

in the hardest forms of labor—in our nation's mines, mills and in the farm fields. It was these conditions that the National Consumers League was created to alleviate.

Through the hard work and dedication of its members, the National Consumers League was able to secure the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938. This monumental legislation has been the backbone for ensuring that American workers are treated fairly and humanely. Specifically, the legislation enacted sweeping reforms to the use of child labor in our country that were designed to prevent the exploitation of youth workers.

In the 60 years since the passage of this extraordinary legislation our economy has changed dramatically. It is appalling to learn that in our great country, the occupational injury rate for children and teens is more than twice as high than it is for adults. In fact, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates that every year 230,000 teens are injured on the job. I am certain that all of my colleagues will agree with me that these statistics are a national disgrace and are totally unacceptable for a civilized, advanced society such as ours.

That is why I introduced H.R. 3139, the Youth Worker Protection Act, a bill that will modernize America's child labor laws. I am also honored to report that in 2003, just like 1938, the National Consumers League was instrumental in the drafting of this legislation and I am confident that with their support we will be successful in securing its passage.

I am delighted that Linda Golodner, President of the National Consumers League and a tireless advocate to advance progressive change in our country was standing next to me when I introduced the Youth Worker Protection Act. Her eloquence on the need for reform to our nation's child labor laws should be shared with our Congressional colleagues, Mr. Speaker, and I therefore request that her statement be placed in the Congressional Record.

STATEMENT OF LINDA GOLODNER

Thank you for coming today. I'm Linda Golodner, president of the National Consumers League and co-chair of the Child Labor Coalition. I am joined today by Congressman Tom Lantos and Maggie Carey from Beverly, Massachusetts.

More than one-hundred years ago, Florence Kelley, first executive secretary of the National Consumers League, led a national effort to press Congress for tough laws to protect working children. Her goal was achieved in 1938 with the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which includes child labor provisions. The Act addresses child labor and the workplace realities of the early 20th century—not the early 21st century. The early reformers would I am sure find it inconceivable that these hard fought child labor laws have not been revisited since that time. Updates to the Fair Labor Standards Act are long overdue. Our nation's most vulnerable workers—many of whom are too young to have a driver's license—deserve 21st-century protection from unsafe and inappropriate working conditions.

The National Consumers League and our more than 40 member organizations in the Child Labor Coalition have been working since for almost 15 years to protect the health, education, and safety of working minors. We have advocated for stronger child labor enforcement and for higher penalties for those who violate the law—especially those that result in a young worker's serious

injury or fatality. We have focused on child labor reform that reflects the realities of today's workplaces and today's educational needs.

Young people who choose to have after school jobs should not have to compromise their education to do so. Yet, many do. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, a 16- and 17-year-old can try to juggle as much as 40 hours of work per week, in addition to their 30 hours of school. Combined, this is more work than is expected of most adults in this country. Whether short-sighted about their own education or facing coercion from employers, many young people work too many hours. Studies show that when teens work over 20 hours a week while school is in session that their grades go down and often alcohol and drug abuses escalates. Many work well over 20 hours a week in after-school and weekend jobs.

Teen worker injuries are also escalating. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has raised estimates on youth worker injuries from 200,000 in 1992 to 230,000 in 1998. Every year, between 60-70 young people die in the workplace. Outdated child labor laws—written in the 1930s—cannot and do not adequately protect our nation's young workers from workplace hazards.

We have high expectations for the passage of the Youth Worker Protection Act. Our highest expectation is that passage of the bill will lead to fewer injuries, fewer deaths, and remove the too often scenario of a youth's first job being his last job. I will leave it to Congressman Tom Lantos to tell you how.

We have high expectations that the passage of the bill will put youth employment in its proper place—as a positive first experience in the world of work. But the first job of any young person today is education—Education that will prepare that teenager to be a productive worker tomorrow.

No teenager expects that they will get hurt on the after-school or weekend job. And, as a nation, we are not assuring young people that the law protects them from harm in the workplace. The passage of the Youth Worker Protection Act would be a step in the right direction. But for now, it is the National Consumers League commitment to teen workers and their parents to arm them with information they need to think twice when choosing that job. Check out www.nclnet.org/childlabor for new materials about laws that do exist and how to avoid dangerous work, including NCL's five worst teen jobs.

This fall, nine American families won't enjoy the back-to-school festivities as usual. Nine families are mourning the deaths of their children over this last summer. The cause of death? Workplace injuries. Every 30 seconds, a young worker under the age of 18 is injured on the job. On average, every five days, one of the injuries is fatal.

Such losses are indefensible. Especially deaths from workplace injuries, which could have been prevented with stronger laws protecting young workers and stronger government commitment to enforcement and prosecution under the law.

HONORING THE HONORABLE
ALSON H. SMITH, JR.

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, Mr. WOLF and I rise today to honor former

Delegate Alston H. Smith, Jr., an outstanding citizen of Winchester, Virginia, who, for nearly half a century, has served his community and country.

Delegate Smith's successful career began in 1954 when he cofounded Shenandoah Foods 2000, a major employer for the Shenandoah Valley. He served on the boards of both Jefferson Bankshares and First Bank, playing a critical role in assisting the economic development of western Virginia.

Delegate Smith also faithfully served in the Virginia House of Delegates for over 20 years, where he was a Democratic leader and tireless advocate of public education. He was instrumental in the development of the Winchester/Frederick County area, bringing critical improvements to his beloved Shenandoah University.

Delegate Smith not only dedicated himself to the Winchester/Frederick County area, but also worked to bring progress to the entire Commonwealth. For nearly a decade, he served the interests of the coalfields of Virginia as chairman of the House Mining and Mineral Resources Committee.

Delegate Smith certainly has recognized that the surest way to make a difference is to begin in his local community. Additionally, he generously has donated much of his personal time to improving economic development opportunities and education for all Virginians. Delegate Smith loves the Valley and loves Virginia. All of Virginia extends their heartfelt thanks for his continuing role in improving the lives of our children, families, and seniors.

Mr. Speaker, the life and service of this Virginian serves as a shining example to all who wish to improve education and opportunity through civic and community involvement. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Delegate Smith.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO KAROL
SACCA

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

of Colorado

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to rise and pay tribute to an outstanding educator from my district. Karol Sacca from Carbondale, Colorado has dedicated her life to the betterment of young people and I am proud to call her contributions to the attention of this body of Congress and our nation.

Karol has been a teacher for a quarter of a century. She has spent the last eighteen years at Roaring Fork High School, where she is currently the school's librarian. In this position, Karol's endless enthusiasm and tireless dedication to her students has resulted in many accomplishments.

Karol created a student media center at Roaring Fork High School and also spearheaded the creation of many innovative reading programs as well. Karol's voluntary reading programs have attracted the participation of over half of the school's students. This level of student participation is a testament to Karol's ability to connect with her students. Karol's ability and conviction have earned her the respect of educators statewide. She is currently one of four finalists for Colorado's Teacher of the Year Award.