

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2020, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 192) recognizing National Nurses Week on May 6 through May 12, 2009.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 192

Whereas since 1999, National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6, also known as National Recognition Day for Nurses, through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing;

Whereas National Nurses Week is a time of year to reflect on the important contributions that nurses make to provide safe, high-quality healthcare;

Whereas nurses are known to be patient advocates, acting fearlessly to protect the lives of those under their care;

Whereas nurses represent the largest single component of the healthcare profession, with an estimated population of 2,900,000 registered nurses in the United States;

Whereas nurses are experienced researchers, and their work encompasses a wide scope of scientific inquiry including clinical research, health systems and outcomes research, and nursing education research;

Whereas nurses provide culturally and ethnically competent care and are increasingly being educated to be sensitive to regional and community customs of persons needing care;

Whereas nurses are best positioned to provide leadership to eliminate healthcare disparities that exist in our Nation;

Whereas nurses help inform and educate the public to improve the practice of all nurses and, more importantly, the health and safety of the patients they care for;

Whereas the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) released preliminary survey data showing that enrollment in entry-level baccalaureate nursing programs increased by only 2 percent from 2007 to 2008, and though this marks the eighth consecutive year of enrollment growth, the annual increase in student capacity in 4-year nursing programs has declined sharply since 2003 when enrollment was up by 16.6 percent;

Whereas United States nursing programs were forced to reject almost 100,000 qualified applications to nursing programs according to the National League for Nursing's most recent survey of all prelicensure nursing programs;

Whereas the nationwide nursing shortage has caused dedicated nurses to work longer hours and care for more acutely ill patients;

Whereas nurse educators work on average more than 57 hours per week in order to ensure that each and every new registered

nurse receives an excellent education, advancing excellence among the next generation of nurses;

Whereas nurses are strong allies to Congress as they help inform, educate, and work closely with legislators to improve the education, retention, recruitment, and practice of all nurses and, more importantly, the health and safety of the patients they care for; and

Whereas increased Federal and State support is needed to enhance existing programs and create new programs to educate nursing students at all levels, to increase the number of faculty members to educate nursing students, to create clinical sites and have the appropriately prepared nurses to teach and train at those sites, to create educational opportunities to retain nurses in the profession, and to educate and train more nurse research scientists who can discover new nursing care models to improve the health status of the Nation's diverse population: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the significant contributions of nurses to the healthcare system of the United States;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Nurses Week, as founded by the American Nurses Association; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Nurses Week with appropriate recognition, ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate the importance of nurses to the everyday lives of patients.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 192, a resolution that honors the important contributions of nurses in the United States health care system.

There are nearly 3 million registered nurses nationwide. Nurses represent the single largest group of health care professionals. They are involved in every aspect of care. They are researchers. They help inform and educate the public, and they also help educate doctors, especially those freshly out of medical schools or residencies. They monitor the health and safety of their patients. They work to provide culturally competent care.

Earlier this spring at an Energy and Commerce hearing, witnesses highlighted the important role that nurses play in improving access to primary care, particularly among the underserved populations.

I would like to thank Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, a nurse, for

her leadership on this issue. I would also like to thank Representative CAPPS, who is also a nurse, for her continued support of nursing issues and for her work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution that observes the important role that nurses play in the lives of their patients.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 192 recognizing National Nurses Week from May 6 through May 12, 2009. Not only is today the last day of National Nurses Week, but it is also the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. I hope that my colleagues here at the House of Representatives have had an opportunity to reflect over the last week on all of the contributions that nurses have made to ensure safe and high-quality health care to those under their care.

In each of our communities, nurses work collaboratively with patients and other health professionals to improve the safety of patients and advance care in a myriad of settings. Nurses represent the largest single component of the health care profession with nearly 2.9 million registered nurses in the United States who are dedicated to improving the health outcomes of million of patients under their care.

I applaud the work that nurses have contributed and because of the ailing economy, we are seeing more nurses filling the shortage that exists. Many are going back to work, or putting off planned retirement to help maintain their family income during tough economic times. Many of those jobs are also being filled by better recruiting tactics by hospitals that have increased wages, offered potential hires signing bonuses, and efforts have been made to retain older nurses by making their jobs less strenuous. But as past economic indicators have shown, nurses shortages occur in times of healthy economic expansion and as baby boomers get older, we hope that hospitals will continue to provide incentives for nurses to fill vacant health care positions.

