

Patients have long deferred their medical decisions to their physicians. But medical care is becoming increasingly complex, and improvements in health technology have led to a multitude of available treatments. The treatment they choose should reflect the personal values and lifestyles of the patient and their family.

Therefore, I am introducing a demonstration bill to give patients more power over their health decisions. The findings from these demonstrations could lead to ways to greatly reduce the cost of the Medicare program, without jeopardizing health outcomes. I strongly urge members to support this legislation.

EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY
PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I support the concept of flexibility in the way that our federal education programs are implemented at the state and local level. Local Educational Agencies and individual schools need flexibility to ensure that our programs are conducted in a manner that is responsive and relevant to local conditions and the divergent needs of all students. However, educational flexibility needs to be viewed in its proper context—specifically in terms of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In this context the Conference Report on H.R. 800, the Ed-Flex legislation, falls short and I rise to oppose the Conference Report.

I am a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, and this Committee has just begun to take up the numerous important issues that are involved in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is folly, Mr. Speaker, for this final version of the Ed-Flex bill to come up before the ESEA has even been considered. How can we justify creating a system in which all states can have the option to waive federal education requirements when those federal education programs have not even been reauthorized? It is inappropriate and unjustified for the Congress to be granting across-the-board waiver authority to states before the House Education and Workforce Committee has reconsidered the ESEA.

In fact, the Conference Report on H.R. 800 is actually weaker than the version that was passed by the House of Representatives. At least our House version of the bill contained a sunset provision that mandated that Ed-Flex be taken up during the ESEA reauthorization process. The Conference Report eliminates this provision.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, accountability must not be sacrificed for the sake of flexibility. If the Congress grants greater flexibility to the states, the states must be held responsible to use these new powers in a way that improves educational quality and student performance. The Conference Report is weak on accountability provisions. We tried to strengthen these accountability provisions in Committee, but were not successful. Now the Con-

gress has placed itself in a position that will grant huge loopholes to states and localities when it comes to measuring and enforcing accountability. This is another reason why I urge my colleagues to oppose the Ed-Flex Conference Report.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the long-term effect of Ed-Flex will be to shift valuable federal resources away from schools in high-poverty neighborhoods towards school in more wealthy districts. It is a hallmark of national education policy that federal funds be used to benefit schools and school districts that are most in need of outside resources. Federal programs need to be targeted to the disadvantaged. It is very possible that this bill will open the way for states to redirect ESEA Title I funds away from the disadvantaged. This trend dilutes the essential purposes of Title I. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the Ed-Flex Conference Report.

AUTHORIZING AWARDING OF GOLD
MEDAL TO ROSA PARKS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT C. SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 20, 1999

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 573, a bill to bestow a Congressional gold medal to Rosa Parks for her contributions to civil rights in the United States of America.

Rosa Parks and her contribution to the current American way of life, by today's standard involved a very simple act. However, that simple act, Mr. Speaker, proved to have some very extraordinary consequences.

In 1955, Jim Crow segregation was the law of the land. African Americans by law were not allowed to share public accommodations with Whites. We couldn't eat in the same restaurants, couldn't live in the same neighborhoods and we were relegated to sit in the back seats of a public bus. If the white only section of the bus became full, we had to give up our seats when told to do so.

Nevertheless, in 1955, on December 1st in Montgomery, Alabama, Mrs. Parks with one very simple act of civil defiance changed that practice and the course of American History. On that day Mrs. Parks refused to give her seat to a White patron when told to do so by a Montgomery Bus driver. In spite of that bus driver's insistence, and knowing the certain consequences of her actions, she chose not to give up her seat. The police took her off the bus, arrested and jailed her. Mrs. Parks was later released on a one hundred-dollar bond.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect the city fathers of Montgomery initially never thought twice about that one simple act on that day in December. In response to Mrs. Parks' arrest, the black citizens of Montgomery began a bus boycott that lasted for 381 days. Led by a young local minister named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Montgomery bus boycott helped to unravel the fabric of the South's social, economic and political culture of "Jim Crow" segregation.

This occasion has personal relevance to me also, Mr. Speaker. More than 40 years ago,

during her brief tenure at Hampton University, I met Mrs. Parks. She worked there with my grandmother and I can well remember being struck by how unassuming and graceful she was, particularly in light of her role as a courageous civil rights pioneer.

Throughout the history of our nation, simple acts such as refusing to give up a seat on a bus as Rosa Parks did, often touch off a national movement that changes the course of history. This, Mr. Speaker, was one of those occasions and for this simple act, this House has taken the first step towards commemorating this demonstration of courage by Mrs. Parks and celebrating its tremendous impact.

I look forward, as many of my colleagues do, to the swift enactment of this resolution so that Mrs. Parks can receive the recognition she deserves from Congress.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY
ISSUES

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the insight added to the policy debate on critical environmental regulatory issues by John McClaughry in an article he authored in yesterday's Washington Times. Mr. McClaughry succinctly highlights the danger which occurs when, as happened in the United States in the late 1800's and early 1900's, property rights are ignored in the name of "progress."

Mr. McClaughry, president of Vermont's Ethan Allen Institute, correctly explains that technological innovation is stunted when the legal system allows polluters to externalize their costs without allowing legal recourse by those whose property is polluted.

I commend the research of Mr. McClaughry and thank him for his important contribution to the policy debate regarding environmental regulation and recommend a careful reading of his article by everyone genuinely interested in both the proper moral and economic resolution of these issues.

CELEBRATING THE RESOURCEFUL EARTH

Tomorrow, many Americans will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Earth Day. The event was created in 1970 to call attention to humankind's despoliation of our planet. It's a good time to see what 30 years of Earth Day enthusiasm has given us.

The environmental awareness stimulated by the first Earth Day has had many beneficial results. Thanks to citizen awareness and ensuing state and national legislation, today the air is much cleaner, the water far purer, and risk from toxic and hazardous wastes sharply reduced. Polluters have been made to pay for disposal costs previously imposed on the public. Private groups like the Nature Conservancy have purchased and conserved millions of acres of land and natural resources.

But—and it always seems there is a but—like every promising new movement, the people who became leaders of the environmental movement stimulated by Earth Day soon found they could increase their political power (and staff salaries) by constantly demanding more command and control regulation. That heavyhanded government response has increasingly surpassed the boundaries of science and reason and severely