

IN RECOGNITION OF THE PORT WASHINGTON YOUTH ACTIVITIES 8TH ANNUAL HALL OF FAME DINNER

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 1998

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three individuals who will be honored on Friday, June 19th, 1998, for their dedication and support of youth activities in the town of Port Washington, New York. Julius Picardi, Frank Giordano and Jack Sommerville will be so honored by induction into the Port Washington Youth Activities Hall of Fame at the PYA's eighth annual affair. They will join a select group of twenty others who have been previously recognized by the PYA.

Mr. Picardi has been a dynamic force in the growth of the PYA during the 1980s serving as coach, organization treasurer, officer and director for over fifteen years. Mr. Giordano is cited for his athletic achievements including collegiate lacrosse at the United States Military Academy in the early 1980s. Many of his skills and his dedication to excellence were developed in his active days as a youth in the PYA programs. Finally, Mr. Sommerville is remembered for his tireless dedication as coach and supporter of PYA baseball programs for more than ten years.

All three of these gentlemen are recognized for their individual and collective contributions to youth sports and all they embody. They are an excellent reflection upon themselves, their families, their community and the volunteer spirit of American organizations, such as PYA. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognizing these individuals who are most deserving of this honor, with special appreciation from their neighbors and friends.

THE ASSISTIVE AND UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT ACT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 1998

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce H.R. XX, the Assistive and Universally Designed Technology Improvement Act for Individuals with Disabilities. H.R. XX is the House companion bill to S. 2173 offered by my distinguished Senate colleague from Missouri, Mr. BOND.

Last July, my Technology Subcommittee held a hearing focusing on the transfer of federal technologies to meet the needs of those with disabled conditions. We learned from the hearing that these technologies, known as "assistive technologies" are being used to increase, maintain, and improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Assistive technologies is a device, whether acquired commercially, off-the-shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Examples of assistive technologies, which provide for more independent, productive, and enjoyable living,

can be simple or complex. It ranges from: Velcro, adapted clothing and toys, computers, seating systems, powered mobility, augmentative communication devices, special switches, assisted listening devices, visual aids, memory prosthetics, to thousands of other commercially available or adapted items. As examples, it can be: a computer that can be used by an individual with Cerebral Palsy, a motor scooter, a hearing aid for an individual who is aging, or enhanced voice recognition for someone with Multiple Sclerosis.

Assistive technologies provide a disabled individual the means to function better in the workplace or the home. This technology, which aids Americans with physical or mental disabilities, improves the end users' quality of life and provides a means for acquiring a job. For the 49 million people in the United States who have disabilities, as well as for Americans who are able bodied, assistive technologies have yielded a tremendous number of quality of life enhancements.

These technology solutions improve an individual's ability to learn, compete, work and interact with family and friends. People use assistive technology to achieve greater independence and to enhance the quality of their lives.

A preliminary study on the impact and benefits of assistive technologies was conducted by the National Council on Disability in 1993. Surveyed were 136 individuals with disabilities to evaluate the costs and benefits associated with the use of different kinds of technology-related assistance. The individuals were from four age groups and the results indicate a significant impact of assistive technologies on many aspects of the respondents lives, including: the majority of infants with disabilities benefited by having fewer health problems; nearly 75% of school age children were able to remain in a regular classroom, and 45% were able to reduce their use of school-related services; 65% of working-age persons were able to reduce dependence on family members, 58% were able to reduce dependence on paid assistance, and 37% were able to increase earnings. Among elderly persons, 80% were able to reduce dependence on others, half were able to reduce dependency on paid persons, and half were able to avoid entering a nursing home.

As a result of our July hearing, the Technology Subcommittee was impressed with the need for a greater emphasis to develop assistive technologies. Yet, the area of assistive technology is greatly overlooked by the Federal Government and the private sector. While the importance of assistive technologies spans age and disability classifications, assistive technology does not maintain the recognition in the Federal Government necessary to provide important assistance for research and development programs or to individuals with disabilities.

The private sector generally lacks adequate incentives to produce assistive technologies and end-users lack adequate resources to acquire assistive technology. It is also believed that there are insufficient links between federally funded assistive technology research and development programs and the private sector entities responsible for translating research and development into significant new products in the marketplace for end-users.

H.R. — provides federally supported incentives in all areas of assistive and universally

designed technology, including need identification, research and development, product evaluation, technology transfer, and commercialization. These incentives achieve the goal of improving the quality, functional capability, distribution, and affordability of this essential technology. The legislation seeks to:

Improve the peer review process at the National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation (NIDRR) at the Department of Education. These improvements would provide greater assistive and universally designed technology products to the marketplace, increase small business involvement in research and development, and assure research and development efforts would cover all disability groups including persons with physical and mental disabilities, as well as the aging and rural technology users.

Augment technology transfer by improving the role of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) to increase its authority, accountability and ability to coordinate. Provisions are included for the increased usage of the Federal labs to improve coordination with all Federal agencies involved in assistive and universally designed technology research and development and for providing public and private sector partnerships for assistive and universally designed technology research and development.

Increase the market for assistive technology by clarifying Title III of the Tech Act for the Microloan program. This microloan program assists disabled persons in obtaining assistive and universally designed technology.

Authorizes funding for the Interagency Committee on Disability Research to hire staff and for operating costs associated with issuing surveys and reports and to the National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation to provide for assistive and universally designed technology research and development.

Increase access to assistive and universally designed technology by creating tax incentives to provide businesses a tax credit for the development of assistive technology, to expand the architectural and transportation barrier removal deduction to include communication barriers, and to expand the work opportunity credit to include expenses incurred in the acquisition of technology to facilitate the employment of any individual with a disability.

I am pleased that H.R. — already has the support of the United Cerebral Palsy Association, the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America, the National Easter Seal Society, and The Association of Tech Act Projects.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill and I will work towards enactment of this worthy legislation.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL GREGORY
G. BEAN

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 1998

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives pay tribute to Colonel Gregory G. Bean. Since 1995, Colonel Bean has served with distinction as the District Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Memphis District in Tennessee's Ninth Congressional District.