

RECOGNIZING THE CITIZEN'S  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 23, 2012*

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to commend the Citizen's Commission on Human Rights on the opening of their new National Public Affairs Office here in Washington, DC.

I want to thank my friend Sam Brunelli, the President and CEO of Team Builders International, for the role he played in bringing the good work of the Citizen's Commission on Human Rights to my attention. Since 1969, the Citizen's Commission on Human Rights has tirelessly worked to educate the public about the dangers of some drugs. As part of this effort, CCHR has been at the forefront of the debate over whether parents' have a fundamental right to raise their children as they see fit; and that includes making decisions about evaluation and treatment of mental health conditions.

As some of my colleagues may recall, back in 2003 a Presidential Commission recommended that the government implement mental health screening in public school. The Commission contended that early detection, assessment, and links with treatment and support programs would help prevent mental health problems from worsening. However, neither the Commission's report nor any related mental health screening proposal under discussion at the time required active parental consent before a child was subjected to mental health screening.

I appreciate the value of having mental health problems diagnosed and treated early, but cutting the parents out of the process was deeply troubling to me. More often than not, the typical course of action when a child is diagnosed with a mental health condition—typically Attention Deficit Disorder, ADD, or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, ADHD, is to prescribe a powerful psychotropic drug, such as Ritalin. But these drugs have some serious side effects which include mania, violence and dependence. In fact, these drugs are so potentially dangerous that in 2007, under pressure from members of Congress and groups like CCHR, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA, was finally compelled to require that the makers of all antidepressant medications update their black box warning on their products' labeling to include warnings about increased risks of suicidal thinking and behavior, known as suicidality.

Yet, inexplicably, not only were parents being cut out of the loop with regard to these drugs, parents who were informed, and who wanted to say no, were actually being threatened by school districts with child abuse charges for not drugging their children.

As a Christian, parent and grandparent, I have throughout my Congressional career staunchly defended the right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children as they see fit. I believe this right is embedded in the U.S. Constitution, affirmed by Supreme Court case precedent, and exemplified by the inalienable rights and freedoms this country was founded on. To deny parents the right to know about the potential dangers of these drugs and the right to say "no, this is not the right

treatment for my child," is simply mindboggling. This is the same flawed mentality that condones putting toxic substances like mercury in medical products like vaccines and dental fillings and then not telling people the mercury is in there. Mercury is the most toxic substances on earth after radioactive materials. It has no place in any medication for children or adults; and I'm proud of the work I've done in Congress to get mercury removed from medicine. I'm also proud to have worked with CCHR and other like-minded groups to raise awareness of the potential dangers of psychotropic drugs, and to fight to put parents back in charge of their children's health care decisions instead of government bureaucrats.

Unfortunately, the price of defending our freedoms from the intrusion of big government is to be eternally vigilant. The economic and political life of America has changed profoundly over the last four years, and once again, the government is trying to intrude upon the relationship of parent to child.

In the past, parents were threatened by government officials with child abuse charges if they resisted efforts to drug their children with ADHD medications. Today, parents are penalized by government for sending their children to school with a brownbag lunch that does not meet some arbitrary government nutritional guidelines. These may seem like widely separate things but they are at the most basic level the same; an usurpation by the government of the right of parents to make decisions for their children.

Under the rubric of "Children's Rights," advocate of big government are pushing the argument that children should have, and the state should recognize, greater autonomy for children from their parents in deciding how to live, or that government agencies must have the power to step in to protect children from "bad parents."

I believe this concept of "Children's Rights" is flawed for two reasons. First, parents possess the maturity, experience, and capacity for judgment required for making life's difficult decisions that children lack. Second, as the Supreme Court said in the case of *Parham v. J.R.19* simply "because the decision of a parent is not agreeable to a child or because it involves risks, does not automatically transfer the power to make that decision"—nor in my opinion should it—"from the parents to some agency or officer of the state."

In his Oval Office farewell address, President Ronald Reagan said two things that are particularly relevant to our discussion tonight; he said: "As government expands, liberty contracts;" and that "All great change in America begins at the dinner table."

President Reagan understood that family is the foundation of our society; and that parents do have a profound impact on their children. If we are to recapture a common denominator of right and wrong in America, we must begin in the homes of America with conversations at the dinner table between moms and dads and growing children.

By respecting and defending a parents' fundamental right to teach their children that there is acceptable behavior and unacceptable behavior, appropriate speech and inappropriate speech we can re-instill in our children a moral character of trust, honesty, respect and tolerance, qualities that are so necessary to having safe and prosperous communities—

and which are at the core of CCHR's own philosophy.

Make no mistake, though, stopping the further spread of government power in the area of the family and ensuring that parental rights are protected with the strength and certainty they deserve will not be a quick and easy victory. That is why organizations like CCHR are so important. If good people like the men and women who work for CCHR refuse to give up the fight, victory is inevitable.

Again, I want to commend CCHR on the opening of their beautiful new facility here in Washington, DC and wish them good fortune in their future endeavors.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS HISTORY PROJECT ACT

**HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 23, 2012*

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, on July 19, 2012, I introduced the Reauthorization of the National Women's Rights History Project Act. This legislation was intended to be introduced with Mr. RICHARD HANNA (NY-24) as an original cosponsor.

TRIBUTE TO DEWAYNE BUNCH

**HON. HAROLD ROGERS**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 23, 2012*

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dewayne Bunch, a brave member of the Kentucky National Guard, a leader in the State legislature, and a dedicated teacher at Whitley County High School: His passing is a great loss and he will be deeply missed by Whitley and Laurel County and across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Dewayne's life encompassed the true meaning of a public servant. Described as "a mighty man of valor," Dewayne helped lead our Commonwealth with an extraordinary level of dedication and excellence. While serving in the Kentucky National Guard, Dewayne proudly fought for our country in Iraq as a first sergeant and received multiple honors, including the Bronze Star. Dewayne was also a veteran of the United States Army and after 24 years of service to the Kentucky National Guard, Dewayne was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives in the fall of 2010 and thoughtfully represented Whitley and Laurel Counties. In his brief legislative career in Frankfort, Dewayne showed tremendous potential as a legislator.

In April of 2011, Dewayne was severely injured while trying to break up a fight between two students at Whitley County High School where he taught math and science for 17 years. Dewayne was highly regarded by his students and faculty, and shared a vision with lawmakers for a better Kentucky, especially in the field of education. After his injury, Dewayne resigned from the Kentucky legislature, and the position was filled by his dutiful wife, Regina Bunch.