

RECOGNIZING THE SISTERS OF MERCY ON THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today asking you to join me in recognizing the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of Mercy of Buffalo, New York.

The Sisters of Mercy were founded in Dublin, Ireland, in 1831 by Catherine McAuley. The first order was formed in the United States in 1843 in the city of Pittsburgh.

The Sisters of Mercy came to Buffalo, New York in 1858. And since that time, from a small teaching order of Mercy nuns, they established a Catholic school system in Buffalo, New York, hospitals where they ministered to our sick, schools where they taught our children and provided an extraordinary example of compassion and love throughout the western New York community.

The Sisters of Mercy are also doing extraordinary humanitarian work throughout the entire world in very volatile places like Africa and the Middle East. And the Sisters of Mercy were represented here today in our Nation's Capital at the first papal visit of Pope Benedict to the United States.

Sister Margaret Ann Coughlin, a long-time friend and 50-year member of the Sisters of Mercy, was here today to join in the celebration that this Nation held in welcoming the new Pope to the United States.

The Sisters of Mercy have cared, not only in the United States, but throughout the world, for the despised and the dispossessed. And those who have been forsaken have never been forsaken by the Sisters of Mercy.

A lot of the institutions that they started, schools, hospitals, are now run by lay people and also administered by lay people, but what remains, Mr. Speaker, is the constant love and compassion, that principle that was established first and foremost and continues today by the Sisters of Mercy.

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE DECISIONS DAY

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise on National Health Care Decisions Day in support of health organizations all over the country who are educating the public about what it means to have an advance directive, or a living will.

Mr. Speaker, advance directives allow individuals to maintain control of their health care decisions even at the end of their lives, regardless of the circumstances that they may face at that time. It is crucial for individuals to understand the options that pres-

ently exist so that they may convey their end-of-life medical wishes accurately and effectively. Accordingly, I have introduced a resolution, H. Con. Res 323, supporting the goals of the National Health Care Decisions Day, which has garnered broad bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not express what those end-of-life medical decisions should be, rather, it simply encourages Americans to educate themselves about these very difficult issues and to talk about them with their loved ones.

I want to thank the more than 100 Members of Congress who have already joined me in cosponsoring this resolution. And of course I look forward to it being considered on the floor very soon. And I encourage all Americans to set aside time to have what may very well be one of the most important conversations a family can have.

REMOVAL OF NAMES OF MEMBERS AS COSPONSORS OF H.R. 2833

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove MADELEINE BORDALLO, RON KLEIN and JOHN BARROW from H.R. 2833, the Preexisting Condition Exclusion Patient Protection Act of 2007.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

VETERANS CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, occasionally things happen when you're in Congress that make you so angry that you can't hardly stand it.

I got a call this past week, Mr. Speaker, from a friend of mine from my childhood. And her brother is a veteran who was in the veterans hospital, and he was assigned to a community residential care program. That's where they put one of these veterans into a home in a neighborhood with other veterans, and they're supposed to be cared for.

She told me that the place where he was being kept was not clean and that the room he was in had a window that was sealed shut. He took oxygen, and

there were no signs or anything that dealt with the oxygen that he was taking. A dog in the house came into his room and chewed through his oxygen tube. He had to keep his door shut, so it virtually made him a prisoner in this house.

There were four veterans in this house. And the attitude of the person who ran this home was not anything that you would call conducive to good care. The two sisters of his were very, very upset and they thought that he shouldn't be kept in this place, and they asked me if I would check into it. So I called the caseworker, a lady named Pat Erp, and she told me that everything out there was fine. I said I wanted to see for myself. So I went out to the house. By the time I had arrived, they had contacted the woman who owned the house, and she was very hostile and said she wouldn't allow me, even though I was a Member of Congress, to take a look at the circumstances under which Mr. English was living, that's my buddy from childhood, Paul English. I didn't want to press the case, so I called the director of the Roudebush Hospital in Indianapolis. He wasn't in, but I did get his assistant director, who was very nice, and he agreed to have somebody come out there and take a look at the situation.

He came out with two ladies who were nurses there. And my childhood friend's sister went into the house with him to try to get his clothes and everything out of there so they could take him to her house until they found another place for him to be kept.

They were hostile, the two nurses from the Roudebush Hospital were hostile. They evidently changed the cord on his oxygen equipment, and they said that nothing like that happened, and yet his sister saw that it happened and they were very upset.

The room in the house was not clean. He had two towels in his room, both of which had holes in them, obviously older. And on the weekends, the caseworker said that the woman who took care of these veterans who were in her care would leave for the weekend and left a pot of food on the stove.

This isn't the way that our veterans ought to be taken care of when they're in a community residential care program, so I decided to pursue it further. And I got a call today and I returned the call of a lady named Phyllis Beamon, who is the head of the Extended Care Unit at the Indianapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the Roudebush Hospital today. And she indicated that everything was fine and that they've used this house and this caregiver since 1983. And I could only imagine what other veterans had to live with who lived in this house since 1983 and were given this kind of "care."

I can't tell you how this affected me. I served on the Veterans Affairs Committee for 10 years. And I had heard

stories like this before, but I always felt that the veterans were getting the quality of care that we were paying for as taxpayers, and they were being taken care of. And yet my friend from my childhood was being mistreated, in my opinion.

His sister finally got him out of there and took him to her house. And the day after she took him to her house, because of the stress he was under, he had a heart attack. He went to the hospital and they put two stints in him and he did survive.

