castrated so we can save."

Or this one, "What his parent didn't know about HMOs may have killed this baby."

Or how about the 29-year-old cancer patient whose HMO would not pay for his treatments. Instead, the HMO case manager told him to hold a "fund-raiser." A fund-raiser.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope that campaign finance reform will not stymie this man's chance to get his cancer treatment.

To save money, some HMOs have erected increasingly steep barriers to

proper medical care. These include complex utilization review procedures, computer programs that are stingy about approving care, medical directors willing to play fast and loose with the term "medically necessary."

Consumers who disagree with these decisions are forced to work their way through Byzantine appeals processes which usually excel at complexity, but generally fall short in terms of fairness, and these appeals, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, sometimes last longer than the patient.

The public understands the kind of barriers they face in getting needed care. Republican pollster, Frank Luntz, recently held a focus group in Maryland, and this is what consumers said. One participant complained, I have a new doctor every year. Another said she is afraid that "if something major happened, I won't be covered." A third attendee griped that he had to take off work twice because the plan required people to see the primary care doctor before seeing his specialist.

Those fears are vividly reflected in editorial page cartoons. Here is one that reflects what that focus group was talking about. It shows a woman working in a cubicle in the claims department of an HMO. In talking to a customer she remarks, no, we don't authorize that specialist. No, we don't cover that operation. No, we don't pay for that medication. She is then surprised, no, we don't consider this assisted suicide.

These HMO rules create ethical dilemmas. A California internist had a patient who needed emergency treatment because of fluid buildup in her lungs. Under the rules of the patient's plan, the service would come at a hefty cost. She told the doctor she couldn't have the treatment because she didn't have the money. However, if she was admitted to the hospital, she would have no charges. So the internist bent the rules. He admitted her, and then he immediately discharged her.

Now, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, are HMOs forcing doctors to lie for their patients?

HMOs have pared back benefits to the point of forcing Congress to get into the business of making medical decisions. Take for example the uproar over so-called drive-through deliveries. This cartoon shows that some folks thought health plans were turning their maternity wards into fast food restaurants.

As the woman is handed her new child, the gatekeeper at the drive-through window asks, congratulations, would you like fries with that?

Well, in 1995, Michelle and Steve Bauman testified before the Senate about their daughter, Michelina, who died 2 days after she was born. Their words were powerful and eloquent. Let me quote from Michelle and Steve's statement.

Baby Michelina and her mother "were sent home 2 hours after delivery. This was not enough time for doctors