

would then be used to create a national database containing the medical history of all Americans. Establishment of such an identifier would allow federal bureaucrats to track every citizen's medical history from cradle to grave. Furthermore, it is possible that every medical professional, hospital, and Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) in the country would be able to access an individual citizen's record simply by entering the patient's identifier into the national database.

As an OB/GYN with more than 30 years experience in private practice, I know better than most the importance of preserving the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship. Oftentimes, effective treatment depends on a patient's ability to place absolute trust in his or her doctor. What will happen to that trust when patients know that any and all information given their doctor will be placed in a data base accessible by anyone who knows the patient's "unique personal identifier?"

I ask my colleagues, how comfortable would you be confiding any emotional problem, or even an embarrassing physical problem like impotence, to your doctor if you knew that this information could be easily accessed by friend, foe, possible employers, coworkers, HMOs, and government agents?

Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration has even come out in favor of allowing law enforcement officials access to health care information, in complete disregard of the fifth amendment. It is bitterly ironic that the same administration that has proven so inventive at protecting its privacy has so little respect for physician-patient confidentiality.

Many of my colleagues will admit that the American people have good reason to fear a government-mandated health ID card, but they will claim such problems can be "fixed" by additional legislation restricting the use of the identifier and forbidding all but certain designated persons to access those records.

This argument has two flaws. First of all, history has shown that attempts to protect the privacy of information collected by, or at the command, of the government are ineffective at protecting citizens from the prying eyes of government officials. I ask my colleagues to think of the numerous cases of IRS abuses that were brought to our attention in the past few months, the history of abuse of FBI files, and the case of a Medicaid clerk in Maryland who accessed a computerized database and sold patient names to an HMO. These are just some of many examples that show that the only effective way to protect privacy is to forbid the government from assigning a unique number to any citizen.

The second, and most important reason, legislation "protecting" the unique health identifier is insufficient is that the federal government lacks any constitutional authority to force citizens to adopt a universal health identifier, regardless of any attached "privacy protections." Any federal action that oversteps constitutional limitations violates liberty for it ratifies the principle that the federal government, not the Constitution, is the ultimate arbitrator of its own jurisdiction over the people. The only effective protection of the rights of citizens is for Congress and the American people to follow Thomas Jefferson's advice and "bind (the federal government) down with the chains of the Constitution."

For those who claim that the Patient Privacy Act would interfere with the plans to "simplify"

and "streamline" the health care system, under the Constitution, the rights of people should never take a backseat to the convenience of the government or politically powerful industries like HMOs.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has no authority to endanger the privacy of personal medical information by forcing all citizens to adopt a uniform health identifier for use in a national data base. A uniform health ID endangers the constitutional liberties, threatens the doctor-patient relationships, and could allow federal officials access to deeply personal medical information. There can be no justification for risking the rights of private citizens. I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Patient Privacy Act.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GENO
SACCOMANNO

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize an individual, who for the past 50 years, has donated his life to the ongoing fight against cancer. Dr. Geno Saccomanno, a cytologist from Grand Junction, CO, is a simple, dedicated man with a personal history that rivals most in accomplishment and commitment. Some of his most notable achievements both professionally and philanthropically, include his groundbreaking and world-renowned cancer research methods, his two popular cytology texts, his scholarship fund for underprivileged high school graduates, his St. Mary's Saccomanno Education Center, and the Catholic school and church that will be built on land he recently donated near his home. As you can see, Dr. Saccomanno is a man who works for the good of all people, in every area of his life.

When Dr. Saccomanno arrived in Grand Junction as a pathologist in 1948, he was the first to pay appropriate attention to the most pressing local cancer issue. As he had noticed in some of his doctoral studies at St. Louis University, Dr. Saccomanno saw correlations between cancer incidence and the coal mines working in Western Colorado and Eastern Utah. His analysis of this issue set the stage for a long life in lung cancer research and diagnosis.

Considered today by colleagues and professionals worldwide as one of the world's foremost pioneers and prophets in lung cancer research, Saccomanno's research techniques are considered a standard in laboratories around the world. His first method of cell separation to detect mutation utilized his wife Ginny's blender and a few simple medical tools. Through the years, his techniques have grown and developed with the aid of technology so much that his research methods are widely praised and world renowned. In fact, the American Cancer Institute is currently attempting to duplicate his processes with a computer.

Dr. Saccomanno has won several well-deserved awards and published a myriad of medical reports during his 50-year career, all that have led to a considerable reputation among a wide range of people. He is revered by everyone, from his colleagues at St. Mary's

to VIP's at the Department of Energy to his friends at the National Cancer Institute.

Today, the 82-year-old Dr. Saccomanno continues his work in the field he has grown to love. Each morning he makes the daily trek from his home to the lab where he continues to look at his vast collection of tissue samples, lung X-rays, and secretions searching for a clue that would someday lead to a cure for cancer. Dr. Saccomanno's obvious dedication to his life's work and the medical field is something that is admired by all.

I would like to take a moment today to thank Dr. Saccomanno for both his efforts in finding a cure for cancer, as well as for all that he has done for his community. He is an excellent example of how important dedication and perseverance are in one's personal and professional life. He sets a standard that we should all strive to emulate. It is an honor for me to count Dr. Saccomanno as one of my constituents and to represent him in Congress.

HONORING DOUGLAS M. BARRETT

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of a resident of Nashua, New Hampshire, Mr. Douglas M. Barrett, on the occasion of his retirement from Sanders, a Lockheed Martin Company. Mr. Barrett's 41 years of dedication to improving our Nation's security, and his devotion to his community, set a standard of commitment and excellence for which we should all strive.

Since beginning his employment at Sanders Associates in 1957, Mr. Barrett has been an integral part of the development and fielding of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems that have been critical to keeping the peace when possible and prevailing at war when necessary. His devotion to getting the best possible technical solutions into the hands of our soldiers, sailors and airmen in the shortest periods of time, and at the best value to the government is to be greatly commended.

As the Vice President and General Manager of the Surveillance Systems Business Area of Sanders since 1982, Mr. Barrett has been instrumental to the growth and stability of the economy in and around Nashua through the creation of jobs. He has also played a major role in providing educational opportunities for the citizens of the greater Nashua area as a board member and past president of the Adult Learning Center.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join with me in recognizing the unwavering commitment and total dedication of Mr. Douglas M. Barrett to his company, community and country.

"LET'S GET TOUGH ON DRUGS"

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask if the Clinton Administration has any defined position on casual drug use and any