doing now. Fully half of the children in this country that are uninsured qualify for either Medicaid or for the CHIP program. And we ought to make a better effort to do that. But when we look at providing better access for all Americans to health insurance, we need to be careful that we do not make the situation worse.

There are some ideas that are in a bill that may come to the floor that relate to expanding what are called association health plans or geographic association type health plans, called health marts, that we need to be careful of.

Madam Speaker, I have two letters here from the Blue Cross/Blue Shield organization and the Health Insurance Association of America that I will include for the RECORD.

BLUECROSS BLUESHIELD ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, July 13, 1998.

Hon. GREG GANSKE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GANSKE: We are writing to express our deep concerns about exempting Association Health Plans (AHPs) and certain Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs) from state law.

This unwise proposal has surfaced again, this time as part of a package of recommendations from the House Republican health care quality working group. BCBSA is concerned about many of the working group's recommendations, but we are particularly troubled by the AHP/MEWA provision.

For good reason, exempting AHPs/MEWAs from state law is strongly opposed by governors and other state officials, consumer groups, health professionals, major health insurance organizations and some small businesses. This proposal would:

Transfer regulation of these entities from states to an unprepared federal government. The Department of Labor has already testified that it does not now have the resources needed to adequately oversee the ERISA plans already under its purview. Consequently, exempting AHPs/MEWAs from state law would necessitate a substantial increase in federal regulators in order to set and enforce solvency standards and other consumer protections

Increase premiums for many small employers and dramatically hike rates for individuals who purchase their own coverage. By exempting AHPs/MEWAs from state law, the proposal would undermine state reforms that have improved the accessibility and affordability of health coverage, such as risk-spreading laws that assure cross-subsidization between low- and high-cost groups.

Decrease health coverage for those who use the most medical services. The proposal would give AHPs/MEWAs a strong incentive to cover only the healthiest people. As a result, sicker people—who are most in need of coverage—would be left in state-regulated insurance pools. Their premiums would increase as more health people joined AHPs/MEWAs, causing many to lose their health coverage.

Reduce funding for state programs to improve access to health coverage. Because AHPs/MEWAs would be exempt from state law, they would not have to contribute to state programs to improve access (e.g., high-risk pools), which are typically funded by assessments on small group health insurance premiums.

BCBSA shares the concerns of AHP/MEWA supporters who want to make health coverage more affordable for small businesses and others. But this proposal would undermine successful state reforms, increase premiums for many and decrease health coverage for those who need it the most.

When Congress considers the working group's proposal this summer, we urge you to oppose exempting AHPs/MEWAs from state law.

Sincerely,

MARY NELL LEHNHARD,
Senior vice President.
JACK ERICKSEN,
Executive Director, Congressional Relations.

JUNE 4, 1998.

Hon. GREG GANSKE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GANSKE: We are writing to express our opposition to proposals that would exempt certain health insurance arrangements, such as association health plan (AHPs) and multiple employer welfare arrangements (MEWAs), from state insurance law and regulatory authority.

We remain very concerned about proposals to preempt state regulatory of federally certified association health plans, including many MEWAs (e.g., H.R. 1515/S. 729). These proposals would undermine the most volatile segments of the insurance market—the individual and small group markets. AHPs could siphon off the healthy (e.g., through selective marketing or by eliminating coverage of certain benefits required by individuals with expensive illnesses), thus leading to significant premium increases for those who remain in the state-regulated pool. The ultimate result: an increase in the uninsured and only the sickest and highest risk individuals remaining in the states' insured market.

We have similar concerns regarding a proposal to create a new type of purchasing entity, called HealthMarts, which has not been reviewed via the committee hearing process. This proposal would exempt health plans offered through a HealthMart from state benefit standards and requirements to pool all small groups for rating purposes. As with AHPs, this proposal raises serious concerns regarding market segmentation and the ability of states to protect their residents. The combination of these two proposals could lead to massive market segmentation and regulatory confusion.

Moreover, these proposals, over time, would lead our nation toward increased federalization of health insurance regulation. Preemption of state regulatory authority would create a regulatory vacuum that would necessitate an exponential increase in federal bureaucracy and federal regulatory authority.

As representatives of the health insurance and health plan community, we are concerned about the issue of access to health coverage for small firms. However, we urge legislators to avoid legislation that unravels the market by helping a limited group of small employers at the expense of other individuals and small groups.

We look forward to an opportunity to work with you regarding proposals that expand coverage without damaging the small group and individual markets.

Sincerely,

BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD ASSOCIATION,
HEALTH INSURANCE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

Sometimes I agree with the insurance industry. In this situation I do. I think that association health plans can siphon off the healthy. They can thus lead to significant premium increases for those that remain in State-regulated insurance pools.