I would like to thank Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, the sponsor of this resolution, and the American Nurses Association for raising public awareness about the contributions that nurses give to our communities. I encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague and physician from the Virgin Islands for yielding to me. I rise in strong support of H. Res. 192, a resolution in recognition of National Nurses Week.

I too would like to thank Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON for introducing this bill, along with Representative LOIS CAPPAS and Representative CAROLYN MCCARTHY, all nurses in this body, for sponsoring this resolution and for their steadfast commitment to honoring nurses and highlighting the importance of estimated 2.9 million nurses to our health care system.

As we move forward with health care reform discussions, we must continue to listen to nurses. Nurses will fight for improving patient access to quality care. And it is nurses who will advocate for more preventive and primary care providers to help reduce the need for costly inpatient care. And it is nurses who will fight for appropriate nurse staffing ratios to reduce medical error and to cut down on the number of readmissions to hospitals.

We all know about the shortages in primary care professionals, especially nurses right now; and as we move toward health care reform and bring more people into the system, we certainly are going to need more nurses.

There are about 500,000 nurses out there who have left the profession for many, many reasons, but one of them is because they have very stressful working conditions.

So as we celebrate National Nurses Week, we need to think about that. One of those issues is to reduce the number of patients that each nurse has to take care of these days. The patient/nurse ratio is so high, there are so many patients that they have to take care of, that many have just said, Can't do it.

And so I think the best way we honor nurses is to look at ways we make conditions in the hospitals, in their workplace, much more amenable to them because they are the frontline people.

Right now when our loved ones have to go to the hospital, many feel they need to have an advocate with them because when the button is pushed calling for the nurse, sometimes they are not there, not because they don't want to be there, but because they are in the next room or the next room and not able to get to their patients.

Madam Speaker, it is important that Congress recognize and celebrate our nurses during National Nurses Week and throughout the year, and throughout the years to come. Our nurses stand up for us, and I am honored to stand up for them.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to the sponsor of the resolution, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON).

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me thank my colleagues who are managing this bill today.

It really is a delight and a privilege to offer a resolution recognizing National Nurses Week, which is May 6 through today, the 12th.

I began my professional career as a nurse and as a registered nurse with a master's degree; I have 15 years of hands-on patient-care experience. I served as the chief psychiatric nurse at the VA Hospital in Dallas. During times of war, we see so many men and women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. They need prompt and compassionate care.

Just yesterday, the New York Times reported that an American soldier in Baghdad shot five of his fellow comrades. The attack took place in a clinic for soldiers who were seeking help for stress. Another such incident occurred last September.

I have great empathy for our brave members of our military who suffer from emotional distress, and I admire the nurses and other health care professionals who work to assist them. Nurses are a key component of our health care system; and whether on the battlefield, at sea, in a skilled nursing facility or in a hospital, the care that a nurse provides is very, very valuable.

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Nurses are the patient's primary advocate. They are intelligent people who most often have to make quick decisions in an effort to save the life of a patient. Nurses are tough guardians. They often do their work under duress and under difficult conditions.

My colleagues, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPAS and Congresswoman CAROLYN MCCARTHY, are also nurses. They have worked with me to promote this resolution, and they are champions in the nursing profession.

I want to thank my many congressional colleagues who cosponsored this resolution honoring nurses. We recognize that although more than 2.9 million registered nurses work in the United States, our Nation continues to suffer from a nursing shortage. Congress should invest in the title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Program to help address this challenge. We cannot do health care reform without addressing the shortage of nursing.

Congress must also increase support for nurse faculty education, particularly for advanced practice nurses and advanced education in nursing. Further, hospitals need to establish valid, reliable and adjustable unit-by-unit nurse staffing plans. These plans should link staff to quality outcomes and should involve direct input of nursing staff based on each area's unique characteristics and needs. The nursing community has provided valuable recommendations on policies to support the nursing profession, and I encourage my colleagues to review these suggestions.

Several nursing organizations were engaged in developing this resolution, and I would like to thank them. They are the American Nurses Association, the Emergency Nurses Association, the National Black Nurses Association, and the National League for Nurses.

