EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING LAWRENCE ''LARRY'' MARIO CARAVARIO OF CLEAR LAKE, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 24, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize California Highway Patrol Officer, Lawrence ''Larry'' Mario Caravario of Clear Lake, CA as he retires from 31½ years of dedicated service.

''Larry'' Caravario was born and raised in San Francisco. He attended Riordan High School followed by 2 years at the City College of San Francisco where he studied accounting.

In January of 1974, Larry joined the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Eventually he was stationed in the Lake County. For years he protected county residents watching out after them as he patrolled state highways and county roads. Additionally, Officer Caravario was responsible for training his fellow officers in matters of weapons and safety. He also served as the CHP's representative to Lake County schools as a pupil safety officer.

Mr. Speaker, when not patrolling the streets or training other officers, Officer Caravario dedicated his time to the children of Lake County. Since 1967 he has coached youth and high school soccer, basketball and baseball. In 1968, Officer Caravario began working as a basketball and baseball game official.

In retirement, Officer Caravario plans to spend more time with his wife Diane, his son David and daughter Joell.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that we take time to thank Officer Caravario for his hard work and devotion to his community throughout the years. On behalf of my fellow colleagues, I wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

STATEMENT OF INTRODUCTION: CHILDREN AND MEDIA RESEARCH ADVANCEMENT ACT

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 24, 2005

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce, along with Representatives HART, BACA and FORD, the Children and Media Research Advancement Act, or CAMRA Act.

This bill has also been introduced in the Senate by Senators LIEBERMAN, BROWNBACK, CLINTON, SANTORUM, and DURBIN.

Our children live in the information age, and our country has one of the most powerful and sophisticated information technology systems in the world. While this system entertains them, it is not always harmless entertainment. Media have the potential to facilitate the healthy growth of our children. They also have the potential to harm. We have a stake in finding out exactly what that role is. We have a responsibility to take action. Access to the knowledge that we need for informed decision-making requires us to make an investment: An investment in research, an investment in and for our children, an investment in our collective future. The benefits to our youth and our Nation's families are immeasurable.

In order to ensure that we are doing our very best for our children, the behavioral and health recommendations and public policy decisions we make should be based on objective behavioral, social, and scientific research. Yet no Federal research agency has responsibility for overseeing and setting a coherent media research agenda that can guide these policy decisions. Instead, Federal agencies fund media research in a piecemeal fashion, resulting in a patch work quilt of findings. We can do better than that.

The bill we are introducing today would remedy this problem. The CAMRA Act will provide an overarching view of media effects by establishing a program devoted to Children and Media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This program of research, to be vetted by the National Academy of Sciences, will fund and energize a coherent program of research that illuminates the role of media in children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and behavioral development. The research will cover all forms of electronic media, including television, movies, DVDs, interactive video games, cell phones, and the Internet, and will encourage research involving children of all ages—even babies and toddlers. The bill also calls for a report to Congress about the effectiveness of this research program in filling this void in our knowledge base. In order to accomplish these goals, we are authorizing $90 million dollars to be phased in gradually across the next 5 years. The cost to our budget is minimal and can well result in significant savings in other budget areas.

This legislation has strong support among researchers and children's advocates. Ted Lempert, President of Children Now, a national nonprofit organization which for years has focused on the need for policymakers to keep pace with the rising influence of media on children, writes: ''CAMRA's establishment of a program on children and the media within the Center for Disease Control and Prevention will provide invaluable insight into the role and impact of electronic media on the children's development. Kids are spending more time with media than on any other activity except for sleeping, yet there are sizeable gaps in what we know about the role media play in children's cognitive, physical and behavioral development.''

Jim Steyer, founder and CEO of Common Sense Media, a leading non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting a healthy media environment for children, supports CAMRA, saying ''We enthusiastically endorse the funding of coherent research which will better illuminate the role of media in children's cognitive, social, emotional, physical and behavioral development. In an increasingly digital world where convergence of technologies provides entertainment, information and interactive possibilities to consumers, there are discernable knowledge gaps about the role of media on children's healthy development.''