☐ 2000

The ultimate result could be an increase in the uninsured, and only the sickest and highest risk individuals remaining in the State's insurance market. We have to be very careful about those types of provisions.

Finally, Madam Speaker, let me just say that I appreciate the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), sticking to his word that we are going to have a debate on patient protection legislation next week. I hope that we will have a clean and fair rule that will allow the majority of the House to have its say on passing good, strong patient protection legislation.

I think that we have been working on this for about 4 years. It is a struggle when you are going up against an industry as powerful as the HMO industry. But despite the fact that they have spent about $100 million lobbying against this, money that should, in my opinion, have been spent on care for patients, the public overwhelmingly wants to see Congress pass a strong Patient Bill of Rights, strong patient protection legislation. They have heard from their friends, they have heard from family members, they have heard from fellow employees about problems with people in HMOs getting the kind of care that they should be getting, and they are scared that that could happen to their own family and their own children. They just want a fair chance at reversing an arbitrary denial of care because some of those decisions, as I pointed out in my speech tonight, and countless hundreds or thousands of others that I could talk about have resulted in injury to people, and it is occurring every day that goes by without our having this debate, Madam Speaker.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join with the 300 endorsing organizations, support H.R. 2723, avoid believing the distortions that the industry is putting out about this bill. The sky will not fall, HMOs will continue. In fact, they will be better HMOs if we pass this legislation.

WHERE WE ARE WITH DRUG POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GRANGER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to come back to the floor tonight, and as usual on Tuesday nights, I try to address the House and the American people on the subject of the illegal narcotics situation. As I have stated many times on the floor of the House of Representatives, I take this issue very seriously.

I chair the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human

Resources of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight charged with the responsibility of trying to coordinate and get back on track our war on drugs. And I do say get back on track our war on drugs because, as I have stated many times in detail, last week in my remarks, the war on drugs basically was closed down in 1993 with the beginning of the Clinton administration. When the Clinton-Gore administration controlled both the White House, they controlled substantial majorities in the House of Representatives, in the United States Senate, and in 2 years of domination completely destroyed, completely dismantled almost all of our international narcotics efforts, took apart the cost-effective source country programs that stopped drugs very cost effectively in their production, in their route, at their source in the countries that produce them.

Then, of course, the administration, working with the majority in Congress, gutted nearly half the amount of money for interdiction, in a very short period of time dismantled almost all of the programs that interdicted drugs at the second stages from the source. First, destroyed those programs, interdiction where you caught them cost effectively at the second level of before entry to our borders, cut those programs in half, use of the military almost decimated, use of the Coast Guard in areas like Puerto Rico which saw an incredible influx of illegal narcotics from throughout the Caribbean and then transited it into the United States, even into Central Florida, my home area of central Florida from Orlando to Daytona Beach, one of the victims of that failed policy.

Then additionally, Madam Speaker, adopting a very liberal policy as far as our national leadership on the issue, soft on the issues, a national health officer, Jocelyn Elders, said just say maybe, and our kids took that at face value, and we have seen the dramatic results among, particularly among, our young people who were so susceptible, we found, to that soft message sent out of the White House and out of the administration and sent out of the Congress. Again, a short time in which they controlled all these mechanisms, but a lot of damage was done.

Now, digging our way out again, we have increased source country programs. We are getting them almost back to the 1992 levels. The interdiction programs' involvement of the military, the Coast Guard, almost back again to the 1992 levels. And education program which we have no match. For which again, I credit the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) who is now Speaker of the House who helped secure funding for that program in the last Congress under his leadership as a chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security on which I served with him that had drug policy jurisdiction. Education.

And of course, contrary to what is out there, the Geraldo Riveras and the others who give these programs about how the war on drugs is a failure, they do not have a clue. Of course we never mention that the war on drugs, in fact, was closed down by the liberal elements. But, in fact, the war on drugs is successful when it is multi-faceted, as I said, where it deals with stopping drugs at their source, interdicting drugs, a strong education program.

And, of course, the Riveras and others will not tell you that in the Clinton agenda most of the money went for solely, treatment. The increases from 1993 to 1995—1996 nearly doubled for treatment, and they continue to double. And, of course, we think treatment, this new majority does, is a very critical part to any multi-faceted and effective anti-narcotics program. But by itself it is sort of like treating only the wounded in a battle, and we cannot just be taking in the casualties, treating them and sending them back out or allowing them just the alternative of a life of addiction as we compared with Baltimore last week.

Madam Speaker, Baltimore now has the distinction of probably 60,000 addicts in a liberal Clinton-Gore type policy which has enslaved almost one-tenth. A Council person from Baltimore said it is one in eight who are now victims of addiction. And that is the liberal policy as opposed to the Giuliani zero tolerance, tough enforcement approach and the approach that the majority in this Congress, the new majority in this Congress, has adopted.

