

help all of us deal with this unique crisis, without penalizing them for their efforts. With January 1, 2000 fast approaching, more information rather than less—shared sooner rather than later—may be the difference between inconvenience and disaster.

I am pleased to see the Administration has proposed similar legislation to address this issue. It is a worthy effort, although it may fall short in some areas. For example, the Administration bill protects statements that are good-faith mistakes but does not include protection for statements shown to be true. The bill introduced today by myself and Mr. DREIER will protect all Year 2000 disclosure statements, giving companies incentives to provide more information, not less.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we can quickly pass this timely legislation during this Congress, and I look forward to working with the Administration and others on this important issue. Also, I welcome suggestions on how we may improve the legislation introduced today. The Y2K challenge is extensive and the stakes are very high. I believe the legislation we have introduced here today is a critical step in successfully meeting that challenge.

I hope my colleagues will join me and Mr. DREIER in supporting this bill.

**PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS
HEALTH CARE AND RESEARCH
ACT OF 1998**

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 3, 1998

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, for the past seven years, since the Persian Gulf War ended, our veterans have suffered from a myriad of symptoms with no end in sight—dizziness, severe headaches, chest pain, shortness of breath, aching joints and depression, to cite just a few examples of what they are going through.

Seven years ago, when the Persian Gulf War ended, a hearing was held here in Washington to investigate reports that Persian Gulf Veterans were suffering a series of mysterious symptoms. But there were no veterans at the witness table in the Committee room. So in 1992, I held a hearing in Boston to gather testimony from sick veterans who could tell me about their health problems. At that time, sick veterans were being called malingerers or worse, by the Defense Department. People didn't believe they were really sick.

But by early 1993, it was clear that there was a problem. Literally hundreds of veterans were calling my office to report of symptoms ranging from skin rashes and respiratory problems to kidney failure and cancer that they believed were linked to service in the Gulf conflict. The Pentagon continued to deny any link but was forced to take a closer look at the facts once countries that were members of the Persian Gulf Coalition began reporting exposures of their own troops to chemical and biological weapons.

Finally, in April 1996, the CIA released a report showing solid evidence that thousands of chemical weapons had been stored at Khamisiyah and that our troops may have been exposed to those deadly agents after the allied forces bombed the storage facilities.

Now here we are, seven years after the war. We've financed 103 research projects, at a cost of \$49 million dollars, and we've had a presidential panel study the veterans health problems. But DoD and VA have not answered the veterans' questions about what caused them to get sick and when they will get effective treatment.

The veterans are frustrated, and rightly so. They still suffer from a myriad of illnesses like stomach disorders and painful muscles and joints, to name just a few of them. The veterans don't want to hear the argument that their illnesses are caused by stress.

When I talk to the veterans, they tell me they do want to know what caused them to get sick, but they also want research to be done to find effective treatment into exposure to biological and chemical agents. That is what they believe is the key to the problem.

These are brave men and women who answered their country's call at a time of need. They deserve a full accounting of how their service might be linked to these horrible illnesses that have so devastated their family lives and careers.

So based on the discussions I've had with Persian Gulf veterans over these seven years, I am pleased to have participated in negotiations to create a bi-partisan bill, HR 3980, "The Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Care and Research Act of 1998" with Chairman BOB STUMP, Ranking Member LANE EVANS, Health Subcommittee Chairman CLIFF STEARNS, and Health Subcommittee Ranking Member LUIS GUTIERREZ.

I don't believe we have had a focused, coherent federal research strategy. HR 3980 will give the Persian Gulf Veterans confidence that priority is being given to researching their exposure to biological or chemical weapons, and the resulting effects on their health, so that effective treatment can be found and administered, to fight the detrimental effects of this exposure on the veterans' health.

Through this bill, we will ensure priority is given to exposure to biological and chemical weapons by setting up a Public Advisory Committee to advise the Persian Gulf Veterans Coordinating Board on what kind of research to target. I am pleased that members of this Advisory Committee will represent groups that were formed specifically to help Persian Gulf Veterans. Their active participation on the Committee will ensure that adequate, targeted research into exposure to biological and chemical agents will be done.

Physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and at the Pentagon, don't have a training program to become updated on how to administer the latest treatment protocols as they become available from research findings. This is essential, and is badly needed. I am pleased that HR 3980 includes provisions to provide training to physicians at VA and the Pentagon, so they can give the best possible care to our Persian Gulf veterans.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this bill provides a provision I sought to publish treatment protocols on the Internet and in peer-reviewed medical journals because many Persian Gulf veterans receive health care in the private sector. If we publish the research findings, private sector physicians who treat Persian Gulf Veterans will have access to those treatment protocols.

It is my hope that HR 3980, "The Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Care and Research Act of 1998" will restore the veterans' con-

fidence in our government's efforts to make them well again, will give them a fresh start, and will take the needed steps to finally solve the Persian Gulf veterans' health problems.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 7, 1998

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House of Representatives on August 6, 1998 for rollcall votes 406 to 416. Had I been present, the following is how I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 406 "YEA"; Rollcall No. 407 "NO"; Rollcall No. 408 "NO"; Rollcall No. 409 "NO"; Rollcall No. 410 "NO"; Rollcall No. 411 "AYE"; Rollcall No. 412 "AYE"; Rollcall No. 413 "NO"; Rollcall No. 414 "AYE"; Rollcall No. 415 "AYE"; and Rollcall No. 416 "YEA".

WHITE HOUSE REMARKS OF
OFFICER GERRY FLYNN

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 7, 1998

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the stirring and insightful remarks of Lowell Police Officer Gerry Flynn at a White House Rose Garden event yesterday, on the importance of preserving and strengthening the Federal Brady Law. Officer Flynn spoke eloquently about the price we pay as a society when guns find their way into the wrong hands and the need to extend the Brady five-day waiting period. I congratulate Officer Flynn for the honor bestowed upon him in being invited to speak at the White House in front of the President, and I congratulate him upon seizing that opportunity to do the entire city of Lowell proud. I am submitting Officer Flynn's White House remarks for the RECORD, so that his words may remain with all of us.

STATEMENT OF LOWELL POLICE OFFICER
GERRY FLYNN AT THE WHITE HOUSE ON THE
BRADY HANDGUN LAW

Good morning. As National Vice-President of the International Brotherhood of Police Officers (IBPO) and President of the Lowell Police Patrolmen's Association, it is truly an honor and a privilege to be here with you this morning. On behalf of those of us in law enforcement, it gives me great pleasure to speak in support of an issue of such enormous importance as "The Brandy Handgun Law."

Robert F. Kennedy once said, "It is a responsibility to put away childish things, to make the possession and use of firearms a matter undertaken only by serious people who will use them with the restraint and maturity that their dangerous nature deserves and demands. For far too long, we have dealt with these deadly weapons as if they were harmless toys. It is past time that we wipe this stain of violence from our land."

Yet, thirty years after his death by a handgun, we are still attempting to wipe the stain of violence from our land—except the stain of violence has now spread into the classrooms occupied by our children.