

are being made in other diseases every day, we cannot let another generation of children slip away.

I have recently met with the parents and professionals of a group called CURE AUTISM NOW, and they have let me know that there is hope for people with autism. The top neurologists and geneticists in the country say that autism will yield to medical research, there will be prevention, treatments, and maybe even a cure. It is only a question of time, energy, money, and will.

Sick children are at a special disadvantage in this world. They cannot raise money for research, they do not vote, they have no political access. Their voices are small and soft. This is even more so for autistic children, many of whom have no voice at all and whose parents are distracted and depleted by the challenges of caring for them, fighting for insurance coverage, fighting the State for services, and fighting exhaustion, disillusionment and despair. It is, therefore, no surprise that pediatric illnesses are funded at a level far below diseases that affect adults.

Recently, the parents of autistic children have visited me and many other Members and their staffs to inform us about autism and the deficiency in current spending. We hope that Congress will support strong report language encouraging the NIH to redouble its efforts in the fight against autism. In particular, I encourage my colleagues to support Centers of Excellence for Autism modeled after the very successful center program for Alzheimers.

I know that every disease is worthy and every parent's pain is deep. Human suffering is not a competitive sport to be ranked or rated. But in autism we have been so behind for so long, and there is so much progress to be made at this critical moment. I ask all of my colleagues to give us a helping hand, and find a cure for autism.

STATEMENT BY KRISTINA SWEET,
HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL,
REGARDING CHILD POVERTY

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 1997

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of my colleagues I would like to have printed in the RECORD this statement by a high school student from Harwood Union School in Vermont, who was speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people.

Ms. SWEET. The instances of young children, children under age of 6 living in poverty in the United States has risen dramatically over the last two decades. Child poverty is a problem that encompasses urban, suburban, and rural areas and affects children of all ethnic backgrounds.

Between the years of 1975, 2 years after the lowest recorded child poverty level, 11.1 percent, the rate increased 39 percent, so that by 1994, one in four young children lived in poverty in the United States. Forty-five percent of all children under the age of 6 lived in poor or nearly poor families.

Because poverty has proved to be more detrimental to young children than to any other age group, because poverty often means hunger, poor health care, poor education, and even because of the economic problems of a future ill-prepared work force

the issue of child poverty is one that necessitates immediate action.

Why the great rise in child poverty? Over the past two decades and especially since the beginning of the 1980's there has occurred an increasing gap between the rich and poor in this country. The average workers wages have declined since 1970 while the wealthiest fifth of the population has seen their incomes increased. This small distribution of wealth significantly affects the poverty of children when 62 percent of all poor children live with at least one working relative.

Even more important than reforming the welfare system will be the reform of an economy that has created the largest gap between the rich and the poor in any industrialized nation. In the past 2 years because of the increased funding of the welfare system and other programs, poverty rates have made a moderate decline. With the new welfare reform bill passed in 1996, loss of funding may cause another increase in child poverty. The work requirement of the new welfare bill will not be affected until backed up with adequate child care and health care programs and a reform of the economy.

Many welfare recipients also because they are unable to find work for a living wage and unable to care for their children while at work, single parents especially need to be provided with access to affordable and adequate child care and health services if they are to work outside of the home.

Children are the future leaders, the future work force, the future citizens of the United States of which one in four even today is living in poverty or near poverty or without many of the opportunities needed to live successfully as citizens of the United States.

Congressman SANDERS, I thank you for your time and urge you to consider the children of the Nation as much as possible in the future.

Poverty gives young children, especially young mothers, pregnant mothers, children can end up with low-birth weight and are more—after they are born—are more susceptible to disease and malnutrition and other health problems and are also more unable to get a good education as children of welfare.

It generally impacts the future of a child who grows up poor who has considerably less access to a good education, is less motivated in school and doesn't really see a way out of poverty.

Considering that welfare only takes up 2 percent of the Federal budget I think that more funding could be put into helping people who have children who are unable to make a decent wage, to help the children get a better education and get decent health care.

Most people that are receiving welfare are unable to make a decent wage and even if they are unable to pay for education that would provide them with a better job.

The percentage that I found was that only 2 percent of the population is receiving Federal aid and is entirely unemployed, so 62 percent of all families with four children are working, have at least one relative that is working, so I think that we need to provide people with better jobs, with better pay.

With the new computer technology there are a lot of jobs predicted but I do not think most people who are poor are properly educated to go in those sorts of fields.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ADAM
JAMES

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is truly my pleasure to rise today to congratulate Mr. Adam James on winning the 1997 Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary Voice of Democracy broadcast script writing contest for Indiana. A resident of Hobart, IN, Adam is one of 54 high school students Nation wide to win a college scholarship for his script on the topic, "Democracy—Above and Beyond."

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary is now in its 50th year of sponsorship for the Voice of Democracy audio-essay scholarship competition. The program requires high school student entrants to write and record a 3- to 5-minute essay on an announced patriotic theme. Adam James was sponsored by VFW Post 5365 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Hobart, IN. He was named the recipient of the \$1,000 Department of Arizona and Auxiliary Harry A. Kosht Memorial Scholarship Award earlier this year. A junior at Hobart High School, Adam aspires to pursue a career in law.

Adam's winning broadcast script reads as follows:

Living in the United States, the one thing that I cherish is democracy. Waking every morning and not donning this cloak of freedom is a notion I cannot fathom. Many Americans, myself included, often take our freedom for granted. We treat it as a right instead of the privilege that it is. Fortunately for us, in our democratic society, freedom is a right.

I wish that I could praise my ancestors for providing me with freedom, but I cannot. I am not related to any of the soldiers who fought or played a part in the American Revolution. My father's family were immigrants who came here in the 1800s. My mother's side of the family came to the states after World War II.

Although they did not fight for America's freedom, my grandparents on my mother's side are subjects of a story that truly demonstrates what democracy is. My grandfather Nikola was a leader of a European underground movement against the Communist government. He used to tell stories about having to carry a semi-automatic pistol with his whenever he took my grandmother on a date. In fact, on the day he died, three years ago, he was still wanted dead or alive in the former Yugoslavia. In the 1940s, my grandfather was fighting against his government when Adolf Hitler invaded Eastern Europe. Being a high-ranking soldier, my grandfather knew that Hitler would imprison him, so he and my grandmother packed up their few possessions and escaped. They made it back on foot to middle Italy, where they were captured by German soldiers and placed in a work camp. Held as prisoners there, they slaved until the United Nations freed Europe from the grasp of the demoniacal Hitler. After the war, my grandparents were put in a detention camp, where my mother was born. Later, they moved to America, settled in the Midwest, and my grandfather became a steelworker. Here they bought a home and raised five children.

This is what makes democracy what it is. In their former country, my grandparents had to hide to prevent being killed and would