Don't misunderstand, Mr. Speaker, I think the people that serve in our veterans hospitals for the most part do an outstanding job. The nurses and the doctors who serve our veterans do a good job, but there are occasions when the care is not just less than adequate, it's almost criminally inadequate.

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And this is one of the cases that really bothers me. And I'm going to call for a complete investigation of the Community Residential Care program and the people who provide it at the Indianapolis Roudebush Hospital, not because I don't think that most of the people who work at the hospital do a good job, because I think they do, but I think there's a dereliction of responsibility in this Community Residential Care program that needs to be corrected and it needs to be corrected very, very quickly.

We shouldn't have a veteran in a room in a house with the windows sealed so he can't get out in the event of an emergency. We shouldn't have him taking oxygen with a dog that's going to come in the room and chew on his oxygen tube. We shouldn't have people that are leaving the premises unattended with four veterans in there on a weekend and telling their relatives, well, you ought to take him someplace else because there won't be anybody here, and if they are here, they leave the food on the stove so they can get their own food. And these people, many of them, are mentally challenged, like my friend is. He's had some psychological problems.

Let me just say in closing, Mr. Speaker, this is something that needs to be addressed. There needs to be an investigation of the Community Residential Care program in Indianapolis, and if it's like this in other parts of the country, we need to have a national investigation.

**JOSIAH AND KATHLEEN PIERCE,
2007 NATIONAL TREE FARMERS
OF THE YEAR**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to congratulate two of my con-

stituents, Josiah and Kathleen Pierce of Baldwin, Maine, for being selected as the 2007 National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year.

Jo and Kathy were selected by the American Tree Farm System for their sustainable management of approximately 2,000 acres of woodland in Southern Maine. Part of the property has been in Jo Pierce's family for six generations.

Jo describes his management philosophy as 100-year thinking about preserving the land's ability to pay for itself by periodic logging and yet maintaining the diversity of plant and animal life that can only be found in and around old forests.

Jo and Kathy's grandchildren represent one measure of long-term management. Jo wants them to marvel at rare and unusual plants and animals that are otherwise frequently lost to short-sighted harvesting. Jo and Kathy keep their property open to the public for hiking, hunting, and other traditional uses. They want other people to experience their own attachment to the land.

The award recognizes Jo and Kathy's civic contributions. In particular, Jo's service as president of the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine, an influential State advocacy group, demonstrated his interest in sharing his knowledge of sustainable forest management with other owners.

The award is also a tribute to Rene Noel, the forester who advises Jo and Kathy about best practices with respect to management of their land.

Maine is a small State. I am particularly pleased to recognize Jo and Kathy's achievement because Jo and I have known each other for many years. Our fathers were friends. We share a similar perspective about our forest property, and we share the same forester.

In Maine and across the country, much of our forest land is in private hands and often in relatively small lots owned by individuals. The future quality of our forests, and the diversity of life they sustain, depends in large part on the knowledge and commitment of their owners, especially to their "100-year thinking" about sustainable management.

Jo and Kathy Pierce, National Outstanding Tree Farmers of 2007, are models for how other forest landowners can use, protect, and preserve for future generations the woodland habitat they own today.

SUNSET MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I stand once again before this body with yet another Sunset Memorial.

It is April 16, 2008, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, and before the sun set today in America, almost 4,000 more defenseless unborn children were killed by abortion on demand—just today. That is more than the number of innocent American lives that were lost on September 11th, only it happens every day.

It has now been exactly 12,868 days since the travesty called Roe v. Wade was handed down. Since then, the very foundation of this Nation has been stained by the blood of almost 50 million of our own children.

Some of them, Mr. Speaker, cried and screamed as they died, but because it was amniotic fluid passing over their vocal cords instead of air, we couldn't hear them.

All of them had at least four things in common.

They were each just little babies who had done nothing wrong to anyone. Each one of them died a nameless and lonely death. And each of their mothers, whether she realizes it immediately or not, will never be the same. And all the gifts that these children might have brought to humanity are now lost forever.

Yet even in the full glare of such tragedy, this generation clings to a blind, invincible ignorance while history repeats itself and our own silent genocide mercilessly annihilates the most helpless of all victims to date, those yet unborn.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is important for those of us in this Chamber to remind ourselves again of why we are really all here.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The care of human life and its happiness and not its destruction is the chief and only object of good government."

The phrase in the 14th amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says: "No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of our innocent citizens and their constitutional rights is why we are all here. It is our sworn oath.

The bedrock foundation of this Republic is that clarion Declaration of the self-evident truth that all human beings are created equal and endowed by their creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Every conflict and battle our Nation has ever faced can be traced to our commitment to this core self-evident truth. It has made us the beacon of hope for the entire world. It is who we are.

And yet Mr. Speaker, another day has passed, and we in this body have failed again to honor that foundational commitment. We failed our sworn oath and our God-given responsibility as we broke faith with nearly 4,000 more innocent American babies who died today without the protection that we should have given them.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude, in the hope that perhaps someone new who heard this sunset memorial tonight will finally embrace the truth that abortion really does kill little babies, that it hurts mothers in ways that we can never express, and that 12,868 days spent killing nearly 50 million unborn children in America is enough; and that the America that rejected human slavery and marched into Europe to arrest the Nazi Holocaust, is still courageous and compassionate enough to find a