Federally regulated self-insured health plans would be required to offer these policies as one of the options available to covered employees.

Many low-income working families simply cannot find room in the family budget to pay the increasingly large premiums for family policies. Moreover, many financially-strapped single parents cannot afford to pay family premiums designed to cover two adults plus children. Kids-only policies could provide an answer for these hard-working and hard-pressed families.

This legislation is sensitive to employers' concerns that they cannot assume further insurance costs. Instead of requiring an employer to shoulder a specified portion of insurance costs, this bill allows the dynamics of the group insurance market to create affordable children's-only policies for the dependents of group health plan beneficiaries.

I am also introducing a second bill to enhance the well-being of federal employees' children. This legislation would allow enrollees in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) to purchase an employee and children-only benefit option at a lower cost than current family coverage options.

My bill would help those federal employees who, because of cost, defer purchasing family health coverage. The bill authorizes the Office of Personnel Management to offer group-rated employee and children only coverage to enrollees of the FEHBP.

There is a real need for a health insurance product that better addresses the needs of low-income and non-traditional families than family policies that are currently available. Group-rated employee and children-only policies would help meet this unfilled need.

Shoring up the decline in employer-sponsored health care is one way to help get kids insured. America's 11,600,000 uninsured children need help. It's time for all of us—in the private and public sector—to pitch in and make sure they get it.

IN HONOR OF DEAN PAUL O'CONNOR

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Dublin, National University of Ireland, The Honorable Paul O'Connor. Dean O'Connor is the guest of honor at the twentieth annual Donahue & Scanlon St. Patrick's Day Party.

Dean O'Connor received primary and postgraduate degrees in law at University College Dublin, the largest law school in Ireland, before qualifying at the Irish Bar in 1976. He was then awarded a fellowship to study at the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated with a Masters in 1978. After practicing briefly in Philadelphia, he returned to his alma mater to take up his first teaching post. Dean O'Connor specializes in the subjects of Criminal Law, Evidence, and Family Law, and he is widely published in each of these areas. In 1986, he resumed his academic acquaintance with the United States as a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Michigan where he studied comparative matrimonial property regimes.

Dean O'Connor has guest lectured in Europe, the United States and Australia. He is a board member of both the Irish Centre for Commercial Law Studies, and the leading Irish law journal, The Irish Jurist. He is also currently a member of the Solicitors profession's Future of the Legal Profession Committee.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring the accomplishments of Dean Paul O'Connor.

HONORING ''MR. HOMES ASSOCIATION''

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with sadness to remember and honor a legendary person from my district, Mr. Harry Brandel, Jr. Mr. Brandel died last week after a long fight with cancer.

He was known as ''Mr. Homes Association'' because he led the Palos Verdes Homes Association for more than three decades. He relinquished this position only when forced to by poor health.

Under Harry's leadership, the community established strict development standards, helping to preserve its extraordinary beauty, low density, and high quality residential ambiance. Harry leaves behind a legacy of beauty and protection that will outlast many generations.

Harry also left his footprint on the city's political life. He was known as a skilled politician, brokering consensus on many controversial development issues. He could do this with his low-key approach and his ability to be friends with his adversaries. This past January, Harry was honored by the city council as the community's longest serving public official. From one public official to another, it is a fitting remembrance, and one to which we should all aspire.

DIRECT CHECK FOR EDUCATION ACT

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, when I talk with parents, teachers principals and school administrators throughout Southern Missouri, it becomes very clear that much needs to be done to strengthen our local school systems. Aging facilities, increasing class sizes, and tight funding are placing a tremendous strain on the quality of education available for our children. And no two school districts are alike in their specific needs. Whether it's building new classrooms, repairing a hole in the gymnasium roof, hiring more teachers, or acquiring new computers or test books, only the parents, educators, and locally elected school boards really know what priorities need to be met in their schools.

There is no question that our local school districts are faced with significant challenges in preparing our children for the future. Unfortunately, our current federal education programs falling well short in assisting our communities to succeed. One of the problems is that 35 percent of federal education funds are spent on meeting the operation budgets of the more than 760 federal education programs spread out between 39 different agencies. This means that only 65 cents of each education dollar is actually making it to our classrooms. This diversion of funds is particularly burdensome on rural communities. Southern Missouri's school districts are limited in local funding options and we simply need more of our federal education dollars returned to us.

Another significant problem is the burdensome federal regulations and mandates that tie schools' hands and cut into educators' valuable teaching time. According to Vice President Gore's National Performance Review, if a local school district decides to apply for a Department of Education grant, the entire process takes 26 weeks and 487 steps from beginning to end. That's 6 months and countless hours spent on applying for a grant—all without any guarantee that the funds will be approved. I have heard from teachers in Southern Missouri who personally spend up to three days out of the week writing grants and filing out paperwork. This is time that our teachers—who are already overloaded with large classes and limited resources—could be dedicating to planning lessons, teaching their classes, and reviewing student's work. It seems to me that our education system needs fewer bureaucrats in Washington crunching numbers and dreaming up federal mandates and more teachers in our local schools educating our children.

I introduced legislation that begins to address the problems of funding and over regulation in our nation's education policy. My legislation—known as the: ''District Check for Education Act,'' or simply ''Direct Check''—would consolidate several Department of Education competitive grant programs and return federal education dollars directly to the local school or school district based on the number of students served. ''Direct Check'' funds are not tied to any burdensome federal regulations or mandates, and they can be used for purchasing text books, computers and technology, teachers' salaries, and classroom construction or renovation. Other allowable uses of these funds include literacy programs, job training initiatives, and drug and alcohol programs.

Education is a national priority, but it is a local responsibility. It has always been carried out and implemented at the local level. The bottom line is that no Department of Education bureaucrat who lives and works in the city of Washington, DC or its suburbs can possibly understand the educational needs of our children in rural Southern Missouri. My ''Direct Check'' bill empowers local school districts by giving them the control and flexibility to use federal education dollars in a way that best meets their priorities for improving the education system for their children. And by freeing up resources and giving them directly to local school districts, we can help preserve and strengthen our American public education tradition as we head into the 21st Century.