

RECOGNITION OF OCCUPATIONAL
SAFETY AND HEALTH AWARE-
NESS DAYS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the Region I chapter of the Voluntary Protection Participants' Association and the Safety Council of Western Massachusetts. I applaud the work of this group in combating the serious threat that work-related injuries pose to our communities.

I want to pledge my support for the upcoming Occupational Safety and Health Awareness Days, June 16–17, 1999 organized by the Safety Council. I am pleased to see that the itinerary consists of both interesting and important presentations by local authorities on safety-related topics.

I feel that it is very important to have events such as this to educate the public about what everyone can do to prevent on-the-job accidents and ensure a safe working environment for the people of Western Massachusetts. It is clear that the work of the Safety Council is invaluable in this regard.

Finally I would like to thank the Safety Council for its tireless advocacy of occupational safety and health awareness. Along with the citizens of the Second Congressional District of Massachusetts, I express my most sincere gratitude and the hope that your important work will continue for years to come.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF W.B. NEILSON HOSE
COMPANY NO. 4

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, on July 6, 1999, the W.B. Neilson Hose Company No. 4 celebrates its 100th anniversary of fine service to Mechanicville, NY. It is my honor to represent the 22nd Congressional District that is served by such a dedicated department.

I would like to offer my sincerest and most enthusiastic congratulations to every member of the W.B. Neilson Hose Company No. 4 who has worked to maintain such a high level of excellence in fire fighting. With the flicker of an idea, thirty-five enthusiastic volunteers took action, bringing this company to life in 1899.

Over the years the W.B. Neilson Hose Company No. 4 has encountered many obstacles. During the early years, members had to draw the heavy horse cart through narrow, hilly streets and haul the heavy load over a steep bridge, all while facing treacherous weather conditions. These bumps in the road could have spelled disaster for an ordinary company, but they only made the W.B. Neilson Hose Company No. 4 stronger.

The devoted and dedicated members of this company deserve to be commended for their outstanding citizenship. These great men and women selflessly risk their lives in an effort to help and protect their friends and neighbors. Their heroic deeds reach far above and be-

yond the duty of an everyday citizen, and for this I am eternally grateful.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking W.B. Neilson Hose Company No. 4 for a century of outstanding volunteer service to Mechanicville, New York. I am sure that this first hundred years is only the beginning for this wonderful company.

VETERANS' CEMETERIES
ASSESSMENT ACT OF 1999

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 2040, the Veterans' Cemeteries Assessment Act of 1999, introduced by Chairman BOB STUMP of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

America made a solemn commitment to those who put their lives on the line for her when in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation authorizing the purchase of "cemetery grounds" to be used as national cemeteries "for soldiers who shall have died in the service of the country."

The stated goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration is to assure that the burial needs of veterans are met with a final resting place that commemorates their service to our Nation. Unfortunately, today nearly a third of America's veterans do not have the option of being buried in a national or state veterans cemetery within a reasonable distance from their residence—determined by the VA to be 75 miles.

I was distressed that the VA's Fiscal Year 2000 proposed budget failed to request funding for even the planning of any new national cemeteries although the Department's own statistics show that demand for cemetery space will increase sharply in the near future, with burials increasing 42 percent from 1995 to 2010, and annual veteran deaths reaching 620,000 in the year 2008.

Additionally, I have been deeply concerned that VA continues to ignore the long-identified national veterans cemetery needs of the southern part of my home state of Florida. In both 1987 and 1994, the Miami area was designated by congressionally mandated reports as one of the top geographic areas in the United States in which need for burial space for veterans is greatest. Yet, as late as August 1998, VA's strategic planning through the year 2010 indicated nothing more than a willingness to continue evaluating the needs of nearly 800,000 veterans in the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale primary and secondary service area. Mr. Speaker, that is over 54 percent of the estimated state veteran population and 3.3 percent of the total U.S. veteran population.

Florida has the oldest veterans' population of any state. By VA's estimate, there will be nearly 25,000 veteran deaths in the greater Miami area in FY 2000, and by the year 2010, the annual death rate in South Florida will be nearly 26,000. Unfortunately, the nearest veterans cemetery is 250 miles away. That is why I introduced H.R. 1628 to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery in the Miami, Florida, metropolitan area to serve the needs of veterans and their families.

