

This congregation, of more than 150 families, began only five years ago. The goal of securing and strengthening modern Orthodoxy in Central Ohio has been driven by Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein along with Rabbi Howard Zack. Rabbi Zack has been the Spiritual Leader of Congregation Torat Emet since its inception in September 2001. Today, as they open their second Synagogue in Columbus, Ohio may the local Jewish community celebrate the reality of this vision.

I offer my congratulations to the Congregation Torat Emet and the dedication of their new facility.

VETERANS NONPROFIT RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION CORPORATIONS
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the "Veterans Nonprofit Research and Education Corporations Enhancement Act of 2009".

As the nation's largest healthcare provider network and the custodian of our veterans' health, the Department of Veterans Affairs has an important role to play in the development of innovative new healthcare technologies, medication, and practices.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs research program is well respected within the research community. The program focuses on research that concerns the special health care needs of veterans especially war related injuries and illnesses.

Some recent successes of the program include neuromotor prosthesis for paralyzed patients, development of an artificial retina for veterans who have lost vision due to retinal damage, and the use of a generic drug (prazosin) for veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Importantly, this research program does not just benefit veterans but also American citizens as a whole. Years ago, this program was responsible for bringing to the medical community the pacemaker.

Nonprofit Research Corporations were authorized by Congress in 1988. The intent of these Corporations was to provide a flexible funding mechanism to conduct research and education at VA medical centers. Today, there are 82 independent, state-chartered corporations.

Nonprofit research corporations are a critical component of the overall VA research program. In Fiscal Year 2007 alone, nonprofits were responsible for securing \$250 million from the private sector and non-VA public funding to support over 4,000 research and education programs at the VA. This includes providing nearly 2,500 without compensation research employees who work side-by-side with VA-salaried employees.

This legislation authorizes the creation of multi-medical center research corporations that would allow two or more VA medical centers to share one Nonprofit Research Corporation. VA facilities with small research programs may join with larger ones. Additionally, smaller ones will be allowed to pool resources to support a Corporation.

It also clarifies the purpose of the corporation by enabling Nonprofit Research Corpora-

tions to support functions related to the conduct of research and education.

Additionally, this legislation will broaden the qualifications for the two mandatory non-VA board members beyond familiarity with medical research and education to acquire those with legal and financial expertise for sound governance and financial management. This provision would also remove the overly strict language prohibiting non-VA board members from having any financial relationship, current or past with a for-profit entity which funds VA research or education. This change would be consistent with the rules applied to federal employees in dealing with conflict of interest by allowing for means of recusal.

This legislation further clarifies the powers of corporations. Some of the key authorities provided by this provision include allowing the Corporations to charge registration fees for education and training programs and to use such funds to offset program expenses or for future educational purposes.

It will allow the VA to reimburse Nonprofit Research Corporations for the salary and benefits of NPC employees loaned to VA under Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignments.

Finally this legislation will improve accountability and oversight of corporations by requiring each Nonprofit Research Corporation to submit an annual report to the Secretary of the VA on operations, activities, and accomplishments. It would also require Nonprofit Research Corporations with revenues in excess of \$300,000 in any given year to obtain an audit.

I urge your support.