

Through small class sizes, with an average of eight students per class, the faculty can interact better with their students, leading to better academic success. However, the College is more than a learning institution, it also promotes responsibility and self-reliance. Beacon students are called upon to identify their own learning styles as well as their strengths and weaknesses to prepare them for their roles in society.

Beacon College goes beyond teaching, it prepares its students for a meaningful career and an independent lifestyle. I am glad that I am able to share with my colleagues the commitment of Beacon College to providing opportunities for those with learning disabilities. Through its efforts, the College is making a richer life for its students and their families.

REMARKS ON IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to strongly oppose the impeachment of the President of the United States. My President. The People's President.

Today we embarrass the memory of our country's Founders as we torture the intent of the genius of their system of *balancing* the awesome powers of Government. Once our votes are cast on this despicable issue, no longer will we be able to look upon ourselves and our House as honorable; or even as men and women who are here to serve as a *check* on the power of the Executive. Instead, we will have become a House that sits in moral judgement over another man, meting out *punishment* for personal deeds which we deem unacceptable. The Majority party, however, has decided that this course is pre-determined, because we must uphold "the rule of law." Otherwise, our country will descend into chaos.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, no one is above the law—and there is no question that the law must be followed. But we also serve a greater document: and that is the Constitution of the United States. And it is the words within that great document that we must follow in this case as we decide whether the disgraceful behavior by the President merits his impeachment.

Mr. Speaker, under your leadership and that of your party, we stand here—small men with petty careers, and partisan of purpose, to diminish our great Republic. Devoid of a sense of proportion and overburdened with an excess of hubris, you claim conscience as your exclusive domain, and deny us the right to offer the People's Will—a motion of censure. I can only surmise the answer to that is because the Republican leadership is being driven by a core of short-sighted, bitter, and small-minded people who would do away with the *high-minded* principles espoused and framed for time immemorial by the Founders of this Nation. And they would do this for the sole reason that they do not agree with the President's actions. However, the President's behavior does not put him in the category of those who would commit treason, except perhaps in the minds of those conspiracy theorists who are consuming the Majority party.

Let me be clear that what we do here today is an oligarchical act that attempts to recreate a presidency that would serve at the Majority's *whim*, rather than at the *will* of the people. Mr. Speaker, please believe me that the gravity of this action will not go unnoticed by the public that we purport to serve.

To be sure, the President has shamed himself greatly.

To be clear, it is we who are about to become the shame of the Nation.

EXCELLENCE IN MILITARY SERVICE ACT

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Excellence in Military Service Act."

This legislation would increase the active duty service obligation (ADSO) of Military Service Academy graduates from five to eight years. Many Americans do not realize that this free and highly competitive college education costs the average taxpayer over \$270,000 per cadet/midshipman. While I believe that investing in our military is critical to the future stability of our nation, I do not think it is fair to burden the taxpayer with this expense without requiring academy graduates to exhibit a similar commitment in their ADSO. I maintain that it is not unreasonable that for a free education, with a monetary allowance, that a graduating cadet/midshipman be required to commit to a longer period of obligated service upon commissioning.

As college tuition continues to skyrocket, I believe our U.S. military academies will become even more attractive to prospective college students. In light of this fact, we need to ensure that a free education does not become a primary motivation for future applicants. I maintain that increasing the ADSO is an effective way to accomplish this without jeopardizing the viability of these historic institutions.

I hope my colleagues will join with me to protect the U.S. taxpayers' investment in one of our nation's most precious resources.

12-YEAR TERM LIMITS

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a proposed amendment to the Constitution that will limit the number of terms a Member of Congress may serve to a uniform, lifetime term limit of 12 years in the House and 12 years in the Senate. This is a proposal I have enthusiastically pushed for over the years and one I continue to support. I am firmly convinced that this is the single biggest obstacle to making some of the tough decisions that have to be made as we move into the 21st century. Term limits is not a partisan issue. It is a sound proposal with broad popular support.

The arguments for term limits are numerous and persuasive. Volumes could be written on

the issue but I would like to stress one point. Term limits are not simply to create turnover for the sake of turnover. It is important to get fresh blood in Congress, but it is more important to change the institution as a whole in a manner that only term limits can achieve. Term limits would end the pervasive careerism in Congress.

