Asthma Awareness Month

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this is Asthma Awareness Month. I rise to commend my colleagues, the gentlelady from California, Congresswoman JUANITA MILLER-McDONALD, and the gentlelady from Maryland, Congresswoman CONSTANCE A. MORELLA, for introducing the Asthma Awareness, Education And Treatment Act, and for their leadership in protesting America's children, minorities, women and the poor from the devastating effects of asthma.

Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease characterized by inflammation of the airways, and increased responsiveness to various stimuli commonly triggers. Asthma episodes involve progressively worsening shortness of breath, cough, wheezing, or chest tightness, or some combination of these systems. The severity of asthma may range from mild to life-threatening.

An estimated 14.6 million persons in the United States have asthma. The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention reported a 61 percent increase in the asthma rate between 1982 and 1994. According to The American Lung Association, more than 5,600 people die of asthma in the United States annually. This represents a 45.3 percent increase in mortality between 1985 and 1995.

The death rate from asthma for African Americans is almost three times that of whites. Among chronic illnesses in children, asthma is the most common. Approximately 33 percent of asthma patients are under the age of 18. In the United States, asthma is the number one cause of school absences attributed to chronic conditions, leading to an average 7.3 school days missed annually. One study estimated that in 1994, school days lost to asthma amounted to 2.2 million in caretaker's time lost from work, including outside employment and housekeeping.

Low income families are struck the hardest by asthma. Seventy nine of every 1,000 people under 45 years old earning less than $10,000 per year have asthma. Fifty three of every 1,000 people earning less than $35,000 per year have asthma.

The American Lung Association has been fighting lung disease for more than 90 years. With the generous support of the public and the help of volunteers and donors, millions of dollars have been raised to support asthma research and to provide assistance to those suffering from asthma. The American Lung Association has been fighting lung disease for more than 90 years. With the generous support of the public and the help of volunteers and donors, millions of dollars have been raised to support asthma research and to provide assistance to those suffering from asthma.

We must work with community-based organizations to educate one another on this serious illness and how it can be managed through medication, clean environments, and regular physical activity. We must provide screening for asthma in non-traditional medical settings; we must establish a nationwide media campaign to educate the public about the symptoms of, and the treatment for asthma.

Most importantly, we must create clean environments. To do so, we must take appropriate measures to eliminate dustmites, animal dander, cockroaches, and mold and poor ventilation in schools, day care centers and homes. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Asthma Awareness, Education And Treatment Act.

As we look forward to the millennium, working together with the American Lung Association and other community-based organizations all over America, we can ease the burdens of asthma and make breathing easier for everyone.

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JULIA CARSON
OF INDIANA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the 11th observance of the National Foster Parent Awareness Month. Originally conceived at the 1987 National Foster Parent Training Conference, National Foster Parent Awareness Month is the impetus for communities around the nation to host activities and events to honor foster parents for making a difference in the lives of children in foster care.

In my state of Indiana, nearly 15,000 children are in the foster care system. Nation-wide, the number is an alarming one half million children. These children often have special needs. They are victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect. They may suffer emotional, behavioral or developmental problems that range from moderate to severe. Most children reside only temporarily with foster parents, until it is considered safe for them to return home. A child's stay with foster parents can be as short as one night or as long as several years or more.

This month we honor the individuals and families who open their hearts and homes to the children in need of a safe and nurturing living environment—Foster Parents. Foster parents can be single, married or divorced. They own homes or live in apartments. Some are as young as 21 years old while others are retired. What they have in common is that they have demonstrated attentiveness, tenacity, patience and empathy along with a willingness to grow and learn from the experience of fostering and an equal capacity to love and let go. Foster parents provide a vital service to our nation's displaced children. They are a valuable resource for families and children. Their work is extremely difficult, knowing that they are working to help reunite a child with a biological parent, or care for a child until that child is adopted.

