I wish them good health and happiness as they move forward in their lives.

DOLLARS TO THE CLASSROOM ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 18, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3248) to provide Dollars to the Classroom:

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Madam Chairman, we have been charged by our constituents to construct and introduce wise legislation, yet today we are considering legislation which will severely hamper our Nation's efforts to improve our children's education. The Dollars to the Classroom Act is riddled with faults, such as providing no mechanism for accountability of Federal funds as well as funding general operating expenses rather than national educational priorities.

One of the major setbacks of this legislation is that it does not ensure that Federal education funds will reach our neediest students. The discretion will be left to the States, which in general have resulted in less targeted fund distribution when compared to Federal programs. In addition, past experience has proven that the consolidation of Federal programs into block grants has resulted in decreased appropriations for varied reasons, such as the lack of distinct Federal priorities and the lack of accountability language.

I am a parent and educator and I know that certain improvements can be made with our American educational system; but H.R. 3248 is not one of these improvements. If education is one of our top priorities in Congress, then we should not pass H.R. 3248. I urge my colleagues to vote no on this legislation.

ESTABLISH YOUTH SUICIDE AS A COMPELLING NATIONAL PRIORITY

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for a resolution I introduced last week that is of fundamental importance to every person who has ever had children and to every family that has suffered the loss of a loved one through suicide.

During this summer, while I was home in my district, I had the opportunity to meet my constituent Lisa Dove, the mother of Justin Dove who tragically committed suicide at age 16. Justin was a well liked child who lived with clinical depression and Attention Deficit Disorder. Despite several years of medical psychological treatments and antidepressant medications, Justin decided to take his own life.

The purpose of this bill would be to recognize the week of September 20–26, 1998, as Yellow Ribbon Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Week. This bill would also recognize that there is a need to increase awareness about youth suicide and make it a national priority. Finally, this legislation also encourages communities nationwide to increase awareness about and prevent youth suicide.

I would like to thank my original co-sponsor of this bill, the Honorable David Skaggs of Colorado. I would also like to recognize the Light For Life Foundation of America and their founders, the Emme family, who tragically lost their teenage son, Michael to suicide in 1994. It was through the vision of the Emme family that the Yellow Ribbon Program, which is now responsible for saving over 1,000 teenage lives since its inception, has become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this resolution will increase awareness and help reduce the number of teenage suicides.

THE VETERANS PERSONAL SECURITY ACT

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Veterans Personal Security Act. This bill is the direct result of several incidents at the Lyons VA Medical Center in my district.

In late May, a Korean War Veteran who was a psychiatric patient at Lyons walked away from his ward, unnoticed. Several hours later, when he was discovered missing, the VA police began to search the medical center's extensive campus. That search, however, was called off, allegedly because the VA could not pay police overtime to continue. Two days later, the patient was found dead in a ditch adjacent to the main administration building. This veteran's death, and the lack of a proper search, is an atrocity.

In that incident, the VA did notify the local Bernards Township Police Department, but a coordinated search was not requested. I also understand that Lyons VA medical center has had a series of alleged rapes reportedly occur on its campus. These incidents have not been reported to local law enforcement agencies, and as a result, rumors have been circulating among veterans, as well as the local community, about what has actually happened at the medical center. Is there a threat to the safety and security of the community at large? One local police chief said that knowing the facts of these incidents will help him answer questions posed by his community, and hopefully help him ease their concerns that these crimes will spread beyond the medical center's boundaries.

The Veterans Personal Security Act would require the VA police to immediately notify local law enforcement agencies if a serious crime or similar incident occurs. That notification must be followed up within 48 hours with a more detailed, written notification. The VA would be required to notify local police if one of several crimes or alleged incidents occurs, including: a missing patient, the abuse or beating of a patient or staff member, the use or distribution of illegal drugs by a patient or staff member or an alleged rape or any other felony.

Additionally, the Veterans Personal Security Act would grant local law enforcement agencies jurisdiction to go onto VA property to investigate these crimes, or to help VA police search for missing persons, or provide whatever assistance is needed to resolve these incidents.

I recognize that many local law enforcement agencies are kept busy meeting the demands of their communities. However, it is oftentimes in the local communities' best interests that these situations are brought to their attention and that the police are made aware of them. The veterans who are treated at these facilities, the staff who work there, and the residents in the surrounding communities deserve to know when a crime or other alleged incident occurs. More importantly, they deserve to be protected. Their safety and security must not be compromised by weak links in communication between VA police and the local law enforcement officials.