Today's resolution honors the good work that all nurses do, the profession

that has more patient support than any other. Along with my many supportive colleagues, I want to thank the House leadership for bringing up this important resolution and I urge support for the resolution.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the American Nurses Association and the National Black Nurses Association, as well as the other nursing associations, for the leadership that they provide on behalf of nurses, and to take this opportunity to congratulate all the new nurses who will be receiving their pins and their caps later this month and joining this noble profession.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in order to thank my colleague EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON for sponsoring National Nurses Week.

Nurses are America's national heroes. Day after day, they deliver life saving health care in nursing homes, hospitals, community clinics, and public schools across this nation. They deliver our babies, take care of the disabled, and make sure that senior citizens receive the tender loving care and attention they need when they are sick and infirm.

Sadly, too many nurses are working in hospitals, clinics and other health care work settings that are stressful, inhumane, and not conducive to safe patient care. Many nurses experience painful and debilitating work related injuries from lifting patients—injuries that could be avoided if there were mechanical lift devices in hospitals which could safely assist nurses in the lifting of patients.

Nurses across the nation rightfully complain of working too many hours, supervising too many patients at one time, and having to spend endless hours filling out paper work. Much of the paper work is related to private insurance billing.

Many nurses leave the profession early because of stressful and difficult work conditions. This is contributing to a growing nursing shortage in America. Unfortunately, patients across this nation are getting less quality care from nurses because there are simply not enough nurses to provide the care that patients need and deserve. America must address the nursing crisis now, especially as we move towards major health reform.

We must thank President Obama for having the vision and courage to address our dysfunctional health care system by calling for passage of a major health reform bill this year. I believe that creating a national health insurance system would be the most cost effective and humane way to achieve universal health care in America. This is why I have introduced HR 676, "The United States National Health Insurance Act," in every Congress since 2003.

We as a nation must ensure that we have the best trained and optimal number of nurses possible. However, if we are to achieve this very important goal, the President and the Congress must have a "federal national nurse policy" that reflects the needs of the nursing profession.

This can be best accomplished by having members of Congress and the President listen to the many challenges that our over worked nurses experience every day, and then passing meaningful federal nurse reform legislation that can substantively address the nursing shortage in this country, and improve their work conditions.

Our nurses deserve the best work conditions possible, and so do the millions of patients they care for in America.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 192, recognizing national nurses week on May 6 through May 12, 2009. I thank Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON for introducing this important resolution which recognizes and acknowledges the dedication of our nursing community across America.

This resolution is important because nurses represent the largest single component of the healthcare profession, with an estimated 2.9 million registered nurses in the United States. In Texas alone, according to the Texas Board of Nursing, there are 162,163 registered nurses through out the state.

In Harris County, the county encompassing my district, there are 24,480 registered nurses. Nurses are patient advocates and act fearlessly to protect the lives of those under their care. Nurses care for patients, but participate in a wide range of needed scientific research, and fight cultural and ethnic disparities, and treat all patients as equals. Nurses are also teachers, not only to future generations of nurses, but to the public, educating us on health and safety.

It is necessary that we acknowledge the outstanding contribution to society by nurses because nurses can be strong allies to Congress as they help inform, educate and work closely with legislators to improve the education, retention, recruitment and practice of all nurses and, more importantly, the health and safety of the patients they care for.

Federal and State support is needed to enhance existing programs to educate nursing students at all levels, to increase the number of faculty members to educate nursing students, to create clinical sites and have the appropriately prepared nurses to teach and train at those sites, to create educational opportunities to retain nurses in the profession, and to educate and train more nurse research scientists who can discover new nursing care models to improve the health status of the Nation's diverse population. The services nurses can provide are linked directly to the availability, cost and quality of healthcare services, which are at the center of health reform discussions.

In a year where health care reform is a top priority, it is significant to acknowledge that 33 national nursing organizations have endorsed a consensus statement from the Nursing Community that complement five of President Obama's tenets outlined in his Transforming and Modernizing America's Health Care System plan. Nurses protect families and financial health and make health care coverage affordable by providing cost-effective care at all levels of nursing practice. Nurses play a key role in the success of the President's aim for universality. Without a strong investment in the nursing workforce, the goal of reaching universality will be unattainable, particularly for rural communities and underserved populations. When the Administration and Congress invest in prevention and wellness, existing practice and care models, such as the Nurse Family Partnership, derived from nursing science will serve as national exemplars for wellness and prevention. The strength of the nursing profession lies in its contribution to improve patient safety and quality care. Nursing care is critical to improving healthcare

quality and safety to ensure better patient outcomes.

