

February 14, 2001

CHILD PASSENGER PROTECTION
EDUCATION GRANTS

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Child Passenger Safety Week. This national observance reminds parents and caregivers of the importance of buckling up children correctly on every ride. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 1999, motor vehicle crashes killed more than 1,400 children (infants to age 14) and injured another 300,000. Six out of 10 children killed in these crashes were completely unrestrained. This is simply unacceptable.

Today, I introduce a bill to continue for fiscal years 2002 and 2003 the Child Passenger Protection Education Grant program authorized by Section 2003(b) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). The bill authorizes \$7.5 million for each of fiscal years 2002 and 2003 for the Secretary of Transportation to make incentive grants to states to encourage the implementation of child passenger protection programs in those states. Current authorizations for the Child Passenger Protection Education Grant program expire at the end of fiscal year 2001, whereas authorizations for virtually all other TEA 21 programs expire at the end of fiscal year 2003.

To increase seat belt use nationwide, the previous Administration established goals to reduce the number of child occupant fatalities 15 percent by 2000 and 25 percent by 2005. The Child Passenger Protection Education Grant program has played an important role in helping the Department meet the first of these goals. Since 1997, the number of child fatalities resulting from traffic crashes has declined 17 percent, exceeding the goal of 15 percent by 2000. Restraint use for infants has risen to 97 percent from 85 percent in 1996, and has climbed to 91 percent for children aged one to four, up from 60 percent in 1996.

Under my bill, a state may use its grant funds to implement programs that are designed to:

Prevent deaths and injuries to children;

Educate the public concerning all aspects of the proper installation of child restraints, appropriate child restraint design, selection, and placement, and harness threading and harness adjustment on child restraints; and

Train and retrain child passenger safety professionals, police officers, fire and emergency medical personnel, and other educators concerning all aspects of child restraint use.

A state may carry out its child passenger protection education activities through a state program or through grants to political subdivisions of the state or to an appropriate private entity. Each state that receives a grant must submit a report that describes the program activities carried out with the funds made available under the grant. Not later than June 1, 2002, the Secretary of Transportation shall report to Congress on the implementation of the program, including a description of the programs carried out and materials developed

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and distributed by the states that receive grants under the program.

In each of fiscal years 2000 and 2001, the Transportation Appropriations Act provided \$7.5 million to finance the Child Passenger Protection Education Grant program. It is essential that we continue to provide funding for the Child Passenger Protection Education Grant program to ensure that we make progress in preventing deaths and injuries to children on the nation's highways, and achieve our goal of a 25 percent reduction in child occupant fatalities by 2005.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GIFT OF
LIFE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL
ACT OF 2001

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce the "Gift of Life Congressional Medal Act of 2001." This legislation creates a commemorative medal to honor organ donors and their survivors. Senator Frist, a heart and lung transplant surgeon himself, is introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

There is a serious shortage of available and suitable organ donors. Nearly 75,000 people are currently waiting for an organ transplant, and every 14 minutes a new name is added to the list. Because of low donor rates, over 6,000 people died in 1999 for lack of a suitable organ. Incentive programs and public education are critical to maintaining and increasing the number of organs donated each year.

We are very happy to hear that Secretary Thompson has made this a priority issue that he plans to address during his first 100 days as Secretary. He has promised to mount "a national campaign to raise awareness of organ donation", and to "do more to recognize families who donate organs of a loved one." The Gift of Life Congressional Medal Act is a great opportunity for us to work with Secretary Thompson to draw attention to this life-saving issue. It sends a clear message that donating one's organs is a self-less act that should receive the profound respect of the Nation.

The legislation allows the Health and Human Service's Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) to establish a nonprofit fund to design, produce, and distribute a Congressional Medal of Honor for organ donors or their family members. Enactment of this legislation would have no cost to the Federal Government. The Treasury Department would provide an initial loan to OPTN for start-up purposes, which would be fully repaid. From then on, the program would be self-sufficient through charitable donations. The donor or family member would have the option of receiving the Congressional Gift of Life Medal. Families would also be able to request that a Member of Congress, state or local official, or community leader award the medal to the donor or donor's survivors.

Physicians can now transplant kidneys, lungs, pancreas, liver, and heart with consider-

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able success. The demand for organs will continue to grow with the improvement of medical technologies. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), an average of 9,600 donations was made per year between 1995 and 1999. Without expanded efforts to increase the supply of organ donation, the supply of suitable organs will continue to lag behind the need.

This is non-controversial, non-partisan legislation to increase organ donation. I ask my colleagues to help bring an end to transplant waiting lists and recognize the enormous faith and courage displayed by organ donors and their families. This bill honors these brave acts, while publicizing the critical need for increased organ donations.

HONORING LONNELL COOPER

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lonnell Cooper, a retired sergeant with the Fort Worth Police Department and tremendous public servant who has served our community for half a century.

Throughout his life and career, Sgt. Cooper has been a stellar law enforcement officer and a trailblazer. He was a leader in breaking down the color barrier as one of the first six African Americans accepted to the Fort Worth Police Department. He also organized the department's first Explorer post.

Among the many honors bestowed on Sgt. Cooper throughout his distinguished career are Fort Worth Officer of the Year of the department's Service Division, he was designated an Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer by the State of Texas and a Pioneer in Criminal Justice by the U.S. Congress. The Mayor of Fort Worth even designated a "Sgt. Lonnell E. Cooper Day" in the city.

This Sunday, February 18, the New Rising Star Baptist Church is paying much deserved tribute to Sgt. Cooper for his lifetime of service to our community. I want to join with his family and many friends in thanking Sgt. Lonnell E. Cooper for all that he has done to make our community safer and a better place to live.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MCKINNEY-
VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION
ACT OF 2001

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001." This legislation builds upon legislation I introduced during the last Congress, numbered H.R. 2888, to improve educational opportunities for homeless children.

As my colleagues will recall, a majority of H.R. 2888 was incorporated into H.R. 2, the Students Results Act, which overwhelmingly