So we know that stopping illegal narcotics at their source is very cost effective, works. We have seen dramatic decreases in Bolivia, Peru, two countries which were really the major sources of coca and cocaine production. Now that has shifted to Colombia because mostly, as I pointed out and documented very well last week, of the Clinton-Gore policy that stopped all assistance, all aid, closed down the war on drugs basically in Colombia so that Colombia is now the largest producer. And the little programs that were started under this Republican majority in Peru and Bolivia have now dramatically cut, and again with small expenditures, production there.

But again it closed down the shoot-down policy; it closed down the assistance programs, a close-down of the cooperation in providing intelligence to Colombia. It destroyed those programs and now has Colombia, which was really not a coca producer, a producer of the raw source, it was a producer as far as transforming of the coca and processing it into cocaine is now the major producer in the world of cocaine, a great achievement that the Clinton-Gore administration has managed to pull off in less than 6 short years.

And now, of course, we have the rampage of heroin. Again, 6 years ago, almost no heroin coming from Colombia. Now the largest source of heroin in the United States grown in Colombia, a byproduct of the Clinton-Gore failed foreign policy towards Colombia. And the solution as they run to the Congress, whether it is Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, or wherever is more money and funds. And, of course, we will be saddled with an estimated $1 billion request which is coming forth to the Congress to help solve the problem that suddenly sprung up in Colombia that actually they created with a failed policy over the last 4 or 5 years.

So that is where we were last week, and tonight I want to talk about where we are with drug policy. Some things happened in the House of Representatives, in fact, just the last few days. Those who watch the House of Representatives may have watched a resolution that was brought up by my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) asking for fair and free elections in Haiti. Now this, my colleagues, is the same Haiti that had the same failed policy that was adopted by this administration that sort of got us in this mess and at no small expense to the American taxpayers or the Congress.

Now stop and think about this. We went in to save Haiti, and we went in by a Clinton-Gore method of destroying Haiti by imposing an embargo which I spoke out very actively against. I had been to Haiti many times, knew a little bit about Haiti. It is the poorest Nation in the western hemisphere. People there make about a dollar a day, and we imposed an economic embargo.

□ 2015

What we did with this Clinton war solution was we closed down 100,000 manufacturing jobs that supported almost 1 million Haitians, and almost all those manufacturing opportunities were owned by U.S. employers who had worked with Haitians to start a little bit of a real economy in a land that had known nothing but poverty. It really is the saddest case. Haitians are some of the most wonderful people I have ever met on the face of the Earth. So we imposed an economic embargo.

What that did was it destroyed any business that might have been legitimate in Haiti, and it turned these folks of this island into basically a liberal Clinton-Gore type welfare state, sort of a socialized system where they relied on Federal funding really from Washington, D.C. to supply food stations and foreign aid and assistance.

I remember talking to the ambassador and others, like what did you do after we imposed this embargo and we sent our troops in? Recall, we spent over $3 billion on this nation-building experiment that has turned into such a disaster that here we are on the floor of the House of Representatives passing a resolution saying can you participate in free elections and can you stop the corruption with your police and with your government?

This is after those billions and billions of American taxpayer dollars were spent for nation-building programs, institution-building programs.

If you stop and look, they are spending American taxpayer money on teaching them how to be legislators, and they could not even convene their legislature; teaching them how to be political people; teaching them law enforcement, and here we have one of the highest levels of corruption in the entire hemisphere, some 4 or 5 years later, and billions and billions of American taxpayer dollars down the drain.

But I did ask the question to the ambassador and the others involved after we sent our troops in there, and we have got established, what have you done to bring back businesses to help American businesses in partnerships which we had started with Haiti before this embargo? Basically, they had done very little or nothing.

Even to this day, they still do not get it. They think that the way to nation-build is to provide just the institutional assistance and not real sound economic development. You can spend all the American taxpayer money you want in the world in Haiti; and until you have some real market activity, tourism, manufacturing, things that create jobs, some agriculture that allows them to provide for themselves, the handout programs do not work. Yet we have done this.

How embarrassing it must be for this administration and this Congress to stand here in the last few days and pass a resolution asking them to sort of clean up their act, after spending billions in this nation-building.

The reason I cite that as a failed Clinton-Gore policy in relation to narcotics is because we have seen the corruption of the police force there. Allegations have been filed on members of the Haitian National Police Force accusing them of a wave of murders, disappearance of detainees and drug-related crimes and other illegal activities. These are the latest reports that we have had.

The United States, in the billions we spent, we spent $75 million to help train and build the police force, and the police department has had to dismiss over 530 officers over the last 4 years for corruption.

