

CHILDREN'S VISION IMPROVEMENT AND LEARNING ACT

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the travesty of preventable vision loss in our nation's children.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently reported that millions of children do not receive the vision evaluations recommended by top medical organizations, placing them at greater risk for permanent vision loss, as well as physical and emotional difficulties.

Undiagnosed vision problems can lead to permanent vision loss and learning difficulties.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends a vision evaluation in the pre-school years. Yet, the study finds that only 1 in 3 children received one before entering kindergarten.

It is a national disgrace that only a small number of children are actually receiving the preventative care, recommended by our own medical guideline, they need to ensure healthy vision.

One eye doctor who read the report called it, "a wake-up call to both primary care providers and eye care professionals." It is clear that we must do better.

Mr. Speaker, in many cases, vision loss can be avoided with early diagnosis and treatment. For the sake of our nation's young people, we need to make sure that children receive the necessary preventative vision care.

Amblyopia is a serious vision problem that affects nearly one-half million preschoolers and is the leading cause of vision loss in young Americans. I recently met with seven-year-old Kennedy Biederman. She is a prime example of what can happen when a child doesn't get proper visual evaluations.

Throughout her childhood, no one noticed that Kennedy couldn't see well. Despite multiple visits, her pediatrician did not notice, her teachers did not notice and neither did the nurses that screened her vision at school. Like many others, she simply slipped through the cracks.

At age 5½, Kennedy happened to visit an eye doctor because of a small injury. The doctor performed an eye exam and diagnosed amblyopia. He also found that Kennedy was legally blind in her left eye and that her "good" eye had only 20/80 vision. "I don't know how she was even functioning at school," her father said.

Mr. Speaker, we have the best medical system in the world. We must do better so that more children don't wind up in the same position as Kennedy. The best way to do that is by making sure that children receive an eye exam from an eye doctor.

An eye exam measures a number of visual skills that are critical to a child's healthy vision, such as using both eyes as a team, the ability for the eyes to focus properly when reading a book or viewing a computer, and the ability for the eyes to move properly when reading across a page of print.

As the National Amblyopia Youth Spokesperson, Kennedy, and her parents Jason and Jill Biederman, will have a great opportunity to share their story. I commend them for their ef-

forts to raise public awareness and believe that with their help, we can make a difference in the lives of children nationwide.

The CDC states that approximately 1.8 million children under the age of 18 (2.5%) are blind or have some form of visual impairment. Many cases of visual impairment could be eliminated simply through more timely diagnosis and treatment.

In order to address this egregious situation, in the last Congress I introduced legislation to provide states with resources they need to increase the number of children that receive an eye exam. More than 100 of my colleagues cosponsored the legislation, as did more than 60 organizations nationwide.

Yesterday, I proudly reintroduced, the Children's Vision Improvement and Learning Act, H.R. 2238.

This bill would work to address these issues by offering grants to all states to provide eye exams and necessary follow-up care; developing and distributing educational materials on state children's vision programs; and ensuring that these new initiatives complement, not supplant, services provided under Medicaid and SCHIP.

As Congress works to improve the educational opportunities available to children in this country, the need to remove outside impediments to learning must be addressed to achieve long-term success.

DELIVERING MAIL—COLLECTING HOPE

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to gratefully acknowledge and thank the National Association of Letter Carriers, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), the AFL-CIO, America's Second Harvest, and the United Way of America for their extraordinary efforts in organizing and carrying out the largest single food drive in the world: the annual National Association of Letter Carriers National Food Drive.

The food drive will again take place on the second Saturday in May, which this year falls on May 14th. The timing of the drive is no coincidence; it comes at a time when most food banks are low on supplies, having exhausted their collections from the holiday season. Last year the food drive collected an incredible 71 million pounds of food for donation to food banks, pantries, and shelters across the country.

As you can imagine, it takes an army of volunteers to collect that amount of food. This year USPS, with help from the Campbell Soup Company and Valpak Direct Marketing Systems, is distributing more than 150 million mailings promoting the drive and encouraging donations. On May 14th, donations will be collected by letter carriers along their mail routes in all 50 states.

