EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE WOMEN'S HEALTH AND CANCER RIGHTS ACT OF 1997

HON. SUSAN MOLINARI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Ms. MOLINARI. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to introduce the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1997. This unprecedented legislation is not only critical for breast cancer patients, but also for all cancer patients.

Last year in the U.S., 182,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 85,000 breast cancer patients received a mastectomy as part of their treatment—7,500 of which were performed in New York State. A similar survey found that 43 percent of the respondents had been denied coverage of followup reconstructive symmetry procedures and nearly 20 percent had been denied insurance coverage for revisions of an initial breast reconstructive surgery. These numbers are far too high and this denial of coverage must end.

Currently, many insurance companies are the sole decision makers in how long a breast cancer patient should stay in the hospital, without taking into account her individual needs or circumstance. In addition, these companies are frequently reluctant to pay for the initial breast reconstruction, as well as followup procedures because they deem reconstruction cosmetic. Ironically, insurance companies do not deny reconstructive surgery for an ear that is lost due to cancer. Insurance companies are simply not being sensitive to the needs of breast cancer patients, and this bill seeks to ensure a breast cancer patient's access to an appropriate hospital stay as well as reconstructive surgery.

There are few procedures which are of such a sensitive nature as mastectomies. Under the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act, the patient in consultation with her physician, determines when it is medically appropriate to be discharged following a mastectomy. Rather than leaving the decision to insurance companies or even to Congress, this crucial decision is made by those personally involved. So if a woman is prepared mentally and physically to be discharged soon after the procedure, she may do so with her doctor's permission. This is also true in the case when a woman is not quite ready after several days. Patients should never be denied the opportunity to be covered by insurance in this frightening situation.

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act also ensures access to all stages of reconstructive surgery. Surgeons across the country have confirmed that the problems with reimbursement have grown worse in recent years as insurance companies become more cost-conscious. Women have been denied coverage for reconstructive surgery even in States where coverage for breast reconstruction was mandatory.

Finally, the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act ensures that individuals diagnosed with any type of cancer have access to a second opinion, including one that may be outside of their health plan network. It is vital that an individual facing a potentially life-threatening disease, such as cancer, have the opportunity to consult a second physician and not the anxiety of whether or not it will be covered by their insurance.

Unfortunately, almost all of us have had a family member or known someone who has been hit by breast cancer—and frankly all women live with that fear. This bill is attempting to provide some sense of security that hospitals and medical providers are able to do the right thing. We will be able to claim success if we can minimize the pain, confusion, and trauma following a breast cancer diagnosis—and the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act aims to do just that.

THE CITY CLUB OF SAN DIEGO: TWO REMARKABLE DECADES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the City Club of San Diego.

Over the past 20 years, the City Club has become an integral part of San Diego—providing a public forum for nearly 500 programs presented in the highest public interest. These accomplishments have earned it the distinction as one of America's great public forums.

The President and Vice President of the United States have appeared before the City Club. On six occasions, the Governor of California has spoken. The list of speakers presented represents a remarkable variety of individuals and opinions, from Jerry Falwell to Gloria Steinem, from Maureen Reagan to Tom Hayden, from Tom Wolfe to Anthony Lewis. Local, State, and national elected officials, journalists, ambassadors, judges, authors, bank officers, media broadcasters, professors, business and sports figures, and others have presented their ideas in the forum of the City Club. The speakers represent rich and varied professions, philosophies, and political views. Senator JOE BIDEN returns for his 7th appearance as the featured guest of the 20th anniversary celebration on February 8, 1997.

In addition to the forums, the City Club has offered other special events: a national conference on immigration; another on press, libel, and American freedom; and a third on the state of our language. One of the City Club's most ambitious undertakings was a four-part series on leadership in San Diego, focusing on government, justice, finance, and the media.

City Club events have been covered on C–SPAN, the local PBS radio station, and cable television systems. A debate between Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate was carried statewide on cable TV.

The City Club has held fundraisers for other nonprofit organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the San Diego Public Library, the United Negro College Fund, and the National Jewish Hospital. These efforts are notable, for it is highly unusual for one nonprofit organization to undertake fundraising for other similar groups.

A lighter side of the City Club includes holiday parties, whale watching trips, theater evenings, a trip to the Nation's Capital, and Aspen ski trips—featuring programs with outstanding speakers as well as time on the slopes.

