America's homeless. But I also recognize that in a competition such as this, excellent programs sometimes fall just short of the cut-offs that are determined by funding availability. And I am concerned especially because the cut-offs are absolute—Maine's funding, for example, went from about $3.7 million to $0.

For that reason, I am introducing this legislation which will provide a safety net to ensure that every state receives at least a minimum allocation to provide a Continuum of Care to that state's homeless. My legislation would continue the grant competition, but would provide that every state must receive at least half a percent of the total Continuum of Care funds. This would ensure that the homeless of every state would be able to count on some continuity of services from year to year.

It is not an exaggeration to say that lives depend on the services provided as a result of the Continuum of Care grants. People must have a place to escape the bitter cold of a January day in Maine or the brutal heat of an August day in Texas. People must have a chance to break out of poverty ad to become productive citizens. This is difficult to do when much of each day must be spent meeting such basic needs as finding food and shelter.

The Homelessness Assistance Funding Fairness Act would take a small step in ensuring that no state's homeless persons are left without assistance in finding permanent or transitional housing. Unless we take action, the tragedy that has befallen Maine's homeless population this year, could easily happen to those of other states next year when the funds are competed again.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TEENAGE PREGNANCY REDUCTION ACT OF 1999

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 1999

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of the Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Act of 1999. This legislation is an important commitment on the part of Congress to give local communities the resources they need to operate effective teenage pregnancy programs.

More specifically, the bill authorizes $10.5 million in total over three years for HHS to conduct a study of effective teen pregnancy prevention programs, with an emphasis on determining the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the programs, and methods for replicating the programs in other locations.

It also authorizes the creation of an information clearinghouse to collect, maintain, and disseminate information on prevention programs; to develop networks of prevention programs; to provide technical assistance and to encourage public media campaigns regarding pregnancy in teenagers.

Finally, it authorizes $10 million in total over three years for one-time incentive grants for programs which are found to be effective under HHS's study described earlier, to assist them with the expenses of operating the program.

Helping our communities prevent teenage pregnancy is an important mission. The United States has the highest teenage birth rate of industrialized countries, which has far reaching consequences for our Nation's teenage mothers and their children.

Unmarried teenagers who become pregnant face severe emotional, physical, and financial difficulties. The children born to unmarried teenagers will struggle to fulfill the promise given to all human life, and many of them simply will not succeed. Many of them will remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, and unfortunately may become part of our criminal justice system.

How bad is the problem? In 1960, 15 percent of teen births were out-of-wedlock. In 1970, 30 percent of teen births were out-of-wedlock. In 1980, 48 percent of teen births were out-of-wedlock. In 1990, 68 percent of teen births were out-of-wedlock. In 1993, 72 percent of all teen births were out-of-wedlock.

Why do we care about this? For the simple reason that beyond the statistics, this trend has devastating consequences for the young women who become unwed teen parents, and for the children born to them.

The report, ''Kids Having Kids,'' by the Robin Hood Foundation quantified some of these consequences. Compared to those who delay childbearing until they are 20 or 21, adolescent mothers: spend 57 percent more time as single parents in their first 13 years; are 50 percent more likely to depend on welfare; are 50 percent less likely to complete high school; and are 24 percent more likely to have more children.

Children of adolescents (compared to children of 20- and 21-year-olds) are more likely to be born prematurely and 50 percent more likely to be low-birth weight babies of less than five and a half pounds—meaning an increased likelihood of infant death, mental retardation or illness, dyslexia, hyperactivity, among others.

How can we make a difference? By working in partnership with communities. At the national level, we need to take a clear stand against teenage pregnancy and foster a national discussion—involving national leaders, respected organizations, the media, and states about how religion, culture, and public values influence both teen pregnancy and responses to it. The Congressional Advisory Committee to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, which I co-chair with Congresswoman LOWEY, will play an active role in this discussion.

At the local level, communities need to develop programs targeted to the characteristics, needs, and values of its families. Communities know what their needs are and what will be most effective with their teenagers, so it is critical that they design and implement the programs, not the federal government. This legislation will assist efforts of communities, and I hope that my colleagues will join me as a cosponsor.

Our goal to reduce teen pregnancy is challenging and difficult. But if we work together we CAN make a difference.

EARTHQUAKE HAZARDS REDUCTION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 28, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union has under consideration the bill (H.R. 1184) to authorize appropriations for carrying out the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 for fiscal years 2000 and 2001, and for other purposes:

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 1184, the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Authorization Act of 1999.

H.R. 1184 will take earthquake research and earthquake engineering research to the next level enabling the replacement of antiquated earthquake warning systems and equipment while linking monitoring centers and laboratories together and stimulating scientific research that will help prevent losses of life and property due to earthquakes.

I am pleased that H.R. 1184 will establish two new projects that will greatly boost our earthquake research and monitoring efforts: the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEES); and the Advanced National Seismic Research and Monitoring System. These programs will join earthquake engineering research facilities and monitoring systems from across the country while upgrading and expanding earthquake testing at the facilities. The programs will help to eliminate duplication of research and promote coordination, cooperation and sharing of information to better enable us to utilize science in the protection of life and property.

I am also pleased that the Committee accepted an amendment offered by Congresswoman WOOLSEY to direct FEMA to report on the components of the ''National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Programs that address the needs of at-risk populations: the elderly, the disabled, the non-English speaking, and single parent households.'' These populations face additional challenges following natural disasters and we must not neglect the most vulnerable of our populations during such disasters. I applaud Congresswoman WOOLSEY in her effort to address this problem.

I also appreciate the committee language expressing that the committee will soon begin examining why insurance companies refuse to reduce insurance premiums to builders, home owners, and commercial properties, that have complied with the new engineering standards and practices shown to reduce damages caused by earthquakes. Those who make conscious efforts to incorporate higher standards to prevent earthquake damages should not have to pay the same rates as those who do not incorporate these standards.

I support this legislation because we need to be prepared for earthquakes; we need to improve our abilities to predict earthquakes; and we need to implement policies and building practices