This year's food drive has an added urgency and importance. The food drive largely supplements the inadequate support the Federal government has provided to our nation's citizens facing financial difficulty. Families around the nation are struggling to get by—family wage jobs are scarce, energy prices are at record highs, and government support

mechanisms are increasingly being axed by this Administration and this Congress.

When we think about letter carriers, first class comes to mind. From now on, we should think of letter carriers and everyone involved in this as world class, because that's what they are. Please join me in donating food on May 14th and acknowledging the spirit of America that will be carried from door to door. May this year's food drive be the safest and most abundant collection yet.

185TH BIRTHDAY OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate what would have been the 185th birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. This week also marks the 3rd annual National Nurses Week, which will be observed May 6th through May 12th.

The 2.7 million registered nurses in the United States bear the primary responsibility for the care and well-being of hospital patients and are the largest single component of the health care profession. Unfortunately, our nation faces a serious shortfall in the number of nurses available; too few nurses are caring for too many patients. According to a report by the Department of Health and Human Services, our nation could face a shortage of 800,000 nurses by the year 2020. As our population ages and as health care costs continue to escalate, government, hospitals, and policy advocates must work together to combat this problem.

The theme of National Nurses Week 2005 is Nurses: Many Roles, One Profession. In addition to their tireless hands-on efforts caring for patients, nurses are constantly involved in health education, research, business, and public policy. Having met with numerous nurses from the 29th district of California, I know first hand the needs of nurses of America. That is why I support House Resolution 245, which will recognize the important contributions of nurses to the health care system and the goals and ideals of National Nurses Week. I ask my colleagues to please join me in honoring some of America's greatest heroes, our nurses.

TRIBUTE TO THE CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Congressional Youth Leadership Council (CYLC) on the occasion of their 20th Anniversary. Founded in 1985, the Council has long been committed to inspiring America's youth to achieve their full leadership potential.

CYLC has educated over 200,000 individually selected young men and women representing all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the American territories, and over 100

countries around the world since its founding. From my district alone, we have had more than 200 students participate in this outstanding and innovative program and in the entire State of Maryland over 1,600 students have had this terrific opportunity.

These energetic and dedicated young men and women are academically well-rounded, involved in their schools and communities, frequently interested in careers of government and service, and eager to develop their leadership skills. In addition to representing all comers of the country and globe, they are culturally, racially, and economically diverse.

The Congressional Youth Leadership Council programs bring thousands of students to Capitol Hill each year in an effort to deepen their understanding of the realities of government, citizenship, and service. I know my colleagues and our staff appreciate the opportunity to discuss important local, national, and global issues with these bright and eager young students.

Essential to the success of these and other CYLC programs is the focus on learning through experience. Students are challenged with simulations, role playing, and debate. They are charged with applying those experiences to abundant opportunities for personal interaction among each other and with today's leaders. The greatest outcome of this type of educational experience is open dialogue, perspective sharing, and cultural exchanges that increase understanding, cooperation, and teamwork.

The Congressional Youth Leadership Council inspires and energizes young men and women who return to their homes, communities, and schools with the tools and commitment to be effective leaders both today and for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to please join me in congratulating CYLC on 20 years of positively impacting the lives of America's youth, our next generation of leaders.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2005

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today my House colleagues and I are reintroducing the Patients' Bill of Rights. This bill will protect patients from the unscrupulous activities of HMOs and hold them accountable if their negligent actions harm their patients.

Although we have worked on this bill now for seven years, we have been thwarted at every turn by the Republican leadership, the Administration, and the insurance industry. We need to get this bill back on track.

President Bush promised his support for such a bill during his 2000 Presidential campaign. But in the end, it was his efforts that killed our bipartisan bill in 2001.

In spite of this setback, we remain undeterred. Working families have waited long enough for the rights they deserve that would be protected under this bill.