This little report in the Tuesday, September 28, Washington Post Foreign Service said, and it quotes a Colin Granderson, ''If you are asking me whether I am more concerned about rot in the police than a year ago, the answer is yes,'' said Colin Granderson, Executive Director of an international civilian mission here in Port-au-Prince, run by the Organization of American States and the United Nations.

Let me quote him further. He says, ''We have both human rights concerns and concerns about the broader conduct of officers, specifically with respect to criminal activity, in particular drug smuggling.''

Now, if that is not the crown jewel of the accomplishments of the Clinton-Gore administration. We spent billions of dollars, we have an economy that is defunct, we have corruption in the political levels unknown to the Western Hemisphere, and we again have spent a fortune in these training and assistance and aid and handout programs. And what do we have? We have Haiti being named as one of the drug smuggling centers of the Western Hemisphere.

It was interesting too in checking into the airport just this past weekend, I noticed, I think it was with, I believe, Nigeria, but I am not certain about that, but there was one other nation mentioned, as you enter the security, it says ''Please note that these airports in these countries are not in compliance with international security.''

There was one other country, and, again I do not recall if it was Nigeria, but I do know very well that the second country named in the list was Haiti and Port-au-Prince Airport.

What a great distinction, again, Clinton-Gore policy, on spending these billions on destroying the economy and real market activity and instituting a social handout program, the institutional training by all these ''experts,'' and we have drug smuggling; and we have one of the worst security risk airports in the world cited as, again, in Haiti.

So I am very concerned about what has taken place there. I am even more concerned now that Haiti has become a haven for illegal narcotics activity.

Tonight I also want to go sort of around the hemisphere and talk in addition about Colombia, which I mentioned last week. I will review it again tonight, and about Haiti, another third Clinton-Gore failure of policy.

I cannot give 100 percent credit to President Clinton and Vice President Gore for this disaster. This took a combination of leadership. It started with President Carter, who negotiated the turnover of the Panama Canal, and maybe it was rightful and just for the United States to eventually cede back the canal to Panama, but it did take an administration that was in place in the past year or two to begin some of the final negotiations for departure of American interests and personnel from Panama.

Here again when they write the history books, they will have, of course, Somalia and Haiti and Colombia; but another crown jewel of policy failure has to be Panama.

I did not take over the subcommittee until January; but, again, I served with Speaker HASTERT who was then Chair of the subcommittee.

Everyone has known that the United States' lease was up, that we had to be out of Panama by the end of 1999, December 31. That was a given. The question was the negotiations; the question was the resources that we had there. Most Americans do not know it, but we had over $10 billion in assets, American assets, over 5,500 buildings in Panama.

When I assumed chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, I went down to Panama early on and met with our folks in charge there. I also stopped in Miami and met with our SOUTHCOM officials who were also responsible for DOD operations in that area.

We were told then that the administration was negotiating a withdrawal of United States troops that in particular had been involved in the interdiction effort and the surveillance effort through South America and Central America. We had been doing, I believe, up to 15,000 flights from Howard Air Force Base in an FOL, forward operating location, surveillance for international narcotics trafficking.

We knew that our time was limited, but we knew that we must negotiate with the Panamanians. We might not have been able to keep a military presence, but certainly it was in everyone's interest in the region and the hemisphere for the United States to continue these narcotics flights to the south and cover all of South and Central America, where we have the problems.

We know all of the cocaine in the world comes from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. We know that 80 percent of the heroin entering the United States is produced and comes from Colombia, and it all travels up through that region. So that is why the Howard Air Force Base operations were critically important to that forward oversight and surveillance mission. We were told that negotiations were under way when I visited there and met with officials and this would all be done.

What happened, in fact, is May 1, Howard Air Force Base was basically closed down as far as further flights. The United States was summarily kicked out. The negotiations failed. Our State Department failed in negotiations to continue the drug flights. So in a mad scurry, the Department of State began, along with the Department of Defense, to find new locations.

They did bring us rather late to the gate several alternatives. One was Aruba and Curacao in the Dutch Antilles and the other was in Manta, Ecuador. Of course, the price tag now may reach one-quarter of a billion dollars before we are through relocating these, but we have closed down all operations.

There has been a huge gap in surveillance of those drug and illegal narcotic activities in the time that the negotiations failed and alternatives were being explored and pursued.

To date, I do not believe that we have in place, either with Aruba, Curacao and the Netherlands, and I have met recently with the Dutch officials on this issue and I do not think there is anything new, but we do not have a long-term agreement on an operation there. So it is very difficult for us to take American taxpayer money and put it into this location for facilities, improvements or operations.