Unfortunately, there is a continuing shortage of professional Registered Nurses. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing released preliminary survey data showing that enrollment in entry level baccalaureate nursing programs increased by only 2 percent from 2007 to 2008. While this makes the eighth consecutive year of enrollment growth, the annual increase in student capacity in 4-year nursing programs has declined sharply since 2003 which enrollment was up 16.6 percent. Due to a lack of nurse educators over 100,000 qualified nursing candidates have been rejected to nursing programs across the U.S. according to the National League for Nursing most recent survey. These shortages have caused the current nurse educators to work on average more than 57 hours per week as well as dedicated nurses to work longer hours and care for more acutely ill patients. The nursing field needs more money invested in its future.

It is only fitting that the end of National Nurses Week is the birthday of Florence Nightingale. She once said "I attribute my success to this—I never gave or took any excuse." So today in her honor we must give no excuse to keep from honoring the noble and important profession of nursing, if anything we should fight to improve its condition because with improved nursing, and funds for nurses, we get a better health care system. I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution and acknowledge and support our country's nurses.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 192 and in support of National Nurses Week. I commend my friend and fellow nurse, Ms. JOHNSON, for introducing this resolution.

As we observe Nurses Week, we have a perfect opportunity to highlight the importance of addressing nursing issues in the context of health reform.

Nurses must have a seat at the table for the discussions and nurses must be part of the solutions. After all, nurses are the best advocates for their patients.

I would like to propose that we use National Nurses Week 2009 to not only thank the nurses who have helped us in our own lives, but to learn more about the roles that they play in our community at-large.

Whether it is the nurse at a patient's hospital bedside, the nurse tending to children at an elementary school, the nurse midwife delivering a baby or the nurse faculty instructing a new generation of nurses, they all play an important part in our health care delivery system.

As we proceed with comprehensive health reform, we need to take into account the various roles that nurses perform so that we can ensure a viable nurse workforce well into the future.

Health reform will be impossible without a nursing workforce to support the primary and acute care needs of all Americans and I encourage my colleagues to join me in making a commitment during Nurses Week to advocate for nurses during our health reform debate.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 192—Recognizing National Nurses Week. I'd like to particularly thank my colleague Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas for offering this resolution, and to honor my colleagues Representative LOIS CAPPS of California and Representative CAROLYN MCCARTHY of New

York, three Members of Congress who worked as nurses before holding public office and who continue to be strong advocates for nurses and patients.

The men and women who work as nurses in the United States are some of the most important—but also some of the most unsung—heroes who serve in our communities. We all probably have a personal story about a nurse who either cared for us or a close family member or friend during a time of need. They are superb in their skill sets; tender in the care they provide; and deserving of our utmost respect.

When you become a nurse, the conventional wisdom and continuing tradition is that you go into the field because you have a genuine interest in and passion for helping those in need. You don't do it for the money; you don't do it for the glamour; and you certainly don't do it for the hours.

But it's time to encourage men and women to pursue a career in nursing by showing them that we respect and value the careers of the approximate 3 million nurses across America. We can do this by increasing pay for nurses and by making nursing education more affordable and more accessible.

We're facing an unprecedented nursing shortage across this country that could lead to a shortfall of up to 500,000 nurses by 2025. And nursing isn't a job that can be downsized or outsourced. That is why I support the inclusion of \$215 million for the Nursing Workforce Development program in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget and why I worked to help secure \$500 million in the stimulus package for training programs for primary care providers, including nurses.

In my own district in California I fought to keep the Registered Nursing Program alive and funded at L.A. Southwest College, and am happy to announce that this year they will receive a \$285,000 appropriation to improve nursing education through state-of-the-art technology.

Nurses are a precious asset we cannot afford to be without.

With major health care reform on the horizon, we must remember that nurses will be at the center of any meaningful reform. Let us honor their service, their dedication, and their profession by passing this resolution.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 192.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION ON ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 204) congratulating the American Dental Association for its 150th year of working to improve the public's oral health