

STATEMENT TO SUBCOMMITTEE
ON PERSONNEL, SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, for the last 2 months, I have assisted my constituents, Charles and Annette Casto, in attempting to locate information regarding the death of their son, L. Cpl. Anthony A. Casto, U.S. Marine Corps. After a hurried investigation, the Marine Corps concluded that Anthony Casto died as a result of suicide. The few material possessions given to the family, brief and uninformative talks with senior military personnel and the investigative branches involved in the process, yielded more questions and uncertainties than answers to Anthony's death.

The families which appeared before the subcommittee were in concurrence that the military's death investigation process is fractured. Currently, separate entities come to conclusions on a single death and withhold information underlying their conclusions. This is the antithesis to freedom of information and contrary to families' legitimate expectations that services will be forthcoming and truthful about the cause of a loved one's death.

All governmental entities and departments are accountable to the citizenry. I am not overzealous when I say that, just as we expect our government to be effective, it should be standard that it is also compassionate when dealing with the families of those who sacrifice their lives for our country. Unfortunately, the personal experiences of families of deceased military personnel illustrate a different picture. Though the people and places were different, there was a common theme that the investigative process treated families as outsiders, not obligated to knowing how their sons and daughters died while serving our country.

I know that the members of the subcommittee listened to the stories on September 12 with sincere interest, professionalism, and sympathy. However, I ask that the subcommittee lead this Congress in a first, but major step, in reforming the military death investigation process to transform it into one that is efficient, responsive, accountable and most importantly, one that is respectful and compassionate to our deceased servicemen and women's families.

HONORING ALVIN R. BELL

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Alvin R. Bell a constituent of mine who participated in CIVITAS@Bosnia-Herzegovina, an intensive program to train local teachers in education for democracy. Mr. Bell was part of a team of 18 American educators and 15 teachers from the Council of Europe who were assigned last July to key cities throughout the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The summer training program was developed by the Center for Civil Education as part

of a major civic education initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The goals of the program are to help prepare students and their communities for competent and responsible participation in elections and other opportunities in the political life of their communities. Achieving this goal will contribute to the reconstitution of a sense of community, cooperation, tolerance and support for democracy and human rights in this war torn area.

I am also pleased to announce that the curricular materials being used for the program in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been adapted from the We the People * * * the Citizen and the Constitution and Project Citizen programs that have been very successful in my congressional district. Initial reports evaluating the summer program indicate the materials and teaching methods were enthusiastically received and can be adapted for use in classrooms throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Alvin Bell is a teacher at Findlay High School in my hometown of Findlay, OH. Over the years Mr. Bell has brought five different teams of students to Washington, DC to compete in the We the People * * * the Citizen and the Constitution national finals, an academic competition involving simulated Congressional hearing to test the knowledge of your youth in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend Alvin Bell for his dedication and commitment during the CIVITAS@Bosnia-Herzegovina summer training program. His work, is helping to achieve the overall objective to building support for democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

THE BREAST CANCER PATIENT
PROTECTION ACT OF 1996

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to join with Representative ROSA DELAURO in introducing "The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 1996" to require insurers to pay for a minimum 2-day hospital stay for a mastectomy and a 1-day stay for a lymph node removal, unless the doctor and patient decide less time is appropriate. The legislation responds to a recent trend by insurers who are refusing to pay for an overnight stay for a woman with breast cancer who has had a mastectomy, the surgical removal of a breast, unless the doctor can prove it is "medically necessary."

While medical societies have no established guidelines on how long a woman should stay in the hospital following a mastectomy, doctors have argued that women need to stay 1 to 2 nights after such surgery. Surgeons have told me that the large majority of women would not do well going home the same day after such a surgery. It is unbelievable to me that the insurance industry is now considering mastectomy an "outpatient procedure" and denying women overnight stays.

After a mastectomy, a woman has a large wound, still-attached drainage tubes and intravenous fluids, and, often times, excessive pain. Overnight stays allow doctors to address many of the problems that can arise in the 12 to 24 hours following surgery and allow

women the time to learn how to care for the wound, handle the pain that accompanies such surgery and recover from the emotional trauma that can result from the surgery.

Outpatient mastectomies are disturbing new part of a growing trend in the insurance industry to deny care or truncate stays. First they denied insurance to victims of domestic violence, then they sent mothers and their newborn home within hours following a birth and now women with breast cancer are being denied the ability to have a very difficult surgery with some degree of dignity.

I have played an active role in ensuring that victims of domestic violence are no longer discriminated against in the health insurance industry and in guaranteeing that mothers and newborns are not sent home before they are ready to go. To that end, I will remain steadfast in my commitment to protect breast cancer patients from premature discharges from the hospital.

I am pleased that the National Breast Cancer Coalition has given its support to "The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 1996." I look forward to working together with the Breast Cancer Coalition, surgeons and medical societies to protect safe and appropriate care for cancer survivors.

The truth of the matter is that insurance companies are trampling on the sacred doctor-patient relationship and it must stop. The decision about when a woman should leave the hospital after a mastectomy should be made between the doctor and the woman, not by insurance companies bent on profits.

Congress must restore the doctor-patient relationship once and for all, and I am doing everything I can to see that that happens. In the meantime, this critical measure will protect thousands of women who confront breast cancer surgery from being forced out of the hospital against their will and against the best advice of their doctor.

TRIBUTE TO REV. EDWARD O. HUG

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 27, 1996

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man of true faith—longtime servant of the church and our larger community in the greater Toledo area, the dear and beloved Rev. Edward O. Hug. He generously bestowed upon our community, particularly in the Catholic parishes throughout northwest Ohio to which he devoted his life for 47 years gentleness, dedication, and spiritual depth.

A man of God, Father Hug ministered to thousands, providing counsel, direction, and solace. His final parish was my own, Little Flower Catholic Church in Toledo.

As we remember Father Hug, his life, and his work and reflect upon his passing, I would like to quote from what has been regarded as one of Father Hug's finest sermons. In discussing life's passages, Father Hug told his congregation, "we should never be afraid of dying. When a baby comes into this world, the baby says 'I'm afraid to be born.' Then he comes out into the world and sees all the friendly faces and realizes the world is a wonderful place." It's the same with death. We're all afraid of dying, but when we die, we are