We were optimistic the Supreme Court would clarify the law on the side of patients, allowing state HMO accountability laws to stay in force. But the Supreme Court ruled against

patients, leaving a situation where at best HMOs may or may not be held accountable in state court and at worst HMO attorneys will use this ruling to avoid accountability altogether. This court decision only further underscores the need for action.

Unfortunately, it appears now that some in Congress not only want to protect the HMO status quo, but go further, under the guise of "medical liability reform," to make it more difficult for patients to get justice. Such reform would not only apply to cases of medical malpractice by physicians, but also severely limit accountability of HMOs and drug manufacturers.

We need a Patients' Bill of Rights to protect Americans from crafty HMO attorneys who avoid accountability by keeping victims and their families tied up in court for years. Without this needed legislation, only foreign diplomats, the mentally insane, and HMOs will be exempt from the consequences of their decisions.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF BRANDON W. BURNER ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding young man from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am happy to announce that Brandon W. Burner of Tiffin, Ohio has been offered an appointment to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

Brandon's offer of appointment poises him to attend the United States Military Academy this fall with the incoming cadet class of 2009. Attending one of our Nation's military academies is an invaluable experience that offers a world-class education and demands the very best that these young men and women have to offer. Truly, it is one of the most challenging and rewarding undertakings of their lives.

Brandon brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming class of West Point cadets. While attending Tiffin Columbian High School in Tiffin, Ohio, Brandon has attained a grade point average of 4.06, which places him at the top of his class of more than two hundred students. While a gifted athlete, Brandon has maintained the highest standards of excellence in his academics, choosing to enroll and excel in Advanced Placement classes throughout high school. Brandon has been a member of the National Honor Society, Honor Roll, and has earned awards and accolades as a scholar and an athlete.

Outside the classroom, Brandon has distinguished himself as an excellent student-athlete. On the fields of competition, Brandon has earned letters in both Varsity Football and Track and Field. He was named Honorary Captain of the Varsity Football team, selected as a 2004 delegate to the American Legion's Boys State and attained the rank of Eagle Scout as a sophomore. Brandon's dedication and service to the community and his peers has proven his ability to excel among the lead-

ers at West Point. I have no doubt that Brandon will take the lessons of his student leadership with him to West Point.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Brandon W. Burner on his appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available anywhere in the world. I am sure that Brandon will do very well during his career at West Point and I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing him well as he begins his service to the Nation.

HONORING MR. RON CHAPMAN

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of his many loyal listeners in the Dallas-Forth Worth and the Fifth Congressional District of Texas, today I would like to honor my friend, Mr. Ron Chapman, for his many years of outstanding broadcasting and community involvement. With his wit, wisdom, and welcome voice, Ron Chapman has helped wake up, inform, and entertain millions of North Texans for the past 45 years.

Ron Chapman came to Dallas in 1959 and began working for KLIF-AM. In 1965, he joined WFAA-TV and for 2 years he hosted the teen dance show Sump'n Else! In the late 1960's, Ron helped bring KVIL to the top of the ratings as both the morning host and program director. Although he left KVIL in 2000, he did not go far. Ever true to his Dallas audience he moved to KVIL's sister station, KLUV-FM. There his morning show continued to consistently rank in the top 10.

Ron Chapman earned the very first National Association of Broadcaster's Marconi Award for Personality of the Year in 1989. As a testament to the quality of his work and his commitment to excellence in broadcasting, Ron Chapman was also inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2004. One of his radio colleagues described Ron as "the benchmark" of what morning radio should be, and I am sure his many listeners agree.

Ron Chapman is more than just a radio personality, to the people of North Texas, he is our friend. As the Congressman for the Fifth Congressional District, and as one of his many loyal fans, it is my distinct pleasure to honor Ron Chapman today in the United States House of Representatives.

Ron, many thanks for all that you have done over your distinguished broadcasting career. You will be fondly remembered and you will be deeply missed on the airwaves by the people of Dallas.

IN HONOR OF ARTHUR DOUGLAS' FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE TO ST. MARK'S SCHOOL OF TEXAS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the commemoration of Arthur Douglas'