The independent study required by H.R. 2040 to assess, among other things, the number of additional national cemeteries that will be required for the interment and memorialization of veterans who die after 2010, will better identify the critical needs of all of Florida, as well as the Nation. Throughout America, Mr. Speaker, 90 percent of eligible veterans are not buried in a state or national veterans cemetery.

Another important matter required to be studied by H.R. 2040 would be improvements to VA burial benefits to better serve veterans and their families. The legislation specifically mandates consideration of a proposal to increase the amount of the plot allowance benefit.

The plot allowance, when paid to a state veterans cemetery, helps defray the state's operating costs of those burial grounds. At a recent hearing of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, of which I am the Ranking Democrat, veterans organizations and State Directors of Veterans Affairs testified that the concern for high operating cost obligations keeps many states from seeking a VA grant to build and equip a state veterans cemetery.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that the plot allowance benefit—\$150—has not been increased in over 20 years, and is limited to only veterans with wartime service. I believe that an assessment of the plot allowance benefit will find (1) that the current benefit does not cover the cost of interment, (2) that the current eligibility criteria discriminates against 20 percent of the veteran population who are buried in a state cemetery but who are otherwise eligible to be buried in a national cemetery, and (3) that an increase in the benefit amount and an expansion of the eligibility criteria would provide the needed incentive for more states to establish state veterans cemeteries as complements the national cemetery system.

H.R. 2040 will provide Congress with the road map needed to fulfill the Nation's solemn obligation to its heroes—that they and their families be provided an appropriate resting place of honor. I urge Members to support this legislation.

COMMEMORATING THE 36TH
ANNIVERSARY OF EQUAL PAY ACT

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, thirty-six years ago today, President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act. In 1963, when this law was enacted, women earned only 58 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Since then, women have made great strides. For example, women are now a major part of our Nation's workforce and have started their own businesses in record numbers. Women are being admitted to college and graduating at rates on par with men, often breaking into many fields which were formerly open only to men.

Yet in spite of these gains, the wage gap between men and women still persists. Today women earn only 75 cents for every dollar a man earns, and for minority women, the wage

gap is even greater. African American women earn 65 cents and Hispanic women only 55 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

The tragedy of this wage discrepancy is highlighted by the fact that four out of every five households depend on a woman's income just to make ends meet. This crisis is further exacerbated by the rise in female-headed households, which makes women's income critical to the well-being of our Nation's children.

When you consider that receiving less pay means that women will also have less retirement security, the enormity of the problem is magnified. For example, less than 40% of women in the private sector have pensions, and those with pensions receive 50% less than what men receive. This is a critical problem given that women tend to outlive men, often by several years.

So, although women have made some gains since President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act, clearly, much more needs to be done to erase the disparity in wages that exists between men and women in order to achieve true pay equity.

Two bills have been introduced during this Congress that seek to remedy this wage disparity: H.R. 541, the Paycheck Fairness Act, introduced by Congresswoman ROSA DELAURO, and H.R. 1271, the Fair Pay Act, introduced by Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NOR-TON.

The Paycheck Fairness Act strengthens current law by allowing women to collect damages for pay discrimination. It also ensures that employers who have taken steps to provide equal pay get the recognition they deserve. The Fair Pay Act prohibits wage discrimination based on sex, race, or national origin for work in equivalent jobs.

I encourage my colleagues in Congress to support these important bills, and I urge the leadership of the House of Representatives to take action to address the issue of wage inequality in our country.

CONGRATULATING BREAD FOR
THE WORLD ON ITS 25TH ANNI-
VERSARY

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Bread for the World organization on its 25th anniversary of seeking to feed the world's neediest individuals—those who suffer from hunger. There is no more basic need for survival than adequate nutrition, and these dedicated, compassionate volunteers are deserving of our deepest thanks. Without their efforts, millions of people around the globe might literally have starved to death in the past quarter century.

For 25 years, Bread for the World has been blessed with the commitment of tens of thousands of people united to one goal: seeking justice for the world's hungry people. This month, I join my colleagues in Congress and on the board of Bread for World in welcoming Bread for the World members to Washington for their National Gathering, Silver Anniversary Celebration, and Annual Lobby Day.

Bread for the World is a nonpartisan, Christian citizens' movement. Its mission is to

change public policy to address the root causes of hunger and poverty in the United States and the world. Bread for the World members lobby the nation's decision-makers for policies that benefit hungry and poor people in the United States and around the world.