Some of those operations are up. We are still at a very low percentage, less than 50 percent, of the flights that we

had prior to May 1. So we have lost 5,500 buildings; we lost $10 billion in assets, no opportunity to opt out of Howard, and now the taxpayer is going to pay for moving these operations to the Antilles and to Ecuador.

In Ecuador the situation is even more dismal. The country there has had economic and political turmoil. We do not have a permanent agreement in place, and even though Manta, Ecuador, where the facility is to be located, is a good forward operating location, it will take even more dollars than suspected; and we have had additional requests already from the administration to put our forward operating locations in.

So both of those are still up in the air. Again, another crown jewel in failure to be prepared, failure to negotiate with the Panamanians. For possibly the payment of a small amount, we might have retained our bases and operations just for the narcotics operation, a great savings to the taxpayers, but yet have an ideal location where we were already operating out of. Now we are operating on sort of a half-baked fashion, half-performance fashion, at great cost to the taxpayers.

If we had not lost just Howard Air Force Base and closed down the operations there, the situation, again as it affects the United States, is very serious. I was pleased to read just yesterday, I believe it was, yesterday's National Media, that the Senate majority leader, TRENT LOTT, has asked the Senate Armed Services Committee to conduct hearings on China's growing presence around the Panama Canal, a strategic waterway, which is, of course, being transferred to Panamanian control.

I am very pleased that the majority leader of the other body is in fact focusing attention, because what I learned in not only my visit to Panama in anticipation of problems and requesting the administration to take action so we did not get ourselves into this pickle, but what I found out about what had already taken place or was taking place as far as possible future strategic damage to the security interests of the hemisphere and the United States in particular, I believe, again, we have missed our mark, that we have a failed policy, that we have allowed also the ports, both on the Pacific side and on the Caribbean side, I believe it is Cristobal and Balboa, now to fall into the hands of possibly Red Chinese interests.

□ 2030

Let me just cite from this report. The Hutchinson–Whampoa, Limited, the Hong Kong based company that won a long-term shipping contract to operate two canal ports, is rumored to have Chinese military and intelligence ties.

I have been personally told, and it has been confirmed by the director of our National Office of Narcotics Control, our Drug Czar, that he believes that the tenders that were conducted thereto and contracts for these ports were not above the board and that these contracts and tenders were done in a corrupt fashion. That has been confirmed by many others.

But now we have possible links to Chinese military and intelligence as far as controlling interests in both of these ports. It is important to the United States because the United States is the number one user of the canal, which carries 13,000 ships per year.

Panama has always served as a major transit area for illegal narcotics. If my colleagues will recall, the reason the United States sent troops, and American troops died on Panamanian soil when Noriega was the President and dictator of that country, George Bush's policy was to go in and route out illegal narcotics trafficking. We knew Noriega was involved. We knew he was corrupt. We knew he was involved in money laundering.

George Bush's solution was to tackle the problem and go after Noriega, who is in United States prison. That is some only 10 years ago. American men and others lost their lives in that battle to reclaim the strategic interests.

Here we are signing away and giving away that interest. What is interesting is that one of the things that was done with the fall of Noriega was really the dispersal of the Panamanian military. There is almost no military in Panama today, just a national police force.

That creates a very difficult situation, because most of the illegal narcotics transiting up through the isthmus of Panama into Central America and Mexico and across the U.S. border must again come through that area and under the control of either military or police.

There being no Panamanian military, we have a great problem with a force that is small, inadequate, and, at times, sometimes subject to corruption again with large amounts of money in the drug trade.

We also have the terrible problem of the insurgency that is in Colombia, which I spoke about last week, the Marxist insurgency, of which there is no line between the insurgency and Marxist guerilla and narco-trafficking. They are supported. They are intertwined. Our Drug Czar has said one cannot tell the difference between the line.

These Marxist forces are now going from Colombia, which borders Panama, into Panama and making incursions further into Panama which is weaker and more corrupt.

My prediction is that the United States will end up again some years down the pike, when the corruption becomes so bad, when narcotic trafficking becomes so bad, and, again, will pay the price, hopefully not in American lives, but to take back our interests.

We are not interested in running Panama, but securing for the entire hemisphere that strategic location, that strategic transportation link between the two seas. I am pleased that the Majority Leader is taking action, as again reported, and demanding hearings on that issue.

In addition to the fiasco in Panama, tonight I wanted to again mention that the statistics, the information that we have on illegal narcotics, the effect of illegal narcotics in our country, particularly among our young people and our population at large, is becoming more and more serious.

I come from an area that has had more deaths by heroin overdoses than homicides. If one stops and thinks about that, people think of crime and murder and its ravages and guns destroying lives. But illegal narcotics overdoses, particularly heroin, in Central Florida now exceed homicides.

