

graciously thank Ed Williams for all of his determination and hard work over the years in bringing this clinic to Valdosta.

The Valdosta Veterans Health Care Clinic, located at 2123 N. Ashley St. in Valdosta, will serve the 7,000 veterans in Lowndes County and almost 5,000 veterans in the surrounding counties. The veterans of Georgia owe Mr. Williams the deepest gratitude and appreciation for his tireless efforts to secure the new facility.

Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge and honor Ed Williams for his outstanding and innumerable contributions over the years to the Valdosta area, to the State of Georgia and to our Nation. He has dedicated his life to inspiring and improving us all, and I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting and congratulating Ed Williams on the opening of the Valdosta Veterans Health Care Clinic. It is great to see all of Ed's hard work pay off!•

#### CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise to bring to my colleagues' attention an opinion piece from the New York Times by Bruce A. Lucero. Mr. Lucero until recently owned and operated the "New Woman, All Women Health Care" abortion clinic and remains, in his words, "staunchly pro-choice." He also supports my Child Custody Protection Act, S. 1645, currently being marked-up in the Judiciary Committee. This article shows, I believe, that even strong pro-choice advocates have good reason to join with those of us who are pro-life in supporting parental involvement in their daughters' decision whether or not to have an abortion.

In his article, Mr. President, Mr. Lucero points out that the Child Custody Protection Act is important for the health of teen-age girls across America. By making it illegal for anyone to take a minor across state lines for an abortion without first meeting the home state's parental notification requirements, this Act sees to it that parents are involved in their daughter's critical medical decision of whether to have an abortion. Where teen-agers cannot consult their parents, for example because of abuse, a judge may waive the parental notification requirement. But as Mr. Lucero points out, parents almost always are the best source of emotional support and financial assistance for girls facing unplanned pregnancies. In addition, teen-age girls who avoid consulting their parents too often end up having later term, more dangerous procedures and avoiding necessary follow-up care. These factors combine to increase medical risks significantly for teen-age girls who undergo secret abortions.

Mr. Lucero calls for people on both sides of the abortion issue to join in supporting the Child Custody Protection Act. As he states, "The only way we can and should keep abortions legal is to keep them safe. To fight laws that

would achieve this does no one any good—not the pregnant teen-agers, the parents or the pro-choice movement."

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the abortion issue will take seriously Mr. Lucero's point, that the health and well-being of the teen-age girls of America is too important to allow ideology to keep their parents from fully participating in crucial decisions such as whether or not to have an abortion, and I urge them to support S. 1645, the Child Custody Protection Act.

I ask that the full text of Mr. Lucero's article be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the New York Times, July 12, 1998]

#### PARENTAL GUIDANCE NEEDED

(By Bruce A. Lucero)

Alexandria, VA.—I am a doctor who performed some 45,000 abortions during 15 years in practice in Alabama. Even though I no longer perform abortions, I am still staunchly pro-choice.

But I find that I disagree with many in the pro-choice movement on the issue of parental notification laws for teen-agers. Specifically, I support the Child Custody Protection bill now being considered by Congress. Under the legislation, it would be illegal for anyone to accompany a minor across state lines for an abortion if that minor failed to meet the requirement for parental consent or notification in her home state.

The legislation, which the House is scheduled to vote on this week, is important not only to the health of teen-age girls, but to the pro-choice movement as well.

Opponents of the measure believe that the bill would simply extend the reach of a state's parental notification or consent law to other states. And they claim that teen-agers would resort to unsafe abortions rather than tell their parents.

In truth, however, in most cases a parent's input is the best guarantee that a teen-ager will make a decision that is correct for her—be it abortion, adoption or keeping the baby. And it helps guarantee that if a teen-ager chooses an abortion, she will receive appropriate medical care.

In cases where teen-agers can't tell their parents—because of abuse, for instance—parental notification laws allow teen-agers to petition a judge for a waiver.

Society has always decided at what age teen-agers should have certain rights—be it the right to drive a car or the right to vote. In the same way, society should determine at what age a minor has the right to an abortion without notifying their parents.

In almost all cases, the only reason that a teen-age girl doesn't want to tell her parents about her pregnancy is that she feels ashamed and doesn't want to let her parents down.

But parents are usually the ones who can best help that teen-ager consider her options. And whatever the girl's decision, parents can provide the necessary emotional support and financial assistance. Even in a conservative state like Alabama, I found that parents were almost always supportive.

If a teen-ager seeks an abortion out of state, however, things become infinitely more complicated. Instead of telling her parents, she may delay her abortion and try to scrape together enough money—usually \$150 to \$300—herself. As a result, she often waits too long and then has to turn to her parents for help to pay for a more expensive and riskier second-trimester abortion.

Also, patients who receive abortions at out-of-state clinics frequently do not return for follow-up care, which can lead to dangerous complications. And a teen-ager who has an abortion across state lines without her parents' knowledge is even more unlikely to tell them that she is having complications.

Ultimately, the pro-choice movement hurts itself by opposing these kinds of laws. I have had many parents sit in my office with their teen-age daughter and say, "We never thought this would happen to us" or, "We were against abortion, but now it is different."

The hard truth is that people often become pro-choice only when they experience an unwanted pregnancy or when their daughter does. Too often, pro-choice advocates oppose laws that make common sense simply because the opposition supports or promotes them. The only way we can and should keep abortions legal is to keep them safe. To fight laws that would achieve this end does no one any good—not the pregnant teen-agers, the parents or the pro-choice movement.•

#### Y2K PROBLEM

• Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, President Clinton yesterday called for urgent action regarding the Year 2000 (Y2K) problem in a speech at the National Academy of Sciences. The President stated "This is clearly one of the most complex management challenges in history." He cited progress in American business and the Federal Government in preparing for the Y2K problem, while simultaneously noting "far too many businesses, especially small-and medium-sized firms, will not be ready unless they begin to act."

I am pleased to see that President Clinton is speaking openly about the seriousness of the Y2K computer problem. Over two years ago I stated "that the Year 2000 problem is indeed serious, and that fixing it will be costly and time-consuming. The problem deserves the careful and coordinated attention of the Federal Government, as well as the private sector, in order to avert major disruptions on January 1, 2000." On July 31, 1996 I sent President Clinton a letter expressing my views and concerns about Y2K. I warned him of the "extreme negative economic consequences of the Y2K Time Bomb," and suggested that "a presidential aide be appointed to take responsibility for assuring that all Federal Agencies, including the military, be Y2K compliant by January 1, 1999 [leaving a year for 'testing'] and that all commercial and industrial firms doing business with the federal government must also be compliant by that date."

I trust the President's acknowledgment of the Y2K issue as a grave and pervasive problem will prompt the agencies and private sector to act quickly. Yet having spent two years studying the problem and warning of the lagging progress of federal agencies in addressing it, I must state that combating the millennium bug at this late date "looks to be the 13th labor of Hercules." I can only hope that both American businesses and the Federal Government follow the President's