George Mitrovich, the president of the City Club and prime mover behind its success, has stated: ''The ability of any democracy to survive, even in the United States, depends in no small degree upon the wisdom of its people—a wisdom that public forums help instill.''

This is the mission of the City Club: to present an arena where the best ideas might prevail. On the joyous occasion of its 20th anniversary, I am honored to publicly recognize and honor the accomplishments of the City Club of San Diego.

''ENNIS COSBY KNEW WORTH OF A HELPING HAND''—A COLUMN BY ROBERT SCHEER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, research studies indicate that learning disabilities affect about 15 percent of the American population. One of the most common learning differences is dyslexia, which makes it difficult for persons to read and understand the written word. Our Nation recently suffered the tragic loss of Ennis Cosby, a young man with dyslexia who was committed to using his influence and education to start a school for children with dyslexia. Robert Scheer, renowned author and contributing editor for the Los Angeles Times, has written a sensitive essay about how dyslexia affects even the most successful persons in our society. I commend this column to my colleagues.

ENNIS COSBY KNEW WORTH OF A HELPING HAND

(By Robert Scheer)

Properly credentialed and steady at my post in the press section at the president's inauguration, within shouting distance of the man himself, a witness to history surrounded by the most successful of my peers, I am, as so often before on such occasions, filled with fear. This time it makes me think of Ennis William Cosby.

Fear, not of the violence that took his life but rather the more mundane persistent and personal terror shared by all dyslexics over having to perform in conventional ways when your brain does not track quite that way. In my case today, it's the pressure to file properly spelled, cogently organized, grammatically correct copy, on deadline.

Small potatoes to some, a horror to others. I'm not complaining, mind you. I made my claim to be heard, and the fact that you are able to read this means that with the aid of great teachers, computerized spelling checks and my wife, sons Christopher and Peter and friend Cara, all of whom are on line to protect me from the more egregious errors of syntax, I will be heard. But the fear never fully disappears.

It is a fear that young Cosby would have well understood, having devoted his life to working with kids with learning disabilities. It is a terror of failure, known keenly by those who, despite their ability and best efforts, flunked seventh grade. What we have in common, along with millions of others including my marvelous son Josh—who thrilled me by admonishing a smug Santa Monica school district special ed administrator to call it a ''learning difference,'' not ''disability'' or ''handicap''—is a conundrum of difficulties loosely labeled dyslexia. What we have in common is the fact that we learn differently than most folks because letters or numbers get scrambled, or we have small motor problems or we become confused under time pressure or are flustered in our efforts to conceptualize in ways that lend themselves to standardized tests. What we also have in common is the potential to excel.

In my time, in the public schools of the Bronx, no one knew of such complexity in the learning process. I was simply pronounced dumb and slow because I couldn't learn cursive writing or spell worth a damn and so was tracked to oblivion until a friendly science teacher discovered that I was good at physics and some other subjects if given half a chance. Since then, a great deal of progress has been made in recognizing and treating dyslexia, but even one from so privileged a background as Cosby went undiagnosed until college years. As he poignantly wrote, ''The happiest day of my life occurred when I found out I was dyslexic . . . the worst feeling to me is confusion.''

I have been thinking of young Cosby almost constantly since the news of his being gunned down off the San Diego Freeway not far from my home. The smiling optimism of his file photo burns into my brain and anger fills me that this young man's optimism spilled out wasted on the indifferent concrete of that freeway offramp. It's the same freeway my son Josh takes to a school called Landmark, where he has opportunities that could save the lives of so many others now tracked to state prisons and other societal markers of educational failure.

It was Ennis Cosby's dream to create a school for kids with dyslexia. ''He wanted to make sure that kids who might not have the opportunity to have the help that he had would get it,'' his professor recalled. ''So he did all he could to help poor kids.'' As I write help, it comes out hepl, and the reason I remain a bleeding heart liberal is that I think we all benefit when the cry for ''hepl'' is understood.

These are the thoughts that went through my frayed mind listening to the inauguration speech of William Jefferson Clinton, a guy who also came up the hard way but who was blessed with the saving grace of testing well. Clinton knows he benefited from the level playing field, and he will not compromise government's obligation to keep it level. But where he has failed is in reaching out to those who need a helping hand, as Jesse Jackson might put it, to be pulled from the quicksand of failure to the high ground of opportunity.