As one parent who lost a son told me at a hearing, drug overdoses are homicides. I am always reminded of his comments. But we have seen that impact in Central Florida; and now, unfortunately, we see it repeated across our Nation, not only with heroin, but with methamphetamines, with cocaine.

One thing that I started to mention at the end of my remarks last week and really did not get it in is the difference that we are seeing between the cocaine and the heroin of the 1980s and the 1970s and even the marijuana.

We will talk about marijuana tonight too, about the difference in the drugs that are on the streets and in the marketplace and also being used by our young people and why we have so many deaths and destruction of lives.

First of all, in the 1970s and 1980s, the heroin and cocaine that was on the street had sometimes a 6 and 7 percent purity, 100 percent being pure. It was 6 or 7. Sometimes strong stuff might have reached 9 percent purity.

Today, through the processing, through the chemistry, through the product that is being produced and entering this country of heroin and cocaine, the purity levels are 70, 80 percent. These narcotics are deadly substances. Basically people are dealing in death and destruction. That is why we are having this epidemic of deaths among young people.

I do not have this past week's statistics, but I had just several cites from the Orlando area: One 30-year-old woman who died of an overdose of cocaine. That is powerful, deadly cocaine. Heroin, several heroin deaths I cited. One, a 12-year-old boy went in and found his father who had overdosed on heroin. That is deadly heroin.

Particularly our young people, sometimes the first time they use it, they mix it with alcohol or some other substance, and they go into convulsions, and they are history. But that is the difference that we see.

Even the marijuana today, the levels of purity are much higher. I believe it is the TCH levels that are substantially higher than anything that we have ever seen. Scientific studies have

shown that the damage that is done to the brain through these high levels of purity is substantial.

I was interested to note, I got a report, again, as chair of this Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Relations, about substance abuse and addiction to substances by our teenagers and young people. I would have thought maybe alcohol might be up there. I was absolutely stunned to see that the vast, vast majority of addiction and treatment is for marijuana, that these young people become, addicted to this high purity level.

I have met, we have a Stewart Marchman Center in the Daytona Beach area, and I have sat at a little round table with young people there and also down in Orlando, the Center For Drugfree Living, have met with young people there without and, some instances, with counselors and talked to them confidentially about their involvement.

Almost all of them had become victims of this high grade of marijuana that destroys their motivation, that begins to affect their performance, their routine, their ambitions, and, again, leads to addiction and crime in many instances.

We have an incredible problem. The national drug crisis, I always try to cite some statistics about the problem. Tonight, let me just mention that, in 1998, more than three-quarters, that is 78 percent, of high school teens report that drugs are sold and kept at their schools, a 6 percent increase over 1996. That is even with some of the education programs that have been instituted. So, indeed, we have a problem. That is part of a CSA teen study in 1998.

From 1993, and again remember 1993 was the close-down of the war on drugs, to 1997, a youth aged 12 to 17 using illegal drugs has more than doubled. That is again, we had the time that the Clinton-Gore administration ruled supreme. They controlled the House and Senate. They closed down some of the programs I spoke about. The results are pretty dramatic: 120 percent increase in illegal drug use by our 12 to 17 year olds. There has been a 17 percent increase between 1996 and 1997 alone. That is a 1998 national household survey.

The overall number of past month heroin users increased a startling 378 percent from 1993 to 1997. That is part of the inheritance, I believe, also of this liberal policy to just say maybe, the Joselyn Elders approach of, if it feels good, do it.

For kids 12 to 17, first-time heroin use, which is proven to kill, that surged a whopping 875 percent from 1992 to 1996, again dramatic figures that are a result of a failed policy. There was no war on drugs, remember, from 1993, the beginning of the Clinton-Gore administration, until just several years ago with a new majority and restarting all of the efforts that are necessary to combat illegal narcotics.

The other failed policy I would like to talk about tonight is a very serious failed policy. I talked some about Haiti. I talked about Panama, reiterated the problems that we have had in Colombia, which I detailed last week. Tonight, I must talk about Mexico.

I have spoken probably more than anyone in the House of Representatives about the problems with Mexico and illegal narcotics trafficking. But the story is a very important story in our war on drugs, because the majority of illegal narcotics, whether it is marijuana, heroin, cocaine, all come through Mexico.

When we went to Panama, we also met with Mexican officials early this year and asked for their cooperation and assistance. We reviewed what Mexico has done. We reviewed what this Congress has done for Mexico and the American people as good friends and neighbors and allies. We have millions of Mexican-Americans who are productive citizens.

The picture, unfortunately, about what this Mexican Government and Mexican officials have done, the picture is very sad. Indeed, the problem again is that we have an estimated 70 percent of the cocaine coming from Mexico. We have 50 percent of the marijuana and 20 percent of the heroin in the United States now coming through our southwest border.