Mr. Speaker, a veteran should not just ''disappear'' from a VA medical center, like the tragic incident at Lyons. When a veteran checks into a VA hospital anywhere in America, he or she expects and deserves peace of mind. The Veterans Personal Security Act should ensure that veterans seeking treatment at VA medical facilities will be protected from further harm.

SISTERLY LOVE

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, as all of us know, family is the center of American life and I want to share with my colleagues an article which exemplifies the strong family ties found among our healthiest and happiest of families. The article was written by Courtney Toft about her sister, Nicole, who has Rett syndrome. The affection and devotion with which she writes permeates each word and demonstrates the unconditional love both girls have for one another. The close relationship between Courtney and Nicole is a direct reflection of the family life created by their mother, Carol Toft, who works in my District Office in Lake Villa, Illinois. Knowing of Carol's commitment and love for her family, my heart was touched by Courtney's comments about her sister and I simply wanted my colleagues to have an opportunity to read her article as it appeared in the September 1998 issue of the Rett Syndrome Association of Illinois Newsletter.

SISTERHOOD

(By Courtney Toft (age 16))

My sister, Nicole, turned nineteen on August 3. Her personality has changed throughout the years, but she has always kept the sparkling eyes and the smile that lights up the room. People always say, ''I think she understands!'' I know she understands! She knows so much more than we give her credit for. She is just like every single one of us except she can't express her feelings in words like the rest of us can. Having a sister with Rett syndrome has taught me so much. If Nicole had been ''normal'' our family would have had a different outlook on life.

Nicole has always been there for me. She listens to my deepest secrets and doesn't tell a soul. She laughs at all my jokes even if they are not funny and basically puts up with all my annoying habits. Of course, Nicole has her bad habits that the rest of the

household has to put up with. Not that I'm complaining, but nineteen years of the Muppets and Sesame Street can be a little extreme. I think Nicole has been a blessing to our entire family. I don't know what we would have done without her.

There are so many stories to tell, but most of them are the ones that only a mother, or sister, could tolerate. Whenever you have a family with two girls close in age, there is competition. You would think that with us there wouldn't be any. Big mistake. Nicole has a boyfriend named Jason (cute couple!). I have a boyfriend named Jeff (cuter couple!) Nicole figures she should have both guys so she hits on mine. The sad part is, my boyfriend falls for her mischievous ways. Thinking from her point of view, I guess we really don't compete. She has everyone wrapped around her finger, and I think she knows it, too.

I might have missed out on some things related to sisterhood, like the part where Nicole was supposed to break Mom in to parenting a teenager. You know, all the bad habits: boyfriends, curfews, driving, and all the other things that every parent looks forward to. Things I haven't missed include time together styling her hair, polishing her nails, and going shopping. We recently had our first adventure together where she and I picked out some really cool clothes for her. Her eyes and smile told me that she thought it was the coolest thing!

We've grown up not only physically, but emotionally. We've developed an admiration for one another, and I'm very lucky to have a sister like her.

THE C–130 PROGRAM

HON. BOB WEYGAND

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of debate over the past couple of months regarding the C–130 aircraft included in the FY99 National Security Appropriations bill. These planes have been referred to as wasteful, unnecessary pork. I must respectfully disagree. Continuation of the C–130 program is of critical importance to our national security because it allows for a more complete integration of the Air National Guard with their active duty counterparts.

Although these aircraft have provided consistent and reliable service to our country, some of the ANG's fleet of C–130s are approaching 40 years of service. After the numerous years of activity, time has taken its toll on the planes. Some of the aircraft are heavily corroded and nearing the end of their service life. Mr. Speaker, replacing outdated aircraft is not ''pork;'' it's an operational necessity. Replacing outdated aircraft is not ''pork'' it's a safety issue.

For example, the 143rd Airlift Group of the Rhode Island Air National Guard is one of six units in the country still using the C–130Es. The requirements of the ANG and the active forces have outgrown the capability of the C–130Es. The cost of maintaining and updating these 30-year-old planes to operationally safe standards exceeds the cost of the modern, more capable C–130J or H aircraft. In addition, the Rhode Island ANG planes lack defensive systems that are a necessity in today's global climate. In particular, Rhode Island's C–130s have documented corrosion due to their years of service in the Pacific.