Michael Rich, Director of the Center on Media and Child Health at Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health, also wrote the following in support this bill: ''As a caring society we assess and respond to the quality of the air children breathe, the water they drink, and the food they consume. You and your co-sponsors are to be commended and supported for your foresight and leadership in directing the National Institutes of Health to investigate what we are feeding our children's minds and how that is likely to affect their health and development, now and in the future.''

From the cradle to the grave, our children now live and develop in a world of media—a world that is increasingly digital, and a world where access is at their fingertips. This emerging digital world is well known to our children, but its effects on their development are not well understood. Young people today are spending an average of 6½ hours with media each day. For those who are under age 6, 2 hours of exposure to screen media each day is common, even for those who are under age 2. That is about as much time as children under age 6 spend playing outdoors, and it is much more time than they spend reading or being read to by their parents. How does this investment of time affect children's physical development, their cognitive development, or their moral values? Unfortunately, we still have very limited information about how media, particularly the newer interactive media, affect children's development. Why? We have not charged any Federal agency with ensuring an ongoing funding base to establish a coherent research agenda about the impact of media on children's lives. This lack of a coordinated government-sponsored effort to understand the effects of media on children's development is truly an oversight on our part, as the potential payoffs for this kind of knowledge are enormous.

Consider our current national health crisis of childhood obesity. The number of U.S. children and teenagers who are overweight has more than tripled from the 1960's through 2002. We think that media exposure is partly the cause of this epidemic. Is it? Is time spent viewing screens and its accompanying sedentary lifestyle contributing to childhood and adolescent obesity? Or is the constant bombardment of advertisements for sugar-coated cereals, snack foods, and candy that pervade children's television advertisements the culprit? How do the newer online forms of ''stealth marketing'', such as advergaming where food products are embedded in computer games, affect children's and adolescents' eating patterns? Cell phones are one of the latest emerging high-tech gadgets to own,

and cell phone/iPod combination devices are now on the market. What will happen when pop-up advertisements begin to appear on children's cell phones that specifically target them for the junk food that they like best at a place where that food is easily obtainable? The answer to the obesity and media question is complex. A committee at the National Academy of Sciences is currently charged with studying the link between media advertising and childhood obesity. Will the National Academy of Sciences panel have the data they need to answer this important question? A definitive answer has the potential to save a considerable amount of money in other areas of our budget. For example, child health care costs that are linked to childhood obesity issues could be reduced by understanding and altering media diets.

After two adolescent boys shot and killed some of their teachers, classmates, and then turned their guns on themselves at Columbine High School, we asked ourselves if media played some role in this tragedy. Did these boys learn to kill in part from playing first-person shooter video games like Doom where they acted as a killer? Were they rehearsing criminal activities when playing this game? There is rising concern about extremely violent video games. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill October 7 that will prohibit the sale of ''ultraviolent'' video games to children under 18 without parental approval. In August, the American Psychological Association passed a resolution calling for less violence in computer and video games sold to children, citing research suggesting that the games contribute to aggressive behavior. The Federal Trade Commission reports that 40 percent of children under 18 play mature-rated video games. A person who plays mature-rated video games at least 40 minutes per day views 5,400 incidents of aggression per month, according to the Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media. With so many of our children immersed in an electronic environment saturated with violent images, we have cause for serious concern.

In the violence and media area, Congress passed legislation so that research was conducted about the relationship between media violence and childhood aggression, and as a result, we know more. Even though much of this database is older and involves the link between exposure to violent television programs and childhood aggression, some answers were forthcoming about how the Columbine tragedy could have taken place. Even so, there is still a considerable amount of speculation about the more complex questions. Why did these particular boys, for example, pull the trigger in real life while others who played Doom confine their aggressive acts to the gaming context? We need to be able to answer questions about which children under what circumstances will translate game playing into reallife lethal actions. Investing in media research could potentially reduce our budgets associated with adolescent crime and delinquency as well as reduce real-life human misery and suffering.

