

funding with the Johnson Space Center. But I went to Texas to build bridges between our great States, and I want you to know that the people in Houston were very cooperative and great to work with.

I want to thank the Clear Lake Area Economic Development Foundation, Boeing Corporation, GB Tech, United Space Alliance, Lockheed Martin and Barrios Technology for giving me an overview of the local aerospace industry; and I want to especially thank Johnson Space Center Director George Abbey for his hospitality during our trip.

Our human space flight program is the crown jewel of our Nation's space exploration and development efforts; and I am confident that, working together, key States such as Texas, Florida, Alabama, California, as well as Nevada and Washington, can help build the political support for a stronger space program.

BLIND JUSTICE?

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday a judicial oversight council ordered an investigation be conducted into the special assignment of criminal cases involving the friends of President Clinton to favorable judges appointed by President Clinton.

Yes, indeed, these were "special" cases. So special, in fact, that the assignment of these cases intentionally bypassed the computer system which normally and randomly assigns criminal cases of all other accused individuals; well, all other accused individuals that are not the personal friends or associates of the President it seems.

Our judicial system must maintain complete impartiality, no matter "who you know" in politics. Whether the judicial system was abused to grant preferential treatment to presidential allies, that will be determined. However, we need to remain vigilant over our justice system to ensure that our laws are applied equally to everyone.

Justice is supposed to be blind. That includes being blind to who your friends are too.

ELIMINATE THE TRICARE PRIME COPAY

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

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I hear from constituents on a daily basis who are concerned about the availability and affordability of military health care. On February 1, I introduced H.R. 3565 to eliminate the copayment requirement for TRICARE Prime

and to make military health care more affordable.

Retirees pay an annual enrollment fee for coverage and are also subject to copayment requirements. Active duty families do not pay an enrollment fee, but are subject to copayments. I am concerned that these copays can dramatically increase overall health care costs, particularly for retirees on a fixed income or for younger enlisted personnel. At \$6 to \$12 a visit, these copays quickly erode the real progress Congress made last year in approving a long overdue increase in military pay. Unless we reduce out-of-pocket costs for military personnel, pay raises only help on the margin.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is very good for veterans, it is good news for active duty personnel, it is fair under the circumstances today, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

NATIONAL DONOR DAY 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, organ donation falls into the category of things you never think will affect you, your friend, your neighbor, or your family. It happens to other people. In this Congress alone, there are several Members who have undergone successful organ transplants; and we are thankful that these fine people are here with us today. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPENCE) are two of the lucky ones.

My husband, John, was also one of the lucky ones. His successful transplantation not only gave John a new lease on life, but it also has given my children back a father, and me, a loving husband.

Mr. Speaker, though we are not alone, every year thousands of Americans wait anxiously on the organ donation lists, and they are entirely dependent on those kind enough to give. They are entirely dependent on those aware that there is a genuine need.

Today transplantation is extremely successful and people can live productive lives with a transplanted organ. However, because of this technology, even more people have been added to the national waiting list.

Sadly, the number of donors has not grown as fast as the number of people awaiting an organ transplant. Today there are not enough organs for everyone who needs them. Even with the

growing number of transplants performed, on average, there is an increase in the number of patients on the national waiting list every day. Today there are more than 65,000 people awaiting an organ transplant, and at least 11 people die each day while waiting for an organ.

In simple terms, the biggest problem facing transplant patients is the shortage of organs. One way that you can help address this health care crisis is to talk to your friends and families about the importance of organ and tissue donation.

I stand before you today to ask for your help. We need to work together to increase the awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation. I ask you to join us in cosponsoring House Resolution 247, a resolution that recognizes and supports National Donor Day. National Donor Day is organized by Saturn and the United Auto Workers, along with a number of organ foundations, health organizations, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

They have established February 12, 2000, as National Donor Day 2000. This day is dedicated to educating people about the Five Points of Life. This weekend this coalition is again joining forces for the third time to bring us together for a National Donor Day. This is America's largest one-day donation event.

Held just before Valentine's Day, the first two donor days raised a total of 17,000 units of blood, added over 24,000 potential donors to the National Marrow Donor Registry and distributed tens of thousands of organ and tissue pledge cards.

You and I, your friends and families, can participate in this historic event by, one, giving blood or pledging to give blood; two, volunteering with the National Marrow Donor Program; or, three, filling out an organ and tissue donation pledge card and agreeing to discuss the decision with family members.

I would also like to take a moment to thank these people and groups in my district, including Saturn in Gainesville, along with Lifesouth Community Blood Centers in Gainesville and other groups and individuals for pulling together to host a donation event on National Donor Day in the Fifth District of Florida.

I urge everyone to talk to their friends and families about the importance of organ donation and to let others know about this year's National Organ Donor Day. Do not forget, it is February 12, 2000. We are counting on you.