EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Susan Chasson’s dedication and perseverance in breaking through the silence of child abuse reminds us that one person’s idea can make all the difference in the world. While it is disappointing that child abuse remains an issue in the 21st Century, Susan Chasson’s vision and endeavors must be commended. She is truly a hero for us all.

THE NURSING CRISIS

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call your attention to a growing crisis—the shortage of nurses in health care facilities across the country. Nurses are an absolutely essential component of our health care system—no piece of medical equipment will ever replace the around-the-clock surveillance provided by our Nation’s nurses. There is simply no substitute for the element of humanity that nurses bring to medicine. Therefore, I find it extremely alarming that one in five nurses plans to quit the profession within five years due to unsatisfactory working conditions. By the year 2008, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that we will need 450,000 additional registered nurses in order to meet present demands. Without nurses, the country will not be able to meet the needs of its patients. This situation is so dire that housekeeping staff hired to clean rooms have been pressed into duty as aides to dispense medicine. Hospitals now routinely order nurses to care for 15 patients or more at a time, almost double the recommended patient load. Overworked nurses are being forced to juggle more tasks than any single person can be expected to handle, and are being asked to do procedures that they haven’t been adequately trained for.

Our nurses have reached the end of their rope. To quote Kim Cloninger, a registered nurse from Illinois: “I wake up every day and hope I don’t kill someone today. Every day I pray: God protect me. Let me make it out of there with my patients alive.” Or perhaps more tellingly, Tricia Hunter, executive director of the California branch of the American Nurses Association states: “I don’t know a nurse who would leave anyone they love in a hospital alone.”

Mr. Speaker, this is the face of nursing today. The nursing profession needs our help. As a profession, nurses have a rich history of doing whatever it takes to provide adequate patient care. Nurses generally don’t make a big fuss over working conditions. The fact that they are tells me that something is seriously wrong with our health care system today. Therefore, I support legislation that enacts upwardly adjustable nurse staffing ratios as a condition of participation in Medicare and Medicaid, and I support legislation banning mandatory overtime. I also support the Patients’ Bill of Rights introduced by Mr. Goldin, Mr. Edwards, and Mr. Kennedy in the Senate, and by Mr. Ganske and Mr. Dingell in the House because it includes a provision that protects health care professionals from retaliation when they speak out for their patients. Lastly, I support the Nurse Reinvestment Act, H.R. 1436, because it addresses the need to attract more people into the nursing profession. I support all of these measures because if we don’t act to solve our current nursing crisis, we will all pay the price at some point down the line.

IN HONOR OF ANDREW KIM

HON. EDOULPHUS TOWNS
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Andrew Kim on the occasion of his installation