EMBRACE DRUG REIMPORTATION

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, today I ask a very serious question. Why is it, the Cheney-Bush bunch allow us to import foreign made flu vaccines, but won't allow Americans to shop for American made cheaper drugs across our borders?

We all know the importance of getting our flu vaccines every year. The Washington Post reports that last year's flu season was the worst flu season we've had in 4 years, and the flu killed 142 people. As all Americans are aware, there is another flu vaccine crisis in our country.

America's supply of the flu vaccine has practically been cut in half, because the world's second-leading supplier, The Chiron Corp. based in Britain, was shut down because of contamination reported in its batches of the vaccine.

48 million vaccines were due to be shipped before this shutdown. I repeat, 48 million doses of this vaccine were to be imported into this country, to help combat a life-threatening illness.

Mr. Speaker, I speak to address a glaring policy inconsistency on the part of the Cheney-Bush administration.

Why is it, that a long-standing health policy, that is wildly effective and successful, be permitted with respect to one killer, but denied to every other disease?

142 people died from the flu last year, and it causes outrage and action. 250,000 people die from heart attacks before they even get to the hospital each year, and it's accepted as just another statistic.

How many of these 250,000 could have been saved, if only they'd had medicine to lower their cholesterol?

How many of these 250,000 could have been saved, if only they'd been able to afford their medicine?

According to a recent press release from the University of Michigan Health System, nearly half of patients who have a prescription for any of the cholesterol-fighting drugs called statins fail to fill their prescription every time—or stop filling it altogether! The University goes on to say that the higher the prescription cost, the lower the number of prescriptions filled.

Let's ignore, for a moment, that Europe has been importing drugs safely and effectively for over 20 years.

Let us also ignore that countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France also have higher life expectancies and lower child mortality rates than the United States does.

But let us not ignore a new FDA proposal. A proposal that would require customs agents to return all drugs sent from foreign addresses back to their senders.

William Hubbard, a senior associate commissioner at the FDA, told Congress on June 7th, "We need to make a blanket assessment that these drugs are not safe for American consumers and they should be turned back."

Unless, of course, it's the flu vaccine.

And then it's OK if they come from the United Kingdom, as in the case of the Chiron Corp. Or if it comes from the world's largest supplier of the flu vaccine, the French company, Aventis Pasteur.

Yes, there are criticisms about the safety of imported drugs. One might be able to look to this most recent flu vaccine scare and say that this is a perfect example of why we don't import drugs. The safety of the supply could be compromised.

I would say that this is a perfect example of why we should import from countries like Canada or the United Kingdom. They have safeguards in place, just as we do, that protect the integrity of the prescription drug supply.

On August 12th, the acting FDA commissioner Lester Crawford expressed his concern that al-Qaida may attack the supply of drugs coming into this country.

I will tell you that I am JUST AS CONCERNED about the 28 percent of older adults with diabetes who, as reported in the February 2004 issue of Diabetes Care, are going without food or other essentials to pay for their insulin.

Why, in the richest nation on Earth, with this so-called comprehensive new Medicare program, are people going without food to afford their drugs?

Why is the Administration so opposed to a program that would help so many?

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge not only the duly elected Representatives of the citizens in these United States, but also the President to do what is in the best interests of these citizens.

I urge both Congress and the President to embrace prescription drug re-importation and reject the influence of the pharmaceutical companies.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PERSONAL PROTECTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 2004

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, all Americans know that gun control continues to be a serious subject of debate, right here in the District of Columbia, in the State of Georgia, which I represent, and across this nation. It's an issue of personal safety and of constitutional rights embedded in the fabric of our Nation.

I agree with those who want to restrict criminal access to guns. However, this must be done without compromising the constitutional rights of our law-abiding citizens.

I strongly support the right of law-abiding adults to purchase and own firearms for the protection of their homes and families, collecting, target shooting, and hunting. That's why I have and will continue to oppose any proposal that threatens this basic Second Amendment right.

