

I have gathered that indicates that receiverships in the District of Columbia have been run largely unfettered by systematic supervision; guidelines for performance; monitoring to assure that promised actions are taken, and improvements achieved; cost and efficiency accountability; and other measures to assure that the agency is returned to the District promptly and in good condition.

The only District of Columbia agency to go promptly through receivership and emerge in good condition has been the D.C. Housing Authority. Its receiver, David Gilmore, demonstrated rare management and human relations talent. A Superior Court decision appointing a receiver for special education services for the District's juvenile detention center has been overturned by the D.C. Court of Appeals. Information concerning the other agencies in receivership have raised such serious questions that D.C. Subcommittee Chairman TOM DAVIS and I have requested GAO reports on all of the outstanding receiverships: Child and Family Services, the Commission on Mental Health Services, and the Corrections Medical Receiver for the D.C. Jail. However, information that we now have has led Chairman DAVIS and I to conclude that immediate legislation to assure adequate supervision of the agencies involved cannot await the completion of the GAO reports on these three agencies. Additional legislation may be necessary after completion of the GAO reports, but the bill we propose today is clearly necessary now to assure the safety and well-being of D.C. residents and cost effective reform of the receivership agencies.

Most of the outstanding receiverships appear to have similar problems, but the Child and Family Services receivership, appointed in 1995 by the U.S. District Court, caused special concern by D.C. officials and congressional members after the death of the infant, Brianna Blackmond. Brianna who was returned to her mother, after a judgment found that she neglected Brianna and her seven siblings, with apparent signoff from the court, lawyers, the child's advocate, and the social workers involved. Since the baby's death, no fair assessment of what went wrong, or fact-finding hearing by a court, and no effective remedial action to correct the problem, or assurance that more deaths of children might not occur, has been forthcoming. Instead, there have been reports of chaos and further deterioration in the agency. Chairman DAVIS has set a hearing on the Child and Family Services Agency receivership for April 14, 2000.

The Commission on Mental Health, charged with providing community-based and institutional mental health care to indigent residents of the District, was placed in receivership in 1997. The receiver has resigned and not only have the services not improved, but the plaintiffs agreed in a negotiated settlement to terminate the receivership because the agency appears to be in worse condition than when it was placed in receivership. Consequently, the court and all of the parties have agreed to a transition plan, and an interim receiver has been appointed by the court to return control of the agency to the city by April 1, 2001.

Medical services in the D.C. Jail were placed in receivership by the U.S. District Court in 1995 for a period of five years. Recently, the receiver let a contract at a cost three times the national average without comparing program and cost estimates regionally

or nationally, and over the objections of the Corrections Trustee appointed pursuant to the 1997 Revitalization Act. The contract was given to an entity consisting of employees of the present receiver who have never had a contract before and whose only contract and only revenue would come from this D.C.-financed contract. In response to concerns I expressed, the court-appointed monitor detailed services provided without indicating if other jurisdictions provide similar services and asserted that medical conditions in the District were worse than other jurisdictions. However, she made no mention of the nearest comparable jurisdiction, the Baltimore Jail medical services, which also are operated by a private contractor pursuant to District Court supervision. The court monitor cited diseases at the D.C. Jail, which undoubtedly are found in big city jail populations throughout the country, and did not indicate why the District should have the same elevated costs and staffing levels now with presumably revitalized systems as it had under emergency conditions in the first years of receivership. The court monitor did not indicate why comparative costs assessments were never undertaken or what standards should guide a cost effective system and what completion of the receivership and return of control to the District should entail. No comprehensive outside professional audit was undertaken before the receiver approved large, ongoing costs for jail medical services.

Thus, three out of four of the existing receiverships present such substantial problems that Chairman TOM DAVIS and I have agreed that action to ensure higher standards and cost accountability cannot wait. The District of Columbia Receivership Accountability Act places affirmative duties on all receivers who are appointed by either Federal or D.C. courts to administer any department, agency, or office of the government of the District of the District of Columbia. These duties are:

First, best practices: The bill places an affirmative duty on each receiver to conduct all operations consistent with the best practices and financial stability and management efficiency of the District of Columbia.

Second, annual audit by the District's Inspector General: Each receiver must submit to an annual financial and program audit conducted by the Inspector General of the District of Columbia.

Third, controlling costs: Each receiver must ensure that costs are consistent with applicable regional and national standards (including personnel costs), except that this requirement may be waived during any initial two-year emergency period of the receivership.

Fourth, consultation with city officials on the budget: In preparing the annual budget for the entity in receivership, the receiver must consult with the Mayor and Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia. After this consultation, the receiver must prepare and submit her budget to the Mayor for inclusion in the city's annual budget. The Council may comment and make recommendations on the receiver's budget estimates.

Fifth, procurement practices: When entering into contracts, each receiver must fully comply with the procurement procedures of the District of Columbia and work through the District's procurement officials.

The bill applies to all receivers appointed beginning with 1995. Existing receivers must

comply with the requirements of this bill beginning with fiscal year 2001. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN, INC., 17TH ANNUAL FOUNDER'S DAY LUNCHEON—
"LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND: MOVING STRATEGICALLY INTO THE MILLENNIUM"

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2000

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, March 18, 2000, the National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (NCNW), North Shore Area Section (NSAS) is sponsoring its 17th Annual Founder's Celebration Luncheon at Fort Monmouth, NJ.

On that occasion, the annual Mahala Field Atchison Award will be presented to Dorothy McNish, an NSAS member. Since 1989, this award has been presented annually to a member of the North Shore Area Section, in memory of Mrs. Atchinson, an exemplary educator and humanitarian. Her lifelong devotion to enriching the lives of children and making our community a better place has been recognized in many ways. In 1973, the Primary School on Sycamore Avenue in Tinton Falls, NJ, was renamed Mahala F. Atchinson School. It is indeed a significant honor for Ms. McNish to receive this award, and I am proud to pay tribute to her on this occasion.

The keynote speaker at Saturday's event will be Major General Robert Nabors, the Commander of the U.S. Army's CECOM (Communications Electronics Command) at Fort Monmouth. Major General Nabors has been the Commander at CECOM since September 1, 1998. He has served our country in numerous posts, both internationally in Vietnam, Korea, Germany, and Italy, and domestically, most recently at the command of the 5th Signal Command, prior to assuming the command at CECOM. During his distinguished career, he has won numerous awards and decorations. Major General Nabors and his wife Valerie have three adult children.

The National Council of Negro Women, Inc., North Shore Area Section, is a non-profit community-based organization striving to ensure the educational, social, economic and cultural enrichment of African American women, their families and their communities. The NCNW, which was founded in 1935 by the noted educator and human rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune, fulfills its mission through research, advocacy, national and community based services and programs in the U.S. and in African countries. Born of NCNW, NSAS has been a part of the Monmouth County community for 18 years.

I would like to pay tribute to all of those who have worked so hard to make Saturday's event a success, particularly NSAS current president Laura Lewis and luncheon chairperson Girdie B. Washington.