Last week, on Friday morning, I conducted a hearing on the southwest border. When we came back from Mexico, we stopped at the border and met with our officials, and they basically told us, Members of Congress in charge of national drug control policy, that the situation on our southwest border dealing with illegal narcotics is out of control.

□ 2045

It is disorganized. It is in disarray. There is a lack of communication, a lack of coordination. And that is of great concern.

Dealing again as chair of this Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, and with billions of dollars involved in some of these efforts in these agencies, we wanted to see specific results. I was pleased that our drug czar Barry McCaffrey came in and testified, and he told me beforehand he was glad that we conducted a hearing on the Hill on the southwest border because it gave him additional clout to deal with these agencies, and also the opportunity to bring them together to see what was working and what was not working.

And that was the purpose of our mission, and our exchange last Friday at our meeting. We know that there have been some successes in 1998. The U.S. Customs Service seized 32,000 pounds of cocaine, 150,000 pounds of marijuana, and 407 pounds of heroin. We also heard testimony that reconfirmed what we had heard in our site visit back at the early part of this year, that the Customs agency does not talk to the INS and the INS does not talk to the DEA and the DEA does not talk to the FBI and other agencies, again 23 agencies that deal with border interdiction and four cabinet level posts, are not all operating in sync.

And we certainly have seen the results of some of the narcotics trafficking that has occurred along this border. Let me just tell my colleagues a little bit about what we heard at our hearing about border violence.

In April 1998, four marijuana smugglers, dealing with that so-called harmless marijuana on the west side of Nogales, Arizona, assassinated a United States border patrol agent. His name was Alex Kurpnick, and committed murder in a so-called harmless trafficking of illegal marijuana.

We have heard of increased violence against United States border patrol agents, with more rock throwing, laser beam pointing and actual incoming fire from Nogales, Mexico. All this we heard is on the increase. In Santa Cruz County, Arizona, along the border, the majority of crimes committed there are drug related.

In March of 1999, a few months ago, Phoenix police department officer, Mark Atkinson, was killed when he was ambushed by a Mexican illegal alien teen. His name was Felipe Petrona-Cabanas, who was involved specifically in drug dealings.

In July 1999, three apparent sniper attacks, possibly by the same gunman, within a 45-minute period, were aimed at United States border patrol agents from El Centro, California. Again, we heard of more situations along our border with Mexican illegal narcotics trafficking raising havoc, and again problems with our agency coordination and efforts to combat this problem.

In border violence there have been 151 documented incidents from January 1, 1999, to date involving violence toward Federal law enforcement officers along our southern borders. In 1998, there were 140 instances of border violence.

The drug smuggling along the border continues to take on even more sophisticated techniques. I think some of my colleagues may have read about the Santa Cruz Metro Task Force which recently uncovered two secretly dug tunnels that connected to Nogales, Mexico. The tunnel was designed to smuggle drugs across the border. It was also discovered from the Tijuana National Airport to the outskirts of San Diego. So these drug traffickers become even more and more clever in their approach.

All this is very interesting, again as far as the violence and the problems and the disorganization of our agencies, and it would be fodder for congressional investigation on its own, if we did not look at the efforts that we have made to increase the number of border patrol agents, the Southwest Strategy as it is called. In the last 6 years, the border patrol agents have increased from 3,928 to 8,027. In the same 6-year

period, the INS budget, Immigration and Naturalization Service, who has a large activity along the border, their budget has increased from approximately $1.5 billion to nearly $4 billion. During the same period, the INS staff grew from approximately 17,000 employees to 28,000 full-time employees as of June of this year.

So it is not that the Congress has not put an effort into this border problem. The problem is that we have put the funds there and we still do not have the cooperation and the effectiveness to deal with this situation.

Now, each of the agencies who came before our subcommittee promised to do better and to work together. That remains to be seen. But, again, we will try to keep the pressure on to see that American taxpayer dollars, which have been heavily loaded in this effort, are more effectively expended.

Again, we have received these problems from our good friend and ally Mexico, and I want to talk a little bit about the country that gave us these problems. Mexico has been a good ally. We have many, many Mexican Americans who are loyal citizens and very productive. But the government of Mexico has failed to cooperate on almost every front.

This is another one of the crown jewels of the failed Clinton-Gore administration policy. They gave them NAFTA, which was probably the best trade deal ever created by the United States Congress, a trade agreement that is unparalleled in the history of international negotiations. Great trade advantages to Mexico. We put our people out of business, lost jobs across the Nation, and gave them great economic opportunity.

We once had a positive trade balance, and now we have a huge trade deficit. They are pouring their goods in, which are produced across the border with lower wages, lower standards, lower environmental requirements across the board. It is not a level playing field, but we gave them those benefits.

