

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE WOMEN'S HEALTH AND CANCER RIGHTS ACT OF 1997

HON. SUSAN MOLINARI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Ms. MOLINARI. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to introduce the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1997. This unprecedented legislation is not only critical for breast cancer patients, but also for all cancer patients.

Last year in the U.S., 182,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 85,000 breast cancer patients received a mastectomy as part of their treatment—7,500 of which were performed in New York State. A similar survey found that 43 percent of the respondents had been denied coverage of followup reconstructive symmetry procedures and nearly 20 percent had been denied insurance coverage for revisions of an initial breast reconstructive surgery. These numbers are far too high and this denial of coverage must end.

Currently, many insurance companies are the sole decision makers in how long a breast cancer patient should stay in the hospital, without taking into account her individual needs or circumstance. In addition, these companies are frequently reluctant to pay for the initial breast reconstruction, as well as followup procedures because they deem reconstruction cosmetic. Ironically, insurance companies do not deny reconstructive surgery for an ear that is lost due to cancer. Insurance companies are simply not being sensitive to the needs of breast cancer patients, and this bill seeks to ensure a breast cancer patient's access to an appropriate hospital stay as well as reconstructive surgery.

There are few procedures which are of such a sensitive nature as mastectomies. Under the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act, the patient in consultation with her physician, determines when it is medically appropriate to be discharged following a mastectomy. Rather than leaving the decision to insurance companies or even to Congress, this crucial decision is made by those personally involved. So if a woman is prepared mentally and physically to be discharged soon after the procedure, she may do so with her doctor's permission. This is also true in the case when a woman is not quite ready after several days. Patients should never be denied the opportunity to be covered by insurance in this frightening situation.

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act also ensures access to all stages of reconstructive surgery. Surgeons across the country have confirmed that the problems with reimbursement have grown worse in recent years as insurance companies become more cost-conscious. Women have been denied coverage for reconstructive surgery even in States where coverage for breast reconstruction was mandatory.

Finally, the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act ensures that individuals diagnosed

with any type of cancer have access to a second opinion, including one that may be outside of their health plan network. It is vital that an individual facing a potentially life-threatening disease, such as cancer, have the opportunity to consult a second physician and not the anxiety of whether or not it will be covered by their insurance.

Unfortunately, almost all of us have had a family member or known someone who has been hit by breast cancer—and frankly all women live with that fear. This bill is attempting to provide some sense of security that hospitals and medical providers are able to do the right thing. We will be able to claim success if we can minimize the pain, confusion, and trauma following a breast cancer diagnosis—and the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act aims to do just that.

THE CITY CLUB OF SAN DIEGO: TWO REMARKABLE DECADES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the City Club of San Diego.

Over the past 20 years, the City Club has become an integral part of San Diego—providing a public forum for nearly 500 programs presented in the highest public interest. These accomplishments have earned it the distinction as one of America's great public forums.

The President and Vice President of the United States have appeared before the City Club. On six occasions, the Governor of California has spoken. The list of speakers presented represents a remarkable variety of individuals and opinions, from Jerry Falwell to Gloria Steinem, from Maureen Reagan to Tom Hayden, from Tom Wolfe to Anthony Lewis. Local, State, and national elected officials, journalists, ambassadors, judges, authors, bank officers, media broadcasters, professors, business and sports figures, and others have presented their ideas in the forum of the City Club. The speakers represent rich and varied professions, philosophies, and political views. Senator JOE BIDEN returns for his 7th appearance as the featured guest of the 20th anniversary celebration on February 8, 1997.

In addition to the forums, the City Club has offered other special events: a national conference on immigration; another on press, libel, and American freedom; and a third on the state of our language. One of the City Club's most ambitious undertakings was a four-part series on leadership in San Diego, focusing on government, justice, finance, and the media.

City Club events have been covered on C-SPAN, the local PBS radio station, and cable television systems. A debate between Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate was carried statewide on cable TV.

The City Club has held fundraisers for other nonprofit organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the San Diego Public Library, the United Negro College Fund, and the National Jewish Hospital. These efforts are notable, for it is highly unusual for one nonprofit organization to undertake fundraising for other similar groups.

A lighter side of the City Club includes holiday parties, whale watching trips, theater evenings, a trip to the Nation's Capital, and Aspen ski trips—featuring programs with outstanding speakers as well as time on the slopes.

George Mitrovich, the president of the City Club and prime mover behind its success, has stated: "The ability of any democracy to survive, even in the United States, depends in no small degree upon the wisdom of its people—a wisdom that public forums help instill."

This is the mission of the City Club: to present an arena where the best ideas might prevail. On the joyous occasion of its 20th anniversary, I am honored to publicly recognize and honor the accomplishments of the City Club of San Diego.

"ENNIS COSBY KNEW WORTH OF A HELPING HAND"—A COLUMN BY ROBERT SCHEER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, research studies indicate that learning disabilities affect about 15 percent of the American population. One of the most common learning differences is dyslexia, which makes it difficult for persons to read and understand the written word. Our Nation recently suffered the tragic loss of Ennis Cosby, a young man with dyslexia who was committed to using his influence and education to start a school for children with dyslexia. Robert Scheer, renowned author and contributing editor for the Los Angeles Times, has written a sensitive essay about how dyslexia affects even the most successful persons in our society. I commend this column to my colleagues.

ENNIS COSBY KNEW WORTH OF A HELPING
HAND

(By Robert Scheer)

Properly credentialed and steady at my post in the press section at the president's inauguration, within shouting distance of the man himself, a witness to history surrounded by the most successful of my peers, I am, as so often before on such occasions, filled with fear. This time it makes me think of Ennis William Cosby.

Fear, not of the violence that took his life but rather the more mundane persistent and personal terror shared by all dyslexics over having to perform in conventional ways when your brain does not track quite that way. In my case today, it's the pressure to file properly spelled, cogently organized, grammatically correct copy, on deadline.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.