

Originally designed for the military under ATL Ultrasound, SonoSite's ultrasound system pioneers an advanced high performance, miniaturized all-digital broadband technology platform in a compact, lightweight system. This allows the simultaneous acquisition and interpretation of images, and provides the ability to diagnose conditions in any clinical or field setting. This advancement promises to alter current paradigms in routine patient care—at the patient's bedside, an imaging facility, or even a remote location.

Initially available for use in obstetrics, gynecology, and emergency medicine, this ultrasound technology will enable trained physicians to significantly expand the routine use of ultrasound for faster, more accurate patient evaluations anytime, anywhere, resulting in better patient care. Patients may benefit by avoiding "waiting trauma," the anxiety felt by both patients and physicians when a problem is indicated but diagnostic answers are not available at the point of care.

I recognize the work being done by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) to complete outcome-based studies assessing routine use of ultrasound in the assessment of abnormal uterine bleeding. I urge the continued partnership between the Agency and SonoSite to best meet the needs of patients and physicians.

The SonoSite ultrasound system is a highly accessible advance in medical technology—both in terms of portability and cost. The low cost of the new system can result in improved healthcare delivery at a time when health clinics and hospitals are facing additional cuts in their day to day financial operations. The portability of this new technology can allow physicians to expand the use of ultrasound in practice by adding an ultrasound machine to every exam room or otherwise supplementing current stationary ultrasound equipment.

I recognize SonoSite, Inc. for its efforts to maximize the use of innovative technology to advance the heavily-utilized ultrasound system as we move into the 21st century. Their efforts in partnership with the AHCPR, will result in quality, portable, and affordable medical care that will have a positive effect on my constituents in the State of Washington, and to others across the country.

In a State known for medical innovation and technological ingenuity, SonoSite deserves recognition for its pioneering technology.

INTRODUCTION OF STB MODERNIZATION BILL STATEMENT

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Surface Transportation Board (STB) Modernization Act. Our rail freight system is an integral part of the distribution of goods across the Nation. The safe and efficient movement of rail freight in this country is an important, though at times unnoticed, part of the economy and the lives of everyday citizens. We take for granted that this system is working properly until goods do not arrive on

supermarket shelves or the cost of heating our homes skyrockets due to costs caused by shipping delays.

The trend of carriers to consolidate has left the Nation with only six major railroads. As a result of these mergers, new problems and issues have been created that were not addressed in the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act, the law that created the STB. This bill attempts to address those issues and would improve the efficiency of the Nation's rail system and address many of the concerns of labor, shippers, and communities.

First, this bill would provide necessary protection to rail workers by ending "cram down." Cram down occurs when merging railroads override collective bargaining agreements with workers and "cram down" new terms on the workers to realize merger benefits. The STB has approved this practice for far too long. Under this bill, a collective bargaining agreement could be modified only if both the rail carriers and affected laborers agree. In addition, the existing minimum level of labor protection would be codified.

Second, this bill would improve the efficiency of shipping in several ways. It would bring an end to "bottlenecks" along rail lines. In bottlenecks, the STB allowed one rail carrier to prevent or discourage a shipper from interchanging with another rail carrier for more direct service by refusing to quote a rate or quoting an excessive rate along its portion of a line. In addition, this bill would broaden the STB's authority to transfer or direct the operations of a line and ease the ability of a carrier to gain access to terminal facilities; and narrow the exemption from antitrust laws that railroads currently enjoy.

Third, the bill contains several miscellaneous provisions that would address problems faced by rail carriers, shippers, and the public. The bill would reduce fees for bringing disputes before the STB, provide tax relief for carriers that invest in their rail yards, and codify the STB's decision to eliminate the requirement that shippers show an absence of product and geographic competition in rate cases.

Fourth, this bill would create a Federal Railroad Advisory Committee to study, among other things, the efficiency, maintenance, operation, and physical condition of the Nation's rail system. After 2 years, the Committee would make recommendations for improving the system to Congress and the President.

Overall, the STB Reauthorization Act of 1999 would guarantee that our Nation's rail system will be competitive, efficient, and safe as we enter the 21st century.

REMARKS OF DR. RUTH MERCEDES-SMITH

HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to take this opportunity to commend this speech given by Dr. Ruth Mercedes-Smith, President of Highland Community College on Freeport, Illinois, to my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

LEARNING BEGINS AT HOME

My topic today is "Learning begins at home." But let me be up-front about this topic. While learning does begin at home, we live, unfortunately, in a time when homes are not prepared to meet this challenge. Therefore, people like you and institutions like Highland Community College must join hands and help parents and families prepare themselves to make it happen.

Did you know that 50% of intellectual development takes place between birth and four years of age? That means that parents are important teachers. They provide the foundation for a child's learning skills at home. But, as I said earlier, many parents are not prepared to develop a learning environment. Consider the following statistics: According to a 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, approximately 22% of America's adults have difficulty using certain reading, writing, and computational skills considered necessary for functioning in daily life. These adults, in general, are operating below the 5th grade level. Of the over 40 million adults with literacy needs, only 10% are enrolled in programs to assist them in improving their skills. Forty-three percent of adults at the lowest literacy level live in poverty. This contrasts with only 6% of those at the two highest literacy levels. Individuals with low literacy skills are at risk of not being able to understand materials distributed by health care providers. Adults with strong basic skills are more likely to ensure good health for themselves and their children. Teen pregnancy rates are higher among those with lower literacy skills.

Seventy-five percent of food stamp recipients performed in the two lowest literacy levels. In addition, 70% of prisoners performed in the two lowest levels. In a 1995 comparison of literacy among seven countries, the United States ranked next to last, when measured against Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland. Clearly a large percentage of our parents are adults at-risk. The question is, "What will our communities do to help them?" As a result of the lack of learning that takes place in the home due to parents who do not have the necessary educational skills we also find that we have large numbers of children who face major barriers as they grow toward adulthood.

Let me tell you about these children: Children who don't have the basic readiness skills when they enter school are 3 or 4 times more likely to drop out in later years. Children's chances for success in school are greatly affected by the educational attainment of their parents. A parent's education level is the single best indicator of a child's success in school. Parents who have books in the home and read to their children have children who are better readers and better students. When parents are involved in helping their school-age children with their schoolwork, social class drops out as a factor in poor performance.

Yes, large numbers of our children are at-risk. Again, I ask the question, "What will our communities do to help them?" An ancient saying from Africa sums it up well: "It takes an entire village to raise a child." I know Hillary Clinton used this as a book title, but I had used these words long before she made them famous. Think about that for a moment. It takes an entire village to raise a child. It seems to me that Freeport is a village in one sense of that word and that Freeport is of a size that could manage this type of challenge. The same applies to Lena, Stockton, Mt. Carroll, Forreton, and other