

(b) **VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR VISION SCREENING.**—The Secretary, in consultation with eye-health professional organizations and other vision-related organizations, shall develop voluntary guidelines to ensure the quality of vision screening and appropriate referral for comprehensive eye examinations and subsequent vision rehabilitation services.

SEC. 6. VISION REHABILITATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS.

(a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) may make grants to eligible institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations for the purpose of activities described in subsection (b) relating to vision rehabilitation professional development.

(b) **USE OF FUNDS.**—The Secretary may not make a grant to an institution of higher education or a nonprofit organization under this section unless the institution or organization agrees to use the grant for the following:

(1) Developing and offering preparatory and continuing education training opportunities (incorporating state-of-the-art approaches, technologies, and therapies to meet the unique needs of older adults with vision loss) in—

(A) geriatrics among vision rehabilitation professionals, including professionals in the vision rehabilitation therapy, orientation and mobility, and low vision therapy fields; and

(B) vision rehabilitation among occupational therapists and others in related rehabilitation and health disciplines.

(2) Conducting, and disseminating the findings and conclusions of, research on the effectiveness of preparatory and continuing education training under paragraph (1).

(3) Developing and disseminating interdisciplinary course curricula for use in the preparation of new professionals in vision rehabilitation, occupational therapy, and related rehabilitation and health disciplines.

(4) Educating physicians, nurses, and other health care providers about the value of vision rehabilitation, to increase appropriate referral by such professionals for the full range of vision rehabilitation services available to older individuals with vision loss.

(c) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an entity shall be a university, academic medical center, national or regional nonprofit organization, community rehabilitation provider, or allied health education program, or a consortium of such entities, that—

(1) offers or coordinates education or training activities among professionals described in subsection (b)(1); or

(2) agrees to use the grant to expand its capacity to coordinate such activities.

(d) **DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS.**—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that grantees offer or coordinate training for current and emerging professionals—

(1) from a variety of geographic regions and a range of different types and sizes of settings and facilities, including settings and facilities located in rural, urban, and suburban areas; and

(2) serving a variety of populations of older individuals with vision loss, including racial and ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, and other underserved populations.

(e) **APPLICATION.**—To seek a grant under this section, an entity shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, September 19, 2008.

Hon. CHRIS DODD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR DODD: The American Optometric Association (AOA), representing over 36,000 doctors of optometry who are the frontline providers of eye and vision care, optometric researchers, educators and optometry students, deeply appreciates your continued outstanding leadership on priority eye and vision care issues before Congress.

With that in mind, it is my pleasure to inform you that the AOA wholly endorses and will be working to pass the Vision Preservation Act of 2008, legislation you have crafted to strengthen federal vision programs designed to prevent and manage vision loss.

Vision impairments are a growing problem in the US—particularly with the aging of the babyboomer generation. Approximately 80 million Americans have a potentially blinding eye disease such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataract, and age-related macular degeneration. If we fail to take decisive action, the number of blind and visually impaired Americans will double in the next 25 years, even though half of all blindness is preventable.

By introducing the Vision Preservation Act, you are providing important leadership on vision-related programs and policies at the federal level. This bill's focus on increasing public awareness about vision problems, bolstering research at the National Eye Institute, and improving access to vision care at Federally-Qualified Health Centers, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and under the Medicaid program are key components that optometry and others in the vision community are completely united behind.

As the Vision Preservation Act of 2008 is considered, be assured that we will continue to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to place maximum emphasis on early identification of those individuals at risk for vision loss and need access to quality care.

If we can be of any assistance on this legislation, or any other vision related questions, please contact Alicia Kerry Jones.