The status quo in Congress encourages longevity in service. One's impact in Congress is almost directly related to the length of time the Member has served. This is due to the fact that the House and Senate are directed primarily by the elected leadership and the full and subcommittee chairmen. Few rise to these levels without significant time served. Therefore, many Members will do their best to stay in Congress as long as possible, making it a career. Consequently the tendency of most will be to try to please every interest group in order to get reelected. While term limits would not completely end this attitude, it would mitigate it considerably because term limits would mean that when somebody is elected to Congress they would know that they were only coming here to serve a short period of time, not to make a career of it. I favor term limits not because of a hostility toward Congress but as an affectionate measure to restore Congress to its rightful role as a deliberative branch of government which governs with the next generation, not just the next election, in mind.

Term limits will give us the citizen legislature the Founding Fathers envisioned and effect fundamental reform in the attitude of those serving in Congress as well as in the attitude about service in Congress. Term limits will inject fresh ideas in Congress, ensure a rotation of influence and give people more choices with more open seat elections.

Congress has both an opportunity and an obligation to make fundamental changes which improve the way in which Congress works for the American people. Fighting for term limits is central to that effort and I urge my colleagues to support this proposal.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTISM STATISTICS, SURVEILLANCE, RESEARCH, AND EPIDEMIOLOGY ACT OF 1999 (ASSURE)

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am re-introducing legislation that will provide \$7.5 million to establish several centers of expertise in autism in an effort to quantify the incidence and prevalence of autism, as well as develop new ways to treat and prevent pervasive developmental disorders such as autism. My legislation—The Autism Statistics, Surveillance, Research, and Epidemiology Act of 1999 (ASSURE)—will empower the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) in the fight against autism.

This bill was crafted in close cooperation with the National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR), the developmental disabilities experts at CDC, as well as with service providers from New Jersey. It is a health care and medical research bill which is long overdue, and I urge all of my colleagues to lend it their support.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "autism is a serious lifelong developmental disability characterized by impaired social interactions, an inability to communicate with others, and repetitive or restrictive behaviors." It is estimated that autism affects one out of every 500 children, although precise rates are unknown. There is also a general consensus that autism rates seem to be increasing, although it is not known whether these increases represent a better understanding of the developmental disability (i.e., better diagnosis), or an actual increase in developed cases of autism.

Under the Smith ASSURE legislation, CDC will uncover and monitor the prevalence of autism at a national level by establishing between three and five "Centers for Research in Autism Epidemiology" across the country. These centers would conduct population-based surveillance and epidemiologic studies of autism. Periodic screenings of the population (5- to 7-year-old children) would be undertaken to examine prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal factors that contribute to autism development.

These centers would combine data from multiple sites to gain a better understanding of how autism differs from other developmental disabilities and disorders. Because autism is suspected to be caused by a combination of both genetic and environmental factors, the ASSURE legislation would help CDC track the trends of autism and determine which factors are responsible for the apparent rise in autism cases nationwide. In short, the ASSURE legislation will build the research infrastructure critical to finding the cause or causes of autism. And once the cause or causes are identified, prevention strategies can be developed and a cure becomes more likely.

The collaborative efforts by CDC and state health departments will help scientists better understand which environmental exposures, if any, are most likely to cause children to develop autism in the womb. In addition, each center established under this legislation would tend to develop a certain niche of autism expertise. Such areas could include: specific genetic markers; early prenatal maternal drug and other exposures; and other autism spectrum disorders.

The story behind the creation of this legislation is in many ways illustrative of why we need to pass and enact the ASSURE act this year. For it was only after I had a meeting with a pair of courageous parents of autistic children in Brick Township that I realized the pressing need for better autism research.

Mr. and Mrs. William Gallagher, the parents of two beautiful children with autism, met with me to share their concerns that Brick Township seemed to have an abnormally high number of children diagnosed with autism. After presenting me with preliminary data suggesting that as many as 27 children may have been diagnosed with autism in Brick over the last decade, I relayed their concerns personally to Len Fishman, Commissioner of New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS). I asked him to initiate a preliminary inquiry to determine if an autism "cluster" investigation was warranted.

