THE MEDICAL MARIJUANA DETERRENCE ACT

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation in response to the actions taken by the State of California and the State of Arizona to allow for the medical use of marijuana. The bill would deny Federal benefits to any individual convicted of using, possessing or selling marijuana.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, it is a Federal offense to sell, use or possess a controlled substance, such as marijuana. Under existing law the courts have the authority, at their discretion, to deny Federal benefits to anyone convicted of using, possessing or selling a controlled substance, such as marijuana. My bill would eliminate the discretion of the courts in those States, which have approved the use of illegal drugs for medical use. In other words, anyone who violates Federal law in this matter would immediately lose any Federal benefit, license or grant for which they might otherwise be eligible.

The Federal Government, or more specifically, the Food and Drug Administration has repeatedly rejected marijuana for medical use because it adversely impacts concentration and memory, the lungs, motor coordination and the immune system.

A recent evaluation of the issue by scientists at the National Institute of Health concluded:

> After carefully examining the existing preclinical and human data, there is no evidence to suggest that smoked marijuana might be superior to currently available therapies for glaucoma, weight loss associated with AIDS, and nausea and vomiting associated with cancer chemotherapy.

There is also increasing scientific evidence that marijuana would be the last medication you would want to prescribe to persons with AIDS since smoked marijuana further compromises the immune system, increasing the risk of infections and respiratory problems.

As we know, the organizations which promoted the California and Arizona medical marijuana initiatives—NORML/Drug Policy Foundation, intentionally exploited the pain and suffering of others as part of their back door attempt to legalize marijuana.

Within the next few days I will introduce a bill to deny Federal highway funds to any State which has approved the use of medical marijuana and yet failed to enact the Solomon amendment, suspending the drivers licenses to persons convicted of using a controlled substance.

In addition, I will be introducing legislation to require DEA to revoke the Federal license of a physician to dispense medication if they recommended the use of marijuana for medical purposes. Federal law—Title 21 U.S.C. Code, section 824, provides the President authority to deny a doctor's registration to dispense controlled substances medication, if they are found to commit acts inconsistent with the public interest. In other words, the President already has the authority under existing law to end the medical marijuana fraud. All we really need is decisive action on his part. However, given the unwillingness of this President to fight the War on Drugs, Congress must act.

BUILDING ON WELFARE AND IMMIGRATION REFORMS: THE JOB OPPORTUNITY AND WELFARE REDUCTION ACT OF 1997

HON. BOB FRANKS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Job Opportunity and Welfare Reduction Act of 1997. It will provide States with a new tool to help move individuals off of welfare and into jobs.

My bill would require the Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS] to notify State welfare agencies of any job opportunities that become available as a result of the removal of unauthorized aliens from work sites.

Mr. Speaker, according to the INS, 4,900 work site enforcement operations were conducted last year resulting in the removal of 14,000 unauthorized workers. My bill would bring together Federal, State, and local governments in an effort to fill these vacated positions with welfare recipients who are looking for work.

Furthermore, as an added incentive, States that participate in this program will be eligible for extra Federal funding from funds already authorized in last year's welfare reform bill. I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation.

CLONING

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I am inserting my Washington Report for Wednesday, March 26, 1997 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

HELLO DOLLY: THE DEBATE OVER CLONING

Recent news reports that researchers in Scotland cloned a sheep named Dolly have generated both curiosity and concern among scientists, the clergy and government leaders. Dolly is not the first animal to be cloned by her creators, but it does mark a significant advance in this area of scientific research.

Cloning animals could have a number of significant medical and agricultural applications, including developing animals whose organs can be used for human transplants, developing animal milk proteins used to treat disease, and creating improved breeds of livestock. These advances will not be seen in the near term because current cloning techniques are quite costly and inefficient. Further research is necessary to develop cost-effective and efficient laboratory cloning techniques for commercial use.

There is concern, however, about what Dolly means for the future of human cloning. Although science has not been pushed to the point where humans can be cloned, there are potential applications of specialized cell cloning and advanced gene therapies that hold tremendous medical promise. The technique used by Scottish scientists to clone Dolly may enable medical science to explore therapies, such as growing new skin for burn victims, culturing bone marrow for treating cancer patients, manipulating genes to cure sickle cell anemia, and treating human infertility. Yet, the prospect of manipulating human cells in this way raises ethical and moral questions about the sanctity of human life and the ability of scientists to create human beings.

WHAT IS CLONING

Cloning describes a process of creating exact duplicates of cells or organisms. Traditional cloning methods require manipulating an embryo, a fertilized egg, to make such copies. The creators of Dolly, however, did not use a fertilized egg, but rather an adult mammary cell and an unfertilized egg. The Scottish researchers activated all the genes in a specialized adult cell to create an embryo, and then implanted the cloned embryo in a surrogate sheep mother. That embryo grew to term resulting in the birth of a live lamb. This new cloning technique is significant because it will allow researchers to clone an exact replica of an animal. Researchers could not control the genetic make-up of clones using embryos.

Human cloning has not advanced to this stage. In 1993, private researchers announced that they were able to clone human embryos using embryos created by in vitro fertilization techniques that were not suitable for in utero implantation. The cloned embryos did not develop to a point where they could be transferred to a human surrogate. Since that time there have been no further reports of human cloning experimentation, and laws have been enacted which prohibit the use of federal funding for research involving the creation of human embryos. Dolly, however, raises the possibility of cloning human beings using unfertilized eggs.

POLICY DEBATE

The debate over cloning pits those who say government should not seek to regulate scientific inquiry against those who believe government should place limits on the scope of scientific research, particularly in the area of human cloning. This latter group argue that the cloning of Dolly suggests the possibility of scientists, at some future time, reproducing human beings by manipulating the genetic materials in unfertilized eggs. Opponents object that scientists should not be in the business of creating human life, and raise further questions regarding a clone's identity as a human.

GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSE TO DOLLY

Shortly after the announcement of Dolly's existence, President Clinton asked a national bioethics commission to begin a thorough review of the legal and ethical issues associated with the use of cloning technology. The commission is expected to report its findings to the President in late May. The President also ordered a moratorium on the use of federal funds for human cloning and urged the private sector to adopt a voluntary ban on human cloning until the commission completes its evaluation. Current law forbids the use of federal funding for human embryo research, including using human embryos for cloning, but the Administration considered the moratorium necessary because embryonic tissue was not used to clone Dolly. Congress is also reviewing the matter. Bills have been introduced to prohibit the use of federal funds for cloning or to ban human cloning outright. Committees have started to debate these proposals. The Administration is urging Congress to wait until the commission's work is completed, rather than risk passing a law which might have the unintended effect of hampering research on gene therapies for various hereditary conditions like Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Information about the ability of a cell to turn on and off specialized capabilities will likely facilitate further advances in biomedical and agricultural research.