Sincerely,

MICHELE HARANIN, O.D.,
Chair, AOA Federal Relations Committee.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 669—RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUTSTANDING HISPANIC SCIENTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. SALAZAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 669

Whereas the purpose of the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award is to recognize outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States who promote a greater public understanding of science and motivate Hispanic youth to develop an interest in science;

Whereas the 8th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala will be held at the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa, Florida, on Saturday, October 11, 2008;

Whereas proceeds from the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala support

scholarships for Hispanic boys and girls to participate in the Youth Enriched by Science Program of the Museum of Science and Industry, known as the “YES! Team”;

Whereas a need to acknowledge the work and effort of outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States has led to the selection of Dr. Lydia Villa-Komaroff as the honoree of the 8th annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award;

Whereas Dr. Villa-Komaroff is an internationally recognized molecular biologist who is deeply committed to the recruitment and retention of minorities in science;

Whereas Dr. Villa-Komaroff currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of Cytonome, Inc., a company building the first optical cell sorter capable of supporting rapid, sterile sorting of human cells for therapeutic use; and

Whereas Dr. Villa-Komaroff was a key member of the research team that first demonstrated that bacterial cells produce insulin and her varied and active professional life includes research positions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, and the University of Massachusetts Medical Center: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes efforts to educate, support, and provide hope for the Hispanic community, including efforts—

(A) to honor outstanding Hispanic scientists in the United States at the annual National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Gala; and

(B) to motivate Hispanic youth to study science through “Meet the Hispanic Scientist Day”, an opportunity for Hispanic youth to meet the honoree of the National Hispanic Scientist of the Year Award; and

(2) congratulates the 2008 National Hispanic Scientist of the Year designated by the Museum of Science and Industry, for ongoing dedication to improving the quality of, and access to, science and engineering research and education.

SENATE RESOLUTION 670—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 25, 2008, AS “NATIONAL FIRST RESPONDER APPRECIATION DAY”

Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 670

Whereas millions of Americans have benefited from the courageous service of first responders across the United States;

Whereas the police, fire, emergency medical service, and public health personnel (commonly known as “first responders”) work devotedly and selflessly on behalf of the people of the United States, regardless of the peril or hazard to themselves;

Whereas in emergency situations, first responders carry out the critical role of protecting and ensuring public safety;

Whereas the men and women who bravely serve as first responders have found themselves on the front lines of homeland defense in the war against terrorism;

Whereas first responders are called upon in the event of a natural disaster, such as the tornados in Florida and the blizzard in Colorado in December 2006, the flooding in the Northeast in April 2007, the flooding in the Midwest in June 2008, and the wildfires in the West in July 2008;

Whereas the critical role of first responders was witnessed in the aftermath of the mass shooting at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, when the collaborative effort of police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians to secure the campus, rescue students from danger, treat the injured, and transport victims to local hospitals undoubtedly saved the lives of many students and faculty;

Whereas 900,000 police officers, 1,100,000 firefighters, and 891,000 emergency medical technicians risk their lives every day to make our communities safe;

Whereas these 900,000 sworn police officers from Federal, State, tribal, city, and county law enforcement agencies protect lives and property, detect and prevent crimes, uphold the law, and ensure justice;

Whereas these 1,100,000 firefighters, both volunteer and career, provide fire suppression, emergency medical services, search and rescue, hazardous materials response, response to terrorism, and critical fire prevention and safety education;

Whereas the 891,000 emergency medical professionals in the United States respond to and treat a variety of life-threatening emergencies, from cardiac and respiratory arrest to traumatic injuries;

Whereas these 2,661,000 "first responders" make personal sacrifices to protect our communities, as was witnessed on September 11, 2001, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and as is witnessed every day in cities and towns across the United States;

Whereas, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, a total of 1,671 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty during the past 10 years, an average of 1 death every 53 hours or 167 per year, and 181 law enforcement officers were killed in 2007;

Whereas, according to the United States Fire Administration, from 1996 through 2005 over 1500 firefighters were killed in the line of duty, and tens of thousands were injured;

Whereas 4 in 5 medics are injured on the job, more than 1 in 2 (52 percent) have been assaulted by a patient and 1 in 2 (50 percent) have been exposed to an infectious disease, and emergency medical service personnel in the United States have an estimated fatality rate of 12.7 per 100,000 workers, more than twice the national average;

Whereas most emergency medical service personnel deaths in the line of duty occur in ambulance accidents;

Whereas thousands of first responders have made the ultimate sacrifice;

Whereas, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and emergency medical workers in the United States were universally recognized for the sacrifices they made on that tragic day, and should be honored each year as these tragic events are remembered;

Whereas there currently exists no national day to honor the brave men and women of the first responder community, who give so much of themselves for the sake of others; and