The organization was launched in 1974, after a small group of Catholics and Protestants began meeting to reflect on how persons of faith could be mobilized to influence U.S. policies that address the causes of hunger. Under the leadership of the Reverend Arthur Simon, the group quickly grew. Now, more than 44,000 members and churches belong to the ranks of Bread for the World and, led by the Reverend David Beckmann, serve as citizen advocates for hungry people.

Year after year, Bread for the World members win victories for hungry people from increased funding for child nutrition programs to investments in African farmers to restoration of food stamps to vulnerable legal immigrants. This year, Bread for the World members are part of Jubilee 2000, a worldwide movement for debt relief, and are supporting legislation providing debt relief for poverty reduction.

I am proud to be a member of the Board of Directors of Bread for the World. I believe it is nothing short of criminal that children go to bed hungry in this, the wealthiest nation in the world. Hunger is a completely preventable condition that stunts the growth and health of our youth and cripples the ability of adults to contribute to our society. I have long worked to fight hunger, sponsoring bills like the Hunger Has a Cure Act and fighting cuts in food stamps, the school breakfast/lunch program, Emergency Food Assistance, and WIC, among others. My commitment to this issue is unwavering.

In this 25th anniversary year of Bread for the World, I would like to take this opportunity to give thanks for their advocacy and wish them continued blessings in the years ahead, as they seek an end to hunger. There are few higher callings.

IN HONOR OF THE TENTH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE NEW YORK
CITY LAB SCHOOL

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute and commend an exceptional public school in New York City as it celebrates its 10th Anniversary. The New York City Laboratory School for Gifted Education is a prime example of public school education at its best.

The school was founded in 1988 with the help of former Board of Education Chancellor Joseph Fernandez and the former District 2 Superintendent Anthony Alvarado. Since its inception, this school has continued to provide a nurturing, safe environment for gifted children, allowing them to the freedom to explore their interests and broaden their horizons while they are enrolled as students.

The New York City Lab School strives to provide each child with an individualized and research-based curriculum where they are challenged to work both independently and collaboratively with their peers. The students also have the opportunity to take advantage of

the school's excellent academic and extra-curricular programs such as Spanish as a Foreign Language award winning Math and Chess Teams, and university partnerships with New York University and City College.

State of the art facilities such as the new Media Center, libraries in every classroom and both IBM and Macintosh computers in every room all contribute to the vibrant and enriching environment of this school. All of these factors have proven successful with students.

The New York City Lab School was the highest performer on the New York State Fourth grade English test. IN 1997 they were second in the city and in 1998 their scores had risen by 17%.

Best of all might be the students, faculty and staff of the school itself. The children are not only gifted but they all possess a love of learning and are all curious and excited about the many experiences they have had and will have in the future at their school.

The faculty are constantly challenged to take risks in the classroom and introduce students to new and interesting ways to respond to their ideas and questions. Faculty are also consistently questioning their own teaching styles and methods so that they may improve and continue to provide excellent interactions with the students.

The leadership of the director, Ms. Elizabeth Marra Kasowitz, is an important guiding force behind this school. With her dedication and consistent role in the school, she is able to work alongside the entire school community to help continue the school's long standing reputation of excellence and dedication to a gifted education.

Parents also play an important role in the community of the New York City Lab School. Parents of students contribute great amounts of time, energy and effort by volunteering in many ways.

The entire community of the New York City Laboratory School for the Gifted is an example of how dedication, hard work and personalized relationships lead to positive and phenomenal results. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending the entire community of the New York City Laboratory School.

A TRIBUTE TO SANTA CLARITA,
CALIFORNIA'S HERO OF THE
WEEK PROGRAM

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 14, 1999

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to bring to the attention of the House of Representatives a wonderful program that exists in the city of Santa Clarita called the "Hero of the Week" and those individuals honored in this program.

The program is jointly sponsored by the City of Santa Clarita Anti-Gang Task Force and Mad About Rising Crime Santa Clarita Chapter under the direction of Mr. Gary Popejoy. Started by Maria Fulkerson and Lorraine Grimaldo of the Sant Clarita Anti-Gang Task Force, the "Hero of the Week" program focuses on more of the positive actions of our youth rather than the negative. The program honors students for their positive actions and choices they have demonstrated. The students