While serving our nation in Operation Desert Storm/Shield, Operation Provide Hope and in Bosnia, the 143rd was forced to use aircraft from other states due to their own inadequate fleet. Despite this hardship, the 143rd performed admirably.

Modernization of the fleet is a priority of the ANG and replacing the C–130 aircraft is a significant component of their plan. The ANG has outlined a modernization roadmap to reach their goals. This roadmap, based on sound operational necessity, calls for allocating aircraft based on military need, a plan endorsed by Maj. Gen. Paul A. Weaver Jr., Director of the ANG. As I am sure you are aware, the 143rd is scheduled to receive the next eight C–130s, which moves the Air Guard one step closer to completing its modernization.

In my view, modernization of our forces is an absolute necessity if we are to maintain an effective national security strategy. By first replacing the oldest and most inefficient aircraft, we can ensure our armed forces will be well equipped should the time come to act. I believe allocating the eight C–130s will be a significant step toward modernizing the ANG's fleet.

HONORING THE PHILADELPHIA PROTESTANT HOME

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Philadelphia Protestant Home on the occasion of the grand opening of their new healthcare center, Pathways at PPH. This outstanding organization has a 108 year tradition of caring for the senior citizens of all faiths of Philadelphia.

Located in Northeast Philadelphia, PPH provides care for seniors from that area and the surrounding counties. Over the years, the nonprofit home has grown from one small rowhome on York Street to a bustling 12 acre campus housing over 500 residents. PPH offers independent living, assisted living, and skilled health care. PPH strives to provide quality, affordable care and to create an environment in which seniors can enjoy their retirement years to the fullest. That environment includes a full activities program with concerts, swimming, bowling, exercise classes, crafts, religious services, trips, and other events. Each year, PPH provides almost one million dollars in benevolent care for seniors who have exhausted their resources.

PPH strives to be a good neighbor and assist other community groups. They provide assistance to seniors who remain in their homes through their non-profit home healthcare agency, CareMasters of PPH. They contribute to the quality of life in their neighborhood by opening their facility to these groups so that they have a place to meet and conduct their work. They sponsor free community events and always try to assist seniors from the community and their families and caregivers.

Pathways at PPH was made possible, in part, through the generous donations of time and money from many PPH residents, employees, family members, community members, supporting congregations, PPH Ladies Auxiliary, local businesses, and numerous others. I am grateful to them for their support of the senior citizens of Philadelphia and commend them for their dedication and hard work.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. WILLIAM L. JENKINS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain my vote on House Resolution 525. Rollcall vote 425 took place on Friday, September 11. I was present and was participating on the floor during the vote, but failed to have my vote officially recorded by the electronic voting device. I wish to affirm that I fully support this resolution and would have been recorded as a ''yes'' if recorded electronically.

IN HONOR OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, a month long celebration beginning on September 15, and lasting until October 15.

America strives on the diversity of its people. As a nation, we pride ourselves on the fact that our national character is magnified by citizens who assert and respect cultural customs brought from other lands. Hispanics, nearly five-hundred years ago, came to this country in search of democracy, freedom and a better way of life.

Throughout history, Hispanic Americans have immensely contributed to the well-being and advancement of our nation. Through science, business, government, agriculture, academics and the Armed Forces, Hispanic Americans have made their presence known in American history. They have undauntedly fought to preserve democracy in America, having served in the United States Armed Forces in dimensions much larger than their percentage of the population.

Hispanic Heritage month is a time to acknowledge the contributions that Hispanic Americans have made to our country, and are continuing to make. Communities all over the nation are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, each in their own distinct manner. In Cleveland, the Cuyahoga Community College Hispanic Steering Council is coordinating the Festival Hispano, featuring performances, workshops and lectures celebrating Hispanic culture and tradition.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in sending a special thanks to the following organizations for their outstanding contributions to making the Cleveland Festival Hispano, such a success: Beck Center for Cultural Arts, Case Western Reserve University, Centro Cultural Hispano de Cleveland, City of Cleveland, The Cleveland Cinematheque, Cleveland State University, John Caroll University, Julia de Burgos Cultural Art Center, Cleveland Public Library, M.Q. Productions, Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio Hispanic Social Service Workers