Whereas these men and women by their patriotic service and their dedicated efforts have earned the gratitude of Congress: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates September 25, 2008, as "National First Responder Appreciation Day" to honor and celebrate the contributions and sacrifices made by all first responders in the United States.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise to submit a resolution today that will designate September 25 as National First Responder Appreciation Day. Last year I introduced this resolution with my good friend and colleague Senator ROBERT CASEY and I am pleased Senator CASEY has joined me again in honoring our first responders. I am also pleased to be joined by Senators AKAKA, BENNETT, BROWN, CHAMBLISS, CLINTON, COLEMAN, CRAPO, DOMENICI, DURBIN, ENZI, HUTCHISON, INHOFE, KENNEDY, LANDRIEU, LEAHY, LIEBERMAN, MIKULSKI, MURRAY, PRYOR, ROCKEFELLER, SANDERS, STABENOW, STEVENS, VOINOVICH, WHITEHOUSE and WICKER in this important recognition of our men and women who keep us safe.

The contributions that our Nation's 1.1 million firefighters, 900,000 police officers, and 890,000 emergency medical professionals make in our communities are familiar to us all. Their heroics can be seen every night on our TV screens, read about in our papers, and heralded by the survivors of every modern disaster. From the wildfires in Colorado and California, the tragic events at Virginia Tech, and the horrific damage of Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, and Ike, our first responders regularly risk their lives to protect property, uphold the law, and save the lives of others.

The duty of a first responder is never without risk and requires the courage to place the safety of others ahead of one's own. It is courage that compels a firefighter to rush into a burning building, a police officer to charge into an active shooter, and an emergency medical professional to perform precision lifesaving procedures in the most hazardous conditions imaginable. While all of these brave Americans know the risks involved, some make that ultimate sacrifice to save another, at the cost of their own life.

Every year over 100 firefighters and nearly 200 police officers are killed in the line of duty. And while some may not consider a career in the emergency medical services dangerous, EMS workers actually have an occupational fatality rate comparable to that of firefighters and police officers. I know I speak on behalf of all Americans when I express my sincerest appreciation for their service and sacrifice.

While we recognize our first responders for their sacrifices, we also acknowledge their everyday contributions that make our communities throughout America a safer place. In addition to battling fires, firefighters reach out through fire prevention and public education, like teaching our children about fire safety and proper emergency response. In addition to arresting criminals, police officers encourage communities to stay involved in crime prevention and cooperate with law enforcement to help make our

neighborhoods safer and more livable. If we or our loved ones experience a medical emergency, EMTs are there at a moment's notice to provide lifesaving care.

In many ways, our first responders embody the very best of the American spirit. With charity and compassion, these brave men and women commit themselves to preserving the highest standard of life we all enjoy in this great Nation. Through their actions they have become heroes to many, through their examples they have become role models to us all.

While various cities and towns have recognized the contributions made by their local first responders, there exists no national day to honor and thank these courageous men and women. The time has come to give our first responders the national day of appreciation that they deserve.

Designating September 25 as National First Responder Appreciation Day provides an opportunity for this institution and the people of the United States to honor first responders for their contributions, sacrifices, and dedication to public service.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting passage of this worthwhile resolution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 671—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ON ITS 200TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 671

Whereas the University of Maryland School of Medicine was established in 1807, making it the first public and the fifth oldest medical school in the United States;

Whereas, in 1823, the University of Maryland School of Medicine became the first teaching hospital in the Nation with the construction of the Baltimore Infirmary and became the first medical school in the United States to institute a residency training program;

Whereas the School of Medicine was the founding school of the University of Maryland and is an integral part of the 11-campus University System of Maryland;

Whereas, at the Baltimore campus of the University of Maryland, the School of Medicine serves as the foundation for a large academic health center that combines medical education, biomedical research, patient care, and community service;

Whereas the University of Maryland School of Medicine is dedicated to providing excellence in biomedical education, basic and clinical research, quality patient care, and service to improve the health of the people of Maryland and the United States;

Whereas the University of Maryland School of Medicine is committed to the education and training of M.D. and Ph.D. students in fields including physical therapy, rehabilitation science, and medical research technology;

Whereas the University of Maryland School of Medicine has played a crucial role in helping to meet the health care needs of