

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, today I want to draw attention to an amazing scientific and medical breakthrough that has received little attention in the press. It should cause each of us to pause and ponder the miracle and gift of human life.

Little Neal Borkowski is still a tiny baby, yet he differs from most because he already has undergone brain surgery, not since his birth, but while he was still in his mother's womb. It was discovered as young Neal was only 20 weeks old and in utero that he had a condition of fluid on the brain.

Without corrective measures he surely would not have survived, so at such a critical stage of development doctors opened Neal's mother's uterus, and brain surgery was performed on this unborn baby so that fluid could not collect on his brain.

Mr. Speaker, when will we, as a Nation, begin to see this unborn life as sacred and valuable and protected as it deserves? Let us bring our children and grandchildren into the world where they know that all human life, born and unborn, is a miracle and gift from God.

Not a sermon, just a thought.

WE MUST PASS AN EFFECTIVE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. WATT of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) has pointed to the headline in the Washington Post this morning that says the AMA Votes To Unionize Doctors, and that comes at the same time that we are considering in the Committee on the Judiciary granting an exemption for doctors to ban together and not be subject to antitrust laws.

The question I ask is: How do we pass those rights to patients? How do we get them together to assert their rights? HMOs can do it, doctors will be able to do it, but who will be speaking for the patient? Mr. Speaker, that is where the Patients' Bill of Rights comes into play.

We have got to pass an effective Patients' Bill of Rights in this body so consumers and patients will have the rights that are being bargained for by doctors and already given to HMOs in the health care system.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEARNS. I would say to my colleague from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) I do not think the doctors are ever going to run to the Demo-

cratic party because they do not want to have socialized medicine.

Now when it comes to education, Mr. Speaker, Republicans and Democrats have different visions. We differ on our assumptions, and that leads to very different policy choices. Democrats start with the assumption that what ails public education is more money. We need much more money.

Republicans do not agree. If money were the problem, and given that Congress has increased federal spending on education every single year since 1960, the schools would long ago have improved. However, both parties agree smaller class size, better teacher training, writing, wiring classrooms for the Internet; that will improve education.

But here is the main point, my colleagues. What it needs is more accountability for the money that is already spent and discipline in the classroom. Democrats believe that competition is bad and that the public school monopolies are good. Republicans do not agree. Competition produces excellence and requires, Mr. Speaker, accountability.

But we do have exactly the same goal: better schools for our children.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WANT GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

(Mrs. TAUSCHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, last week's failure by this Republican-led Congress to deliver commonsense, practical gun safety legislation disappointed working families and law enforcement officials of both parties in my suburban district in San Francisco's East Bay.

I would like to call attention to the reaction of a Republican law enforcement official in my district. Saying he had enough, Alameda County Sheriff Charles Plummer, a life long Republican, switched his party registration away from the Republican party. These are Sheriff Plummer's words:

I was coming back from a meeting Friday and listening to a couple of Republicans on the radio talking about gun rights saying this legislation is not needed. I went ahead and changed my registration after being a Republican for 47 years.

Sheriff Plummer said that gun safety, and I quote, "has to be solved nationally . . . Even in the hunting country where I was raised, my friends think if someone needs an AK-47 to kill a deer they are not much of a sportsman."

Mr. Speaker, I could not have said it better myself.

CLOSING THE LOOPHOLE

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I was going to make some comments on the Republican agenda and the best program on where we go on saving Social Security, and our best defense, our excellence in education and tax relief, but after the previous speaker, I want to mention my disappointment that we have not closed the loophole in a vote by this House on what happens at gun shows. And for the information of those that voted against the loophole closing bill the other day, I just want to explain what happens if an individual lies on the form in the application to buy the gun and they do not find out that he has committed a felony until maybe 2 days later or 3 days later.

What happens is the FBI and the ATF call local law enforcement because this individual has now committed two felonies, one in lying on the application; second, taking possession of the gun. They go after him.

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They do that immediately. They take him, they prosecute him, they confiscate the weapon.

Additionally, States have the right to impose restrictions as they see fit. I am disappointed on that side of the aisle that we did not move ahead with closing the loophole.

HOUSE SHOULD ALLOW DEBATE AND VOTE ON DEMOCRATS' PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. ROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I joined my Democratic colleagues in signing a discharge petition to force the Republican leadership here in the House to bring the Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights up for debate and a vote. The Republican leadership refuses to permit debate and a vote on the Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights.

The Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights is based on a revolutionary idea that managed care should be more about managing the health of our loved ones than managing the profits of the HMOs.

We need to ensure that treatment decisions are made by a patient's doctors, not by an HMO accounting clerk; that patients can enforce their rights by taking HMOs to court if the HMO wrongfully denies surgery, specialists, hospitalization or other medically necessary care that causes the death or injury to the patients.

Moderates on both sides of the aisle have endorsed the Democrats' Patients' Bill of Rights, but the Republican leadership here in the House of Representatives refuses to allow us to debate and vote on it.