Those of us with dyslexia, and that ranges from Albert Einstein to Cher, have known that a helping hand spells the difference between pain and performance. Bob Dole, who pushed through the Americans With Disabilities Act, which has helped dyslexics enormously, knows that. If I had any moment of regret at the inauguration, it came with the sense that Clinton does not know what it means to flunk the seventh grade.

Ennis Cosby did. But despite that, he got a master's, was going for a doctorate and planning to start a school for dyslexic kids, making him—to use his father's words—my hero, too.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO END SUBSIDIES FOR THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

HON. BOB FRANKS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce with my colleague, Representative MARTY MEEHAN, a bill entitled the Tennessee Valley Authority First Step Reform Act.

Two weeks ago, Tennessee Valley Authority Chairman Craven Crowell asked Congress to eliminate its $106 million annual appropriation, so that the TVA can concentrate on its electricity business in preparation for upcoming energy deregulation. As a Federal agency since 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority has provided the Tennessee Valley with flood protection, agricultural and industrial development, and electric power. Thanks to TVA's efforts, the economy of the Tennessee Valley has been greatly enhanced. However, as the TVA makes the transition to becoming an independent power producer, I congratulate the TVA for their recent initiative to eliminate its $106 million appropriation. This legislation would codify that request by ending all appropriations for the TVA after fiscal year 1998.

Second, this bill would order the Office of Management and Budget to provide an independent audit of the rest of the Federal subsidies enjoyed by the TVA, as well as a plan to completely wean the TVA off taxpayer subsidies.

Today, I am distributing to every Member of Congress a report that describes the TVA's direct and indirect government subsidies. These include over $1.2 billion in Federal and State tax exemptions, reduced borrowing costs, and exemptions from many Federal regulations that all other utility companies must obey. These subsidies allow TVA to provide cheap power to a select region subsidized at the expense of the taxpayers in the rest of the United States. This practice should not be allowed to continue.

As we move toward deregulation of the electric utility industry, these subsidies will give TVA an unfair advantage over the utility companies that pay taxes and are required to abide by State and Federal regulations. It is time we leveled the playing field. This legislation is the first step in making these reforms.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation.

FLORIDA'S HEALTHY KIDS PROGRAM: A MODEL FOR THE NATION?

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, it is America's shame that 10 million children—mostly the children of working parents—do not have health insurance. Health insurance equals access to health care. Lack of access to health care equals increased deaths and diminished lives.

We must find a way to insure these children.

Florida has developed a program run through the schools that provides a comprehensive set of benefits for children for about $50 per month. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is giving $3 million in grants to seven other States to see if they can replicate Florida's success.

Following is material from the RWJ Foundation's ''Call for Proposals'' which describes the Florida program. I think that the Federal Government might look to this State example as a way it could quickly and efficiently reach most of the 10 million uninsured. If we used President Clinton's $500 tax credit idea with a program of school-based health insurance, we could obtain low cost but comprehensive insurance for millions of children without new bureaucracies or hassles.

I urge everyone to think how we could combine the Florida idea with Federal tax legislation to make new money available to end the national disgrace of 10 million uninsured children.

PURPOSE

Healthy Kids is a program designed to help states develop a comprehensive, affordable health insurance product for uninsured children. The program, initiated in 1988, provides grant funds to replicate a successful model in Florida that helps families that do not qualify for government aid—but that cannot afford private health insurance—buy health insurance for their children. Florida Healthy Kids is a subsidized insurance product sold through schools. School districts are used as a grouping mechanism to lower the cost of insurance for children, similar to the role employers play in providing group coverage to their employees.

Up to $3 million has been made available for the Healthy Kids replication program. Under this three-year competitive program, approximately seven states will be awarded grants. These include planning grants for states to develop their programs and implementation grants for those ready to proceed.

BACKGROUND

One child out of every seven in America does not have health insurance, according to a 1996 study by the Employee Benefits Research Institute. The number of uninsured children is increasing and current trends in private health care coverage and welfare reform threaten to accelerate the rate of increase.

The majority of Americans get their health insurance coverage from group insurance plans provided through their employers. Historically, covering a worker generally meant covering his or her children as well, but rising health care costs have begun to change that. Recent years have seen a drop in employer-provided dependent coverage