HI MEADOWS AND BOBCAT GULCH FIREFIGHTERS

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the courage of the firefighters who fought the Bobcat Gulch and Hi Meadows fires in Colorado. These men and women risked the extreme dangers to aid the people of Colorado's Fourth Congressional District.

The two fires each raged for over a week before containment in the late evening of June 20. In Bobcat Gulch, the initial cause was a campfire, which grew to consume 10,600 acres before containment was achieved. A group of 821 workers, 5 helicopters, all making up 28 crews, worked diligently to overcome the uncooperating weather. Similarly, at Hi Meadow, 1,000 workers, 7 helicopters, and 71 engines battled the blaze.

These individuals deserve our gracious appreciation for pulling together as a team to help save the lives and property of people in Colorado.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT ACT

HON. JENNIFER DUNN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my friend Mr. CARDIN of Maryland to introduce the Medical Research Investment Act.

The MRI Act increases the annual percentage-of-income limitations for individual charitable contributions for medical research from 50 percent to 80 percent. To the extent that such medical research contributions by an individual exceed the enhanced annual percent-of-income limitation, such excess would be permitted to be carried forward for the succeeding ten taxable years, rather than for the 5 years allowed under current law. In addition, the legislation ends the unfavorable treatment of gifts of stock acquired by incentive stock options for an individual who gives publicly traded stock, earmarked for medical research, to a charitable organization during the first year after the date of exercise of the stock option. The MRI Act will prevent those taxpayers from being penalized with ordinary income tax or alternative minimum tax when they are trying to give away their wealth to help people. No longer will people have to sell $140 worth of stock to give away $100, or delay their contributions when that money can be put to work today curing disease.

This country stands on the threshold of an important opportunity for philanthropy. More Americans than ever, many in the high-tech industries, have been able to amass an abundance of wealth in a short time, and are eager to invest in their communities and in their nation. This legislation allows such high net worth donors, who have the capacity to contribute significantly more than they can deduct under current law, to make large charitable contributions for medical research. It also allows those same potential donors, many of whom have a large part of their wealth tied up in stock options, to contribute their stock to a charity for medical research without incurring taxable income.

Academic research on charitable giving has found, time and again, that individuals tend to give more when the price of giving is lower. This legislation establishes the favorable tax treatment that will stimulate charitable donations of cash and property to medical research. In fact, a study by Price WaterhouseCoopers estimated that if the proposal were effective this year, the additional giving spurred by this bill would be $180.4 million in 2000—over a 4 percent increase in charitable giving by individuals for medical research. Over 5 years, it would inspire over $1 billion dollars in additional medical research. In my home state of Washington alone, the increase in the first year would be $3.67 million.

Increased investment in medical research consistently results in an improvement in the health of Americans and in the health of America itself. For instance, increases in life expectancy in the 1970's and 1980's were worth $57 trillion to America. Indeed, improvements in health have accounted for almost one-half of the actual gain in American living standards in the past 50 years. It is anticipated that if medical research reduced deaths from cancer by just one-fifth, it would be worth $10 trillion to Americans. Personal, medical, and insurance expenditures would be reduced, as would public expenditures for Medicare, Medicaid, and other governmental medical assistance programs. Losses in national productivity due to illness would be reduced as well. In a country where cancer costs the nation in excess of $107 billion annually, diabetes costs us $105 billion annually, and Parkinson's Disease in excess of $25 billion annually, there is certainly room for improvement in health. Quick and steady improvement is only possible with increased funding of research.

Today at the introduction of this bill, Cathy and Caity Rigg of Enumclaw, Washington joined us to tell their story. Caity is 8 years old and suffers from juvenile diabetes. She and her mother Cathy have been tireless advocates for increasing both government and private funds to find a cure for diabetes. Under this bill, we will greatly enhance the available funds for research. I am attaching Caity's remarks since I believe that she, more so than anyone, can attest to the difficulties of living with a debilitating disease.

Mr. Speaker, the time to act—to secure the significant gifts that many individuals are anxious to donate to charities—is now. We are entering an era of explosive growth in knowledge that will substantially advance scientists' ability to understand, prevent, and cure disease. I hope I can count on the support of each Member of Congress to pass this bipartisan bill. It is crucial to the health of every American.

Thank you Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn. Thank you to all the congress members here today for remembering kids like me.

My name is Caity Rigg and I'm 8 years old. I've had diabetes for 4 years now. In second grade last year we had our 100th day of school. My teacher asked if I had $100 to spend what would I do with it. I wrote that I would give it to the doctors so they could find a cure for my diabetes.

I still take 4 shots of insulin every day in my tummy, legs and arms to keep me alive. Sometimes it hurts really bad and I cry but Mom always hugs me. I poke my fingers to get blood all day long so I can see if I need food or medicine. When I need food I sometimes feel really bad and my head gets dizzy.

I see nurse Julie at school every day to check my blood sugar. Some days its good but some days I need juice or a shot in my arm. I don't want to do it anymore, but I have to so I don't go blind or lose an arm or leg or something bad. Mom promises there is no diabetes in heaven, but I want to get rid of it before then.

Please help me by passing the Medical Research Investment Act so that more money will be donated to help scientists and doctors find a cure for me and other children who have to go through what I do.

Thank You!!

RECOGNITION OF AMSA ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies (AMSA) on the occasion of its 30th Anniversary. AMSA is the only association exclusively representing the nation's municipal wastewater treatment agencies. As front-line environmental practitioners that serve the majority of the population, AMSA members protect our nation's valuable water resources by treating and reclaiming wastewater to meet the ambitious goals of the Clean Water Act. Congress should celebrate their role in the remarkable revitalization of America's waters during the past 30 years. While the population served by publicly-owned treatment works has risen 40 percent since 1970, water quality has improved dramatically, in large part due to the fine work of AMSA's membership. In addition to their primary responsibility for collecting and treating the Nation's domestic, commercial, and industrial wastewater, AMSA member agencies play a major part in their local communities, often leading watershed management efforts, promoting pollution prevention, water conservation and recycling, and providing resources for environmental restoration.

AMSA was established in 1970 by representatives of 22 municipal wastewater treatment agencies. Since then, AMSA's 30 years of participation, growth and cooperation has helped ensure a strong federal, state and local partnership to attain the important goals of the Clean Water Act: to protect the chemical, biological and physical health of our nation's streams, lakes, rivers, estuaries and coasts.

Today, AMSA's 245 members serve the majority of the population connected to municipal wastewater systems and reclaim 18 billion gallons of wastewater each day. AMSA is a nationally recognized leader in environmental policy and works closely with Congress and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, lending unparalleled technical expertise and information on pollution prevention, air quality, wastewater treatment, ecosystem health, and utility management.

In recent years, AMSA has been actively involved in a broadening array of environmental laws and regulations, including water infrastructure funding, nonpoint source pollution,