Mr. Speaker, while I rise today to praise and applaud foster parents for the very important work they do, I want to acknowledge an amazing organization and an outstanding individual, from my District, supporting the foster care system. Because foster parents take on the awesome responsibility of providing both emotional and financial support for the neediest children at a great personal expense, it is very important that we encourage our communities to support foster parents as they support foster kids.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON
OF MISSISSIPPI
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HOMOSEXUALS, DISABLED, ELDERLY ADDED TO HATE CRIMES LAW
(By Dennis Patterson)

RALEIGH—People who are gay, homosexuals, the disabled or the elderly and target them for crimes could face increased sentences under a bill approved by a House committee.

The measure, which now goes to the full House, expands North Carolina's hate crimes law to include sexual orientation, disabilities, gender and age. Crimes that are proven to be motivated by hate would be increased to at least a felony.

The hate crimes law now applies to race, religion and national origin.

"This bill doesn't pick on anybody," Rep. Martin Nesbitt, D-Buncombe, said Tuesday as the House Judiciary I Committee debated the bill. "It punishes people for perpetrating a crime because they hate a class of people."

The bill "centers on the question of whether we will be civil in North Carolina," said Rep. Paul Luebke, R-Winston, one of the bill's two primary sponsors. "It is, to put it in a phrase, a statement that we will not hate."

The bill is named after Matthew Shepard, a homosexual with North Carolina connections who was beaten to death in Wyoming.

John Rustin of the North Carolina Family Policy Council called Shepard's death a "brutal and inexcusable crime." But the homosexual acts that would be covered by the
hate crimes law are illegal in North Carolina, he said, "This is not about crime. It is not about hate," he said. "It is about legitimizing the homosexual lifestyle."

Johnny Happy, chairman of the Christian Action League said individual homosexuals are guaranteed the equal protections of all citizens and do not need the status of a protected group.

But Janet Joyner, a retired professor at the North Carolina School of the Arts who works with a support group for homosexual and bisexual children, said the law would help relieve a hostile environment.

"I must tell you that name-calling and intimidation already occur in elementary school," Joyner said.

"It’s a bigger issue than just sexual orientation," M.K. Cullen of Equality North Carolina, a homosexual group, said after the committee approved the bill. "It’s going to be an uphill struggle to educate all the members of the House about this bill before it comes to a vote."

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**STUDENT PAPER APOLOGIZES FOR ALLEGED RACIST CARTOON**

**SYRACUSE, N.Y.—** Syracuse University’s student newspaper apologized in print Tuesday for what it called a racist editorial cartoon that sparked a student protest and accusations that the paper was racially insensitive.

Reporters said a depiction of Student Government President Michaeljulian Idani in Friday’s Daily Orange looked strikingly like the fictitious Little Black Sambo, a century-old storybook character embodying offensive African-American stereotypes.

About 200 students protested Monday. After an hour meeting with protesters, the newspaper agreed that Tuesday’s top story would be the protest with a quoted apology from editor Ron DePasquale.

The paper also agreed to staff participate in a diversity sensitivity workshop and to appoint a student adviser for race issues.

"I think that while we never want to go through and experience like this, it’s something that in the end can benefit everybody," DePasquale said.

Cartoonist Dan Dippel said he never intended to cause this furor in the cartoon.

The cartoon showed what is supposed to be a tongue-wagging Idani skipping down the road with money flying everywhere. It was paired with a caption that read "Idani in the black community." The Student News said "He is a leader for promising a student group he would help fund a Hip-Hop Showcase without going through the proper channels."

John Hope Franklin, Historian and Educator, Gets Truman Honor

INDEPENDENCE, Mo.—Historian, educator and author John Hope Franklin will receive the 1999 Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award.

The honors were announced Tuesday by the Truman Foundation, formed in 1973 to honor each year a person or "One America in public life who have improved the community and the country through citizenship, patriotism self-reliance and service."