I realize the concerns of some Americans who, in the wake of school shootings and other heinous illegal acts, call for stricter gun control measures. I understand those concerns. That's why I fully support measures that call for tougher sentences for the illegal use of firearms, to get offenders off the streets and out of our communities. I support stiff sentences of juveniles who use firearms illegally, and I support increasing the maximum penalty for adults who illegally provide those juveniles with firearms. That's how we must keep our schools and communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, tougher gun laws should not infringe on the rights of law-abiding citizens, and Congress has both the authority and the responsibility to ensure that they do not. So, the question before us today is not whether Congress can repeal the District of Columbia's handgun and self-defense bans, it is whether Congress should do so. The U.S. Constitution, the constitutions of 44 States, Federal law, the laws of all 50 States, the vast majority of Georgians and of Americans recognize the right for law abiding citizens to use firearms for protection, and for other legal purposes. Only the District of Columbia prohibits a person from having a firearm assembled and loaded at home, for the purpose of self-defense. I believe that that's wrong. We should pass this bill and allow D.C. residents to protect themselves from crime.

UNIVERSAL NATIONAL SERVICE ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a very important subject for the young people of my district and America, the draft. This week, the Congress considered H.R. 163, Universal National Service Act of 2003, which would require every U.S. citizen, and every other person residing in the United States, between the ages of 18 and 26 to perform a two-year period of national service, unless exempted.

Let me make clear, I do not support reinstatement of an active military draft system. Also it is very unlikely there will be a draft in the foreseeable future.

The legal authority for drafting men into the U.S. armed forces expired in 1973. However, the U.S. Selective Service System has been registering 18–25 year-olds on a stand-by basis. These young men could be called for service should an active draft ever be reinstated. Currently, women are not required to register with the U.S. Selective Service.

Young people, as well as their parents, across my district have heard about a draft bill, and these constituents are asking questions about the draft bill and want to find out its status. Congressman RANGEL and U.S. Senator FRITZ HOLLINGS from South Carolina introduced this legislation to reinstate an active draft and extend service requirements to women. I cannot speak for them about their motives behind this legislation, but they certainly do make a fundamental point: if we go to war, all Americans should share in the cost and sacrifice of that war. The authors point out that without a universal draft, this burden falls disproportionately on the shoulders of the poor, the disadvantaged, and minorities, as was the case during the Vietnam War.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 163 raises important questions about the current composition of U.S. armed forces. For example, Representative RANGEL argues that among 535 Members of Congress, only four have sons or daughters who presently serve in the military.

Yet we have not had a national debate on the draft and we certainly did not have that debate this week. H.R. 163 was not marked up or voted on by any committee here in the House. This bill was added to the suspension calendar of the House reserved for noncontroversial items. And yet it is quite controversial.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq—combined with other worldwide deployments in Afghanistan, Korea, and over 140 other countries—has put an enormous strain on our active duty and reserve soldiers. We have seen underpaid, ill-equipped, and overextended American troops fighting in Iraq. More than two-thirds of New Jersey's National Guard will be activated this year. There are hard questions that need to be answered about how we can continue this war, at this pace. We do need to review our commitments overseas and asses our ability to meet them. This bill shows that a National debate on these issues is greatly needed. This week, we did not have that debate. The House leaders simply tried to make a political point, but I hope that this has sown the seeds of the discussion. The nation's military leaders are nearly unanimous in saying that the military can meet its needs better without a draft. None of us here in the House today would be eligible under a potential draft. We are too old. And I would like to see this debate with the input of the young people who are affected by it. I feel strongly that we should all go back to our districts and continue this discussion—but with those who it will be affected by it.

I do not believe that an active military draft system is currently necessary or advisable. More important, the generals and admirals do not believe that a draft is necessary or advisable. I have co-sponsored legislation introduced by Representative ELLEN TAUSCHER to meet military manpower needs by temporarily increasing by 8 percent the end-strength numbers of our all-volunteer armed forces during the next five years and increasing enlistees' pay and benefits accordingly (H.R. 3696). This alternative approach would increase the volunteer numbers of active duty-soldiers gradually over the next five years, thus enabling members of the National Guard and Reserve to rotate out or transition voluntarily into active duty slots with better benefits and equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many moms and dads, and I have heard from many students from all across my district who are disturbed by the idea of renewing the draft and I agree with them. We do not need to return to the draft system.

MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, October 3–9 is Mental Illness Awareness Week. During any one-year period, up to 50 million Americans—more than 22 percent—suffer from a clearly diagnosable mental disorder involving a degree of incapacity that interferes with employment, attendance at school or daily life. Like so many disorders, mental illness does not discriminate and affects every age, ethnic, and socioeconomic group.

