

strides that have been made to understand autism, not much is known about how the disorder actually develops in the brain.

The BRAIN Initiative is an ambitious program which aims to advance our understanding of how the brain functions. It is my firm belief that the BRAIN Initiative is an instrumental step toward revolutionary breakthroughs in neuroscience. For these reasons, I introduced the Mental Health Awareness Semipostal Stamp Act to help raise additional funding for the BRAIN Initiative, at no expense to taxpayers. I am confident that together we can make great strides for autism awareness, and I hope that you join me in lighting it up blue for the rest of April.

TEAM VISION

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize M-Vision Miami, a group comprised of young professionals in the Youth Leadership Miami program, sponsored by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

M-Vision, in partnership with PACE Center for Girls, has worked to create a career development and college preparatory lab for PACE students. The M-Vision program focuses on financial literacy training, interview etiquette, college preparation, career awareness, exploration, and community service. This group, which is completely volunteer based, has dedicated countless hours to building relationships throughout Miami-Dade County in order to support their mission.

I thank M-Vision and centers like PACE Miami for their efforts to ensure that all children, regardless of their socioeconomic class, have an opportunity to achieve college and career success. They have done a remarkable job, and I am certain that they will continue doing great work for years to come.

CONGRATULATING DEBBIE BRADY

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Debbie Brady, the executive director of the Dade County Farm Bureau, who will be retiring this year after a life dedicated to educating others on the importance of agriculture in our daily lives. Debbie is also the president of the Florida Agri-Women, a member of the American Agri-Women, and a long-time resident of South Dade. She has worked in agribusiness for over 30 years and has a true passion for farming. Her knowledge and experience are unparalleled, and she will be greatly missed.

I have had the privilege of meeting with Debbie on many occasions and know how much of a resource she has been to both me and my staff. We have strongly advocated together on behalf of the South Dade farmers, especially during the recent oriental fruit fly quarantine and devastating floods that crippled the region's ag community. Her immense knowledge of the issues has helped us make very positive gains on behalf of the farmers in South Dade.

Debbie, thank you for dedicating your life to helping our community. We

wish you the best in your retirement. You have certainly earned it.

END CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to spend a few minutes this morning discussing the recent report of the Commission to End Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities. Chartered by Congress under the Protect our Kids Act of 2013, the Commission's goal is to provide a framework for ending child maltreatment fatalities in the United States. For 2 years they have studied and examined this problem, and now we have the results.

The death of any child is a tragedy. While the data on child deaths related to abuse and neglect is incomplete, the Commission estimates that there were over 1,500 such cases in 2014. The majority of the children in these heartbreaking cases were younger than a year old, and many of them only days and weeks into their young lives. Three-quarters of the deaths occurred in children under age 3.

Madam Speaker, these are shocking figures, but we are talking about much more than just numbers. These stories of lives cut short, of senseless deaths, are a rallying cry for action, and no community or State is immune. In my home State of Rhode Island, at least four children have died in State care since October, two of them infants.

In neighboring Massachusetts, Bella Bond's story is a heartbreaking reminder of our moral obligation to act in defense of all children. Bella only ever knew abuse and neglect. She died before her third birthday, allegedly beaten to death by her drug-addicted parents. Despite two neglect complaints against Bella's mother, there was never any recognition that this toddler's life was in danger. The State never sent anybody to check on her safety, and her death remained hidden until her body was discovered.

The problems in the Bella Bond murder, though, sadly, are not unique. The Commission's report highlights a lack of communication between State child welfare agencies and law enforcement in every State. Noting the high correlation between domestic violence and child deaths, the Commission recommends that States treat this as a broad public health issue and call for better coordination between child welfare agencies and law enforcement.

Cross-agency collaboration will allow social workers to use law enforcement data to find the most at-risk children and intervene when necessary to protect the child. Just as we would take action to stop disease before it kills the patient, we can and we must intervene when a child's life is at risk.

However, the Commission also notes that the most successful interventions

are the ones that prevent a crisis from happening in the first place. Not all of these interventions involve foster care or removing a child. Early intervention of the most at-risk families will allow social workers to tailor and deliver the most effective interventions for each family, and even sometimes small interventions early on can make the biggest difference. The report makes clear that crisis breeds crisis. It is the self-perpetuating, repetitive cycle.

Parents suffering from mental health issues or drug addiction are much more likely to harm or kill their child. The stresses of unemployment and poverty are also linked with child abuse, neglect, and death.

Madam Speaker, States need to engage in an all-of-the-above approach to child safety. We must also ensure that funding is in place to allow for meaningful interventions. Child welfare agencies need to be held accountable for results, and empowered to deliver services and interventions to at-risk children and families when they are required.

Despite these challenges, I would like to close on a hopeful note, embodied in the title of the report itself: Within Our Reach.

Madam Speaker, we can put a stop to these tragic deaths. Law enforcement, child welfare, and community groups have to work together to provide a network of support and intervention for families and children at risk of abuse. We in Congress have to fully fund these agencies and empower them to deliver meaningful change.

Madam Speaker, the time to act is now.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 43 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Pastor Kevin Hintze, Zion Lutheran Church, Georgetown, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Gracious Lord of our Nation, we thank You for the continued preservation of our blessed country and all who uphold civil duties of leadership within our borders.

We pray today for all the Members of Congress and their staff that they may be endowed with wisdom from Your spirit as they serve with the authority of government in our land.

Bless their daily work and encourage our leaders of this Nation to fulfill