Johnny Henderson, editor of the Greater Fordham, was the first African-American to receive the award.

Franklin is chairman of President Clinton’s advisory council of Americans. He has been in public life who have improved the community and the country through citizenship, patriotism self-reliance and service.

FRANKLIN graduated from Princeton University in 1931 and Harvard University Law School in 1933. He served as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis and as a legal advisor to the NAACP.

He is a professor of history at Emory University.

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**EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS**

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**WASHINGTON.—** Rosa Parks is getting the Song of Solomon Award, one of the nation’s most prestigious civil rights honors.

The House voted 424–1 in favor of the measure after the Senate passed it with- out dissent. Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, was the only lawmaker to vote against the bill, which President Clinton is expected to sign.

"This courageous act changed her life and our nation forever," said Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla. "Passage of this bill will be our contribution to her legacy today."

Parks, an Alabama native, watched the debate on television from Los Angeles.

"Mrs. Parks is very excited to have this honor," she said. "The House and the Senate added her name to the list of great women who have helped our country fulfill its commitment to equal rights for all Americans," said House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo. "For her leadership and her example, Rosa Parks deserves to be honored with the Congressional Gold Medal."
Former Attorney General Dan Morales then issued a legal opinion directing Texas colleges to adopt race-neutral policies for admissions, financial aid and scholarships. Legislators asked new Attorney General John Cornyn for a second opinion. His office helped university officials write the appeal submitted Tuesday.

According to University of Texas System Regent for the Oxford, the Hopwood ruling left Texas at a competitive disadvantage with other public universities in recruiting students. The appeal argues that limited consideration of race in admissions is necessary to overcome the effects of past discrimination. It also says the school has a compelling interest in a racially and ethnically diverse student body.

A state Comptroller's Office study released in January showed a drop in the number of minorities applying for, being admitted to and enrolling in some of the state's most selective public schools.

**Teacher Suspended After Ridicule of Racial Slur Reassigned**

LORAIN, OH.—A teacher suspended for repeating a student's racial slur disparagingly was reassigned today to observe a veteran teacher in another school.

Terence Traut, 28, a seventh-grade math teacher at Lorain Middle School, was reassigned to Whittier Middle School.

"Some of our master teachers, who have been in the district for 19 to 20 years, have been involved in difficult student situations," school spokesman Ed Brahanam said. "Hopefully, he can learn through observing teachers with strong classroom management skills."

He was assigned to his home, with pay, since April 1 and was suspended last week. It was not clear how long he would be observing another teacher.

Traut could not be reached for comment today. Messages were left at his new school and at his home.

Traut, who is white, became upset when he heard a black and Hispanic student call each other "nigga," slang popularized by some rap musicians but derived from the similar-sounding slur.

As the principal for the principal's office, Traut repeated the word and told the class that it was stupid to use such language. He repeated the comment disparagingly when one of the boys returned.

The 11,000-student district 25 miles west of Cleveland is about half white, 25 percent black and 25 percent Hispanic.

The city chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People wanted Traut's dismissal and said any use of a racial slur by a teacher was inappropriate.

The school board said it might consider dismissing Traut, depending in part on his willingness to apologize.

**Firearm Child Safety Lock Act of 1999**

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress to act on the issue of gun related violence, and pass legislation which will adequately address this issue.

The school shootings in Jonesboro, Edinboro, Fayetteville, Springfield, Richmond, West Pacucha, Littleton and most recently, Colorado, should wake up this body to act.

Gun related violence has plagued our nation and jeopardized the safety of our children.

The American people are demanding action by this body, and the people want a safe environment in our nation's urban and rural areas for our children.

Each day in America, thirteen children under the age of 19 die from gunfire. In 1996, 4,643 children were killed by firearms. Firearms cause 1 of every 4 deaths of teenagers from the ages of 15 to 19. In addition to this, firearms are the fourth leading cause of accidental death among children from the ages of 5 to 14.