During this week, there will be a more visible push in the communities to get the information out about mental illness. There will be booths set up and mental health fairs across our country as a way to reach out to more people. I commend the efforts of organizations and individuals who not only during this week but throughout the year work to help others identify and treat their mental illness.

Unfortunately, their hard work is somewhat stifled when there is not equal health care for mental illness or every person needing psychiatric care does not have access to a psychiatrist of their choice. With one in four adults suffering from a mental illness or substance use disorder in any year, it is likely that every family will feel this impact. Yet, most health plans discriminate by providing less care for mental illness, and by requiring patients and their families to pay more out-of-pocket costs.

Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to correct this disparity. Our constituents should not be penalized because they have a mental illness compared to a physical illness. We should ensure that the mental health system provide a more individualized and holistic approach to care without shame or inequity in coverage. Mental illness is like most physical illnesses; the patient is in need of treatment, support and rehabilitation.

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL REUNION, YORK, SOUTH CAROLINA

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, on the weekend before Labor Day, some four hundred alumni of Jefferson High School gathered for their first reunion since Jefferson closed more than thirty years ago.

Jefferson got its start in a frame school house built for African-American students next to Wesley United Methodist Church on West Jefferson Street in York, South Carolina. From there, Jefferson graduated to a Rosenwald school and became the African-American public school in a racially segregated system Although the system was called "separate but equal," Jefferson never had facilities or teaching materials equal to its counterparts, the white schools that I attended. Used books were passed on from white students, dated and worn. The school district built a new high school for white students in 1950, but left black students to make the best of their old one. The students, teachers, and administrators at Jefferson did just that. They made the most of their circumstances. The students who came back for this Reunion did not dwell on what they lacked at Jefferson High School. They saluted teachers who took a personal interest, believed in them, and encouraged them to excel. They recalled their formidable teams in football and basketball and the musical talent they produced. They recognized the values instilled in them for a lifetime.

When the alumni sat down for a banquet the last night of their reunion, the pride they felt at being "Jeffersonians" was easily felt and well-founded. Among the four hundred attending the dinner, there were graduates who had risen to the highest levels of the Civil Service and become department heads in state government; Ph.D.'s in the sciences and liberal arts; college professors; school teachers, successful entrepreneurs, attorneys; and many more who had distinguished themselves. The banquet speaker, Roberta Wright, symbolized their success. She finished Jefferson and went on to become a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Fisk University and the University of Michigan School of Law. She made a stirring speech, challenging everyone to do more for the common good.

With the onset of integration in the early 1970s, Jefferson High School came to an end. But the three-day reunion made clear that Jefferson lives on in the lives it made better. Hundreds of the alumni attending attested to better, more productive lives because of what they learned at Jefferson under teachers who cared, encouraged, and challenged.

IN RECOGNITION OF ADMIRAL THOMAS H. MOORER

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on February 5 of this year, a legendary American naval hero passed away in Bethesda, Maryland. Admiral Thomas H. Moorer epitomized the finest qualities of dedication and national service. His distinguished naval career spanned 41 years, including service as a naval aviator, as one of the first pilots off the ground during the attack on Pearl Harbor, as a decorated hero of numerous combat missions in the Southwest Pacific and the Battle of Midway, as Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, as commander of NATO's U.S. Atlantic Command and the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, becoming the only officer in the Navy's history to command both our Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, as Chief of Naval Operations, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as a tireless advocate for American veterans. Admiral Moorer was instrumental in establishing the United States Navy Memorial on Pennsylvania Avenue. In numerous appearances before Congressional Committees, Admiral Moorer provided valuable testimony on a variety of national security concerns.

Capping this extraordinary career, Admiral Moorer made his final appearance on Capitol Hill on October 22, 2003, as Chairman of the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the 1967 attack on the USS *Liberty*. It is a privilege for me to introduce the Findings of the Independent Commission of Inquiry Into the Israeli Attack on the USS *Liberty* into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

FINDINGS OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON THE USS "LIBERTY," THE RECALL OF MILITARY RESCUE SUPPORT AIRCRAFT WHILE THE SHIP WAS UNDER ATTACK, AND THE SUBSEQUENT COVER-UP BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

We, the undersigned, having undertaken an independent investigation of Israel's attack on the USS *Liberty*, including eyewitness testimony from surviving crewmembers, a review of naval and other official records, an examination of official statements by the Israeli and American governments, a study of the conclusions of all previous official inquiries, and a consideration of important