

Ultimately, we were responsible for cleaning up after ourselves in terms of Federal Government. Those of us who care about promoting livable communities that make our families safe, healthy and economically secure and who believe that the single most powerful tool available to us is not new fees, new laws, new requirements, but rather the Federal Government led by this bill, modeling the behavior that we expect of other Americans whether they are families, businesses or local government.

We have an opportunity to do that right now in moving forward with legislation, with adequate funding to make sure that the toxic legacy of over a century of unexploded ordnance and environmental degradation is taken care of, is addressed, that we do clean up after ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues join me in support of H.R. 2605 and that we urge our colleagues on the Committee on Appropriations and the Armed Services Committee to make sure we are all doing our job, making the framework so that Congress is no longer missing in action on the issue of unexploded ordnance.

HONORING THE KABoom! CORPORATION AND NASCAR FOR THEIR PUBLIC SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Isakson) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, last night about 10 hours ago this Congress passed the VA-HUD appropriations bill for the year 2002. In so doing, we have appropriated billions of dollars to assist low- and moderate-income Americans in the purchase or rental of their housing.

Mr. Speaker, 13 years ago when George Herbert Walker Bush, the former President of this country, made his acceptance speech, he made a speech about the "Thousand Points of Light," those Americans who go unnoticed every day but do so much good for their fellow man without credit or without compensation.

Today in Washington, D.C., a point of light will shine brightly. Under the auspices of a not-for-profit playground construction company known as KaBoom! In the Jetu Washington apartment complex where over 500 children reside, a new playground will be dedicated to improve the quality of life and the environment for those children, a safe, attractive and accessible playground. The KaBoom! Corporation, over the course of many years, has built 270 playgrounds in America for disadvantaged children and assisted in the renovation of 1,200 such playgrounds.

They do so by partnering with the private sector to provide the manpower, the resources and the funding. I am pleased today to acknowledge the Home Depot Corporation and NASCAR, who have partnered to provide the manpower, the funding and the resources for the playground that will be built today.

I particularly want to pay tribute to the Home Depot Corporation. Its founders, Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank, when they started their company not too many years ago in their first store, insisted on community participation on behalf of their employees, and themselves were philanthropic in the gifts of their money to support good causes.

Last year alone the Home Depot Foundation donated \$75 million in America for our at-risk youth, for their recreation and their quality of life, and for their health care. They truly are points of light that make our community better.

So as last night we celebrated the expenditure of billions of dollars in taxpayer money to assist Americans, let us also pay tribute today to the untold billions of dollars in manpower, man-hours and actual money donated by those points of light in America who for no reason but the goodness of their hearts make the quality of life for the less fortunate better.

Today in Washington, D.C. that will happen at the Jetu Apartment complex thanks to the not-for-profit company, KaBoom!, the for-profit companies of NASCAR and Home Depot, two points of light that will make a difference in the lives of hundreds of children.

IN SUPPORT OF CLEAN PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Pallone) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, many of us know now that the Republican leadership postponed any debate or vote on the patients' bill of rights, the HMO reform even though it was scheduled for last week. Now, of course, we are hearing that it may come up this week perhaps as early as Thursday, later on this week.

Mr. Speaker, I mention it because myself and many other Democrats have come to the floor frequently over the last year, and perhaps over the last 2 or 3 years, demanding that we have an opportunity for a clean vote on a real patients' bill of rights because we know of the problems that Americans and our constituents face with abuses when they are in the managed care system, where they have an HMO as their insurer.

What I fear though, Mr. Speaker, from the pronouncements that we are

hearing from the Republican leadership is that there will not be an opportunity for a vote on HMO reform unless they have the votes for a weaker version of HMO reform or they call it the patients' bill of rights than what the majority of the Members of this House have been seeking.

The majority of the Members of the House, almost every Democrat and a significant number of Republicans, in the last session of Congress voted for a very strong patients' bill of rights, the one sponsored by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), who is a Democrat and also by some Republicans, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE), and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), who are Republicans.

It is very important that the opportunities be presented here in the House if it is going to happen this week to have a clean vote on the real patients' bill of rights.

I think it is crucial that my colleagues and the public understand that there is a difference between some of the different versions that have been sort of circulating around this Chamber, and to suggest that we are going to have a vote on the patients' bill of rights but not have the opportunity to deal with the really effective strong one, I think would be a major mistake.

Let me give an example of the differences and why I think it is important that we have a vote on the real bill, on the one that is going to make a difference for the average American.

President Bush has said over and over again that he does not support a real patients' bill of rights. He does not support the Dingell-Ganske-Norwood bill because, first of all, there will be too much litigation, too much opportunity to go to court. Secondly, because it will drive up the cost of health insurance.

We know from the Texas insurance, and there are ten other States that have the good bill of rights including my own in New Jersey, that the fear of lawsuits is not real and the fear about increased cost of health insurance or people having their health insurance dropped is not real. In the case of Texas, it is well documented since 1997 when the patients' bill of rights went into effect in that State there were only 17 lawsuits. The average cost of health insurance in Texas has not gone up nearly as much as the national average. So we know that these fears that President Bush talks about are not legitimate.

What the President has been supporting and what the Republican leadership has been supporting is a weakened version of the patients' bill of rights that has been introduced by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER).

Just to give an example of what the differences can be on these bills, let me