Commissioner Fishman was very receptive to the concerns of the Brick parents, but after a few weeks of preliminary research by state officials, it became apparent that the current level of scientific knowledge in the United

States about autism was inadequate to the task at hand. Quite simply, no one knew for certain what the national rate of autism was supposed to look like, and therefore no one could tell parents whether the rate of autism in their town was at, above, or below the national average.

This news came as a surprise to me and to the parents of autistic children. Although there are rough estimates of autism rates from studies in foreign countries, CDC and the NJDHSS did not have enough information to determine if the alleged autism "cluster" in Brick was a real public health problem or an illusion of chance. And without knowing whether or not a problem exists, it makes it tough for public health officials to respond to a community's concerns because the cause of autism and how to prevent it remain shrouded in mystery. Mr. Speaker, the experience of Brick should serve as a wake-up call that more autism research is needed if the causes of the disorder and a cure are to be found anytime soon.

As a first step, an intensive effort by CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is underway to try to derive national autism rates and to determine if an autism "cluster" exists in Brick. The study is one of the first of its kind ever undertaken in the United States, and the results of the investigation will prove invaluable for other communities that may be affected by similarly high numbers of autism cases.

But we need to take the second step and enact this legislation if we are going to generate real progress in the fight to eliminate autism. Mr. Speaker, CDC has already established a pilot program—an autism epidemiology center—near Atlanta, Georgia. The limited but promising results from this initiative points to the fact that current understanding of autism is woefully inadequate and that better surveillance and monitoring of developmental disabilities like autism are critical to providing answers and hope for the nearly 500,000 autistic persons in America.

SUMMARY OF AUTISM STATISTICS, SURVEILLANCE, RESEARCH, AND EPIDEMIOLOGY ACT OF 1999 (ASSURE)

\$7.5 million in authorization for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create the National Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program.

Authorizes CDC to create between three and five "Centers of Excellence in Autism," which would: (1) monitor the prevalence of autism at the national level, (2) assist in development of state autism surveillance programs, (3) provide education and training for health professionals to improve treatment of autism, and (4) develop center-specific expertise in one or more areas of autism research.

Establishes CDC as the nation's clearinghouse for autism research and policy development.

Establishes an advisory committee and authorizes annual reports to Congress on the state of autism research.

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
BURIAL ELIGIBILITY ACT

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join today with the gentleman from Arizona, the

Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, to introduce the Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act. This important legislation is deserving of the strong support of each Member and I am hopeful this measure will receive prompt attention and consideration early in the 106th Congress.

The measure which Chairman STUMP and I are introducing today is similar to legislation approved by the House last year. This measure, like the legislation approved by the House during the 105th Congress, establishes eligibility rules for burial at Arlington National Cemetery—one of our Nation's most hallowed sites.

As noted by the General Accounting Office, the eligibility requirements for burial at Arlington National Cemetery need clarification and the act introduced today provides that clarification. In particular, this important legislation is intended to eliminate the inconsistency in the granting of waivers for burial at Arlington National Cemetery which has occurred in the past.

As both a Marine and a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I know that Arlington National Cemetery is truly sacred ground, especially for our Nation's veterans and their loved ones. Like many others, I was extremely concerned by reports, later shown to be totally without any substantiation, that waivers for burial at Arlington National Cemetery had been granted in exchange for major political contributions.

While an expedited examination of this allegation by the General Accounting Office found "no evidence" of waivers for contributions, it did highlight some of the serious flaws in the existing process for burials at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act which Chairman STUMP and I are introducing today addresses those concerns by removing most of the discretion, ambiguity and guesswork for eligibility for burials at Arlington National Cemetery. This legislation will also make it easier for the public to understand the requirements for burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

I commend the gentleman from Arizona, Chairman STUMP, for his strong and effective leadership and his stalwart efforts to establish, in law, eligibility for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. I invite all of my colleagues to support and cosponsor this most important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO AHMED SAMAWI

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on October 19, 1998, the Greater Cincinnati religious community lost one of its finest leaders. Ahmed Samawi, a friend and a man who treasured his faith and the freedom to worship without consequence, passed away at the age of 65. A devoted family man and successful businessman, he will perhaps be best remembered for his vision of better understanding and closer relations between the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish communities.