Many of us believe that our children are becoming increasingly materialistic. Does exposure to commercial advertising and the ''good life'' experienced by media characters partly explain materialistic attitudes? We're not sure. Why then are we exposing children to heavy doses of advertisements in many of our nation's schools through Channel1 Network where ''free'' television sets to schools are provided in exchange for a small fee: unfettered access to advertise to children during school time? As streaming video programming proliferates on computers, cell phones and personal digital assistants, advertisers have more avenues to reach our children and bombard them with pro-consumption messages. As technology advances and becomes increasingly widespread among younger children, parents are justifiably concerned about losing control over the messages their children receive. Recent research using brain-mapping techniques finds that an adult who sees images of desired products demonstrates patterns of brain activation that are typically associated with reaching out with a hand. How does repeatedly seeing attractive products affect our children and their developing brains? What will happen when our children will be able to click on their television screen and go directly to sites that advertise the products that they see in their favorite programs? Or use their cell phone/iPod to download music or pay for products that they want immediately? Why should they wait? Why should they work for long-term goals? Exactly what kind of values are we cultivating in our children, and what role does exposure to media content play in the development of those values?

A research report linked very early television viewing with later symptoms that are common in children who have attention deficit disorders. However, we don't know the direction of the relationship. Does television viewing cause attention deficits, or do children who have attention deficits find television viewing experiences more engaging than children who don't have attention problems? Or do parents whose children have difficulty sustaining attention let them watch more television to encourage more sitting and less hyperactive behavior? How will Internet experiences, particularly those where children move rapidly across different windows, influence attention patterns and attention problems? Once again, we don't know the answer. If early television exposure does disrupt the development of children's attention patterns, resulting in their placement in special education programs, actions taken to reduce screen exposure during the early years could lead to subsequent reductions in children's need for special education classes, thereby saving money while fostering children's development in positive ways.

We want no child left behind in the 21st century. Many of us believe that time spent with computers is good for our children, teaching them the skills that they will need for success in the 21st century. Are we right? How is time spent with computers different from time spent with television? Or time spent with books? What are the underlying mechanisms that facilitate or disrupt children's learning from these varying media? Can academic development be fostered by the use of interactive online programs designed to teach as they entertain? In the first 6 years of life, Caucasian more so than African American or Latino children have Internet access from their homes. Can our newer interactive media help ensure that no child is left behind, or will disparities in access result in leaving some behind and not others?

The questions about how media affect the development of our children are clearly important, abundant, and complex. Unfortunately, the answers to these questions are in short supply. Such gaps in our knowledge base limit our ability to make informed decisions about media policy.

We know that media are important. Over the years, we have held numerous hearings in these chambers about how exposure to media violence affects childhood aggression. We passed legislation to maximize the documented benefits of exposure to educational media, such as the Children's Television Act which requires broadcasters to provide educational and informational television programs for children. Can we foster children's moral values when they are exposed to prosocial programs that foster helping, sharing, and cooperating like those that have come into being as a result of the Children's Television Act?

We acted to protect our children from unfair commercial practices by passing the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act which provides safeguards from exploitation for our youth as they explore the Internet, a popular pastime for them. Yet the Internet has provided new ways to reach children with marketing that we barely know is taking place, making our ability to protect our children all the more difficult. We worry about our children's inadvertent exposure to online pornography—about how that kind of exposure may undermine their moral values and standards of decency. In these halls of Congress, we acted to protect our children by passing the Communications Decency Act, the Child Online Protection Act, and the Children's Internet Protection Act to shield children from exposure to sexually-explicit online content that is deemed harmful to minors. While we all agree that we need to protect our children from online pornography, we know very little about how to address even the most practical of questions such as how to prevent children from falling prey to adult strangers who approach them online. There are so many areas in which our understanding is preliminary at best, particularly in those areas that involve the effects of our newer digital media.

By passing the Children and Media Research Advancement Act, we can advance knowledge and enhance the constructive effects of media while minimizing the negative ones. We can make future media policies that are grounded in a solid knowledge base. We can be proactive, rather than reactive.

In so doing, we build a better Nation for our youth, fostering the kinds of values that are the backbone of this great Nation of ours, and we create a better foundation to guide future media policies about the digital experiences that pervade our children's daily lives.

RECOGNIZING SHEILA DAUGHERTY OF NAPA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 24, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my dear friend Sheila Daugherty of Napa, CA as she is honored by the Salvation Army Napa Corps.

The story of Sheila Daugherty is uniquely American. Growing up in a large Irish family, Sheila was taught the importance of helping others and serving one's community. She has