

sample of hospital emergency rooms and then estimates national numbers. Nevertheless, NEISS has been gathering these statistics systematically over many years, so that trends become clear over time.

Beginning in 1996, a sharp upward trend can be seen in hospital emergency room visits by passengers on unregulated "fixed" rides—the category of rides exempt from CPSC regulation under the Roller Coaster Loophole. These injuries soared 96 percent over the next 5 years. Meanwhile, such emergency room visits were falling for passengers on rides that the CPSC still regulates.

The theme park industry likes to tell the public that its rides are safer than the mobile rides because they are overseen by a permanent park staff, but according to this independent government safety agency report, the mobile parks have less of an injury problem than the theme parks.

Why has this startling increase in amusement park rides occurred recently? No one knows for sure. If the facts were known to the CPSC, it could do its job. But the facts are kept from the CPSC, so we are left to speculate. We know, for example, that new steel technology and the roller coaster building boom of the 1990s resulted in an increase in the speed almost as dramatic as the increase in serious injuries. All of the nation's 15 fastest coasters have been built in the last 10 years. In 1980, the top speed hit 60 mph. In 1990, it hit 70 mph. The top speed today is 120 mph, and Six Flags is advertising a new ride for 2005 of 128 mph. The roller coaster arms race is alive and well.

For the most part, these rides are designed, operated and ridden safely. But clearly, the margin for error is much narrower for a child on a ride traveling at 100 mph than on a ride traveling 50 mph. Children often do foolish things, and the operators themselves are often teenagers. People make mistakes. The design of these rides must anticipate that their patrons will act like children, because they often are children.

THE BILL RESTORES BASIC SAFETY OVERSIGHT TO THE
CPSC

The bill we are introducing today will close the special-interest loophole that prevents effective federal safety oversight of amusement park rides. It would, therefore, restore to the CPSC the standard safety jurisdiction over "fixed-site" amusement park rides that it used to have before the Roller Coaster Loophole was adopted. There would no longer be an artificial and unjustifiable split between unregulated "fixed-site" rides and regulated "mobile" rides. When a family traveled to a park anywhere in the United States, a mother or father would know that their children were being placed on a ride that was subject to basic safety regulation by the CPSC.

It would restore CPSC's authority to: 1. Investigate accidents, 2. Develop and enforce action plans to correct defects, and 3. Act as a national clearinghouse for accident and defect data.

The bill would also authorize appropriations of \$500 thousand annually to enable the CPSC to carry out the purposes of the Act.

I urge my colleagues to join us in this effort to make this the safest summer ever in our theme parks. Let's pass the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BROWN VS.
BOARD OF EDUCATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the historical decision and individuals involved in the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. This Supreme Court decision was one of the most significant decisions in the history of the United States and was an important impetus in the Civil Rights Movement. Those involved moved the country forward and opened the doors for generations of Americans that would no longer believe that "separate but equal" was a justifiable policy.

In 1896, the Supreme Court held in Plessy vs. Ferguson that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment permitted separate facilities of equal quality for blacks and whites. It established the policy of "separate but equal" as a constitutionally acceptable system in this country. For the next seventy years, many parts of this great Nation promoted segregation in education, housing, transportation, and other facilities. Blacks and whites had separate water fountains, rode in separate railroad cars, and were educated in separate schools.

For the first half of the 20th century, there were two distinct Americas—one black, one white. White schools had far greater educational resources. They receive larger portions of state budgets for education. Their books were current and up-to-date. Their teachers were paid competitive salaries. Black schools were far from equal. Black students were barely prepared for the educational and living challenges ahead of them. Black students were closed to many of the opportunities for advancement. Segregation proved that separate would be inherently unequal.

Lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, including Thurgood Marshall, would lead a series of court cases challenging the constitutionality of segregated educational facilities. Their argument would rest on the disparities in the educational funding and spending, the quality of the educational systems, and the psychological impacts of segregated schools.

Researchers and scholars across the Nation provided evidence of the harmful effects of segregation of young minds. Dr. Kenneth Clark demonstrated that segregated schools nurtured feelings of inferiority in black children. Others showed how the preparation, opportunities, and access of black children were severely hampered by separate educational facilities.

The Supreme Court heard these arguments and agreed with the NAACP and its panel of experts. Separate facilities were inherently unequal. States must treat all its citizens equally, regardless of race. The value of education demanded that the opportunities available to one group be available to all groups.

The ruling nonetheless would have larger import outside of education. It provided hope to African-Americans that they would no longer be treated like second class citizens. It encouraged African-American leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, to pursue full equality through the Civil Rights Movement.

Despite considerable resistance, this Nation has moved forward in equalizing the educational and social opportunities of its citizens, but more can still be done. Public facilities are no longer separated based on race. The gap in educational opportunities is slowly narrowing. The opportunities available to minorities are increasing. We could do more to close the gap in education and to ensure equal opportunities for all.

For today, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we reflect on the importance of that Brown vs. Board of Education decision. The Supreme Court made a wise and important decision that changed the course of this Nation for the next 50 years. It guaranteed to all of our citizens equal treatment before the law regardless of race. This was a clearly important event in American history. The men and women who challenged the policy of segregation should be commended for their deeds. They should have the full appreciation of this Nation.

HONORING MISS JEAN CORNELL

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an exceptional young lady, Jean Katherine Elizabeth Cornell. Miss Cornell is a resident of Mt. Laurel, New Jersey in my district, and is currently in the seventh grade at Harrington Middle School. She is a member of the school's Student Council, and a talented singer in the First United Methodist Church of Moorestown's Youth Choir. Above all, she is a motivated and inspired young lady who is standing up for equal rights for all women.

Miss Cornell has been involved in the Alice Paul Institute's Leadership Program, and helped start the Alice Paul Institute Girls' Advisory Council. She is very active in her community, spreading Alice Paul's message of leadership and equality. She is helping to build support for the Equal Right Amendment by educating the public about this vital piece of legislation. This amendment to the Constitution would guarantee the equality of rights under the law for all persons regardless of gender.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Miss Cornell for her contributions to her community, and to women everywhere. Her efforts are much needed in the struggle to close the equality gap between men and women. If there were more girls like Jean, our Nation would be a more just and equal society.

RECOGNIZING REAR ADMIRAL
GREG SLAVONIC

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to congratulate Rear Admiral Gregory J. Slavonic upon the completion of his career of service in the United States Navy and Navy Reserve. Throughout his 34-year military career, Rear Admiral Slavonic served with distinction and dedication, ultimately