The rate of gun related crimes is increasing. From 1984 to 1994, the firearm homicide death rate for youths from the ages of 15 to 19 has increased 22%, while the non-firearm homicide death rate decreased 12.8%.

It is our responsibility, as representatives and leaders to protect our nation's children. These statistics illustrate the need for stronger measures from Congress. Yet, despite the statistics and recent developments, which clearly prove that there is a problem with firearms, many Members of Congress refuse to push forward substantive gun legislation.

To address this problem, I have re-introduced my bill, the Firearm Child Safety Lock Act of 1999. My bill, H.R. 1512, the Firearm Child Safety Lock Act of 1999, will prohibit any person from transferring or selling a firearm, in the United States, unless it is sold with a child safety lock.

In addition, this legislation will prohibit the transfer or sale of firearms by federally licensed dealers and manufacturers, unless a child safety lock is part of the firearm.

A Child Safety Lock, when properly attached to the trigger guard of a firearm, will prevent a firearm from unintentionally discharging. Once the safety lock is properly applied, it cannot be removed unless it is unlocked. Public support for child safety locks is strong. 75% of Americans have voiced support for mandatory trigger locks.

This legislation will protect our children and increase the safety of firearms.

However, child safety locks are not enough. We must determine why young people commit these horrible acts of violence. We must take the proper steps to educate and counsel our children, to prevent future acts of violence. We must be proactive and diligent in our efforts to help our children and stop these violent acts.

My bill, H.R. 1512, also has an educational provision which provides for a portion of the firearms tax revenue to be used for education on the safe storage and use of firearms. The mental health of our children must also be adequately addressed.

We must determine what the problems are. Find solutions to those problems, and then act.

We can address this issue without violating the second amendment to the Constitution. The right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed. The right to life without fear will be preserved by this legislation and other necessary legislation that should be passed by Congress.

We must have the courage to stand firm and take steps to avoid the continued senseless bloodshed, and loss of life of children around this country. This bill and our efforts can do just that, we can protect our children and protect their future. In doing so, we are protecting ourselves.

**Introduction of the Rental Fairness Act**

HON. ED BRYANT OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. BRYANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the “Rental Fairness Act of 1999.” This measure addresses two important issues. First, the impact of state vicarious liability laws on interstate commerce and motor vehicle renting and leasing consumers across the nation. Second, the question as to whether vehicle renting companies must be licensed to sell insurance products to their customers—insurance that is optional but very important to many car and truck rental customers who are under insured or have no insurance at all.

Title I of the Rental Fairness Act will, for a limited period of 3 years, adopt a federal presumption that companies that rent motor vehicles need not be licensed to sell insurance products to their customers for the term of the rental. Recently, class action lawsuits have been filed in three states accusing these rental companies of selling insurance without a license—despite the fact the these companies have been offering these products to their customers for almost three decades.

For many car and truck rental customers, these supplemental insurance purchases are not just a luxury—they are a necessity. For customers who carry minimal automobile insurance, or no insurance at all, the insurance products offered by car and truck rental companies are an important and inexpensive method of buying short-term, comprehensive insurance to protect themselves against accidents or theft. If this federal presumption is not adopted, these companies may cease to offer these products altogether—leaving many customers with no means of protecting themselves from potential liability during the rental of a motor vehicle.

The car and truck rental industry already has undertaken a huge effort to clarify their need to be licensed under each state’s insurance laws on a state-by-state basis. To date, twenty-four states have clarified, either through regulation or legislation, their positions on this issue. Until the other states can act on this issue, Title I will offer this industry protection from these types of class action lawsuits.

Title I in no way undermines the primacy of the states in regulatory insurance. In fact, it specifically restates the primary role of the states in insurance regulation. Title I of the Act has the support of the trade associations representing insurance agents because these groups realize the rental companies do not compete directly with insurance agents on these types of face-to-face, rental transaction-specific insurance sales.