When they got in financial trouble, what did we do? This administration bailed them out. We bailed them out with an unprecedented number of dollars in financial support. They have gotten as a nation and an ally and friend almost every advantage possible.

And what have they given us? We ask and we require, in order to get trade and foreign aid and assistance, we ask the President and the Secretary of State to certify each year to Congress that they are cooperating in stopping illegal narcotics production and trafficking. That is the drug certification law. In other words, if they cooperate, they get this assistance. If they do not, they are supposed to be decertified. Each time, Clinton-Gore has certified Mexico as cooperating.

The worst insult was in the last year. And I want my colleagues to look at these figures from 1998. Mexican drug seizures. We asked them to help in seizing illegal narcotics, and this is what we got: from 1997 to 1998, in seizing heroin, a drop of 56 percent; in seizing cocaine, a drop of 35 percent. Is this cooperation?

This Congress passed 2 years ago a resolution asking Mexico to help in signing a maritime agreement. To date, they have not signed a maritime agreement.

We asked for protection of our agents, because some years ago Enrique Camarena, a United States drug enforcement agent, was tortured and died in a horrible death and slaughtered like an animal by Mexican drug dealers. So we have asked for protection of our small number of agents, and we still do not have those guarantees of protection.

We asked for enforcement of laws. They pass laws in Mexico, but they do not enforce them. And what did we get? We got kicked in the teeth like no other nation has been kicked in the teeth after giving them incredible trade benefits. What did they do? We started a sting operation in Mexico, because we knew, and we had reports of incredible amounts of money laundering. In fact, this operation was called Operation Casablanca by our customs agents. Our customs agents discovered the biggest money laundering operation in the history of the world.

In fact, in testimony that we had by one former Customs agent, he told us that he was in the process of trying to money launder over $1.1 billion for a Mexican official, who was identified as a cabinet member, possibly a secretary of defense, and possibly with ties to the president of Mexico, the current president of Mexico.

Now, we know the former president, Salinas, and his brother and family, were up to their eyeballs in illegal narcotics and money laundering and every sort of crime; but, again, we had testimony before our subcommittee about what was going on there. Instead of cooperation, instead of enforcing the laws, they threatened to expel and even to arrest our United States customs agents. This is a travesty.

What was very interesting, and what I think warrants, what I think warrants investigation, and I am going to ask the director of the FBI to look into it, is the latest death of a former Deputy Attorney General who died awaiting trial here. In a suicide note, he died a few weeks ago, he implicated Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo and members of the country's ruling party in the slaying of his brother. He also said that the Mexican Government is opposing a push by the United States Congress to level major penalties against business ties to drug traffickers. This is additional information that we have gotten.

What is sad is that we have information now that implicates even the highest office. What is sad is that the initial investigation of the money laundering of $1.1 billion was basically closed down by our Department of Justice, closed down by our Customs operation. That is even after comments by individuals like Tom Constantine, who is the former head of DEA, who said, ''In my lifetime, I have never witnessed any group of criminals that has had such a terrible impact on so many individuals and communities in our Nation. Corruption among Mexican antidrug authorities was unparalleled with anything I have seen in 39 years of police work.''

The story gets even more difficult as we look into the evidence that continues to arise about the level of corruption with Mexican officials at every level. We have reports now that the Baja Peninsula, the western state connected to California, is now almost entirely under the control of illegal narcotics traffickers. We have reports that the Yucatan Peninsula is also in a similar state and other States of Mexico.

So we have been good friends. We have been good allies. And every report that we get paints an even grimmer picture.

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Finally, we asked the Mexicans to extradite major drug kingpins. The United States, on November 13, 1997, entered into and signed a protocol to the current extradition treaty with Mexico. This protocol has been ratified by the other body, the United States Senate; and it still has not been ratified by the Mexican parliamentarians.

This is a very sad state of affairs, again an example of failed Clinton policy granting them certification and granting them trade, granting them financial assistance, and getting in return none of the requests of this Congress, failure of cooperation in narcotics.

Mexico today has the crown and glory of being the major drug transport area from Colombia through Mexico, again the largest source of illegal narcotics entering the United States, a very dismal picture presented and brought to my colleagues, unfortunately, by this administration.

Hopefully, working with this new Congress, we can turn this around, we can get the resources to Colombia, we can take a tougher stand with Mexico, we can continue to hold hearings, make the American people and the Congress aware of this situation, and reverse this sad state of affairs with our closest ally, our closest friend, in exporting to the United States terror, death, and destruction in the form of illegal narcotics trade and business.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to conclude at this time and, hopefully, be back next week with another report on the problem of illegal narcotics and how it impacts both this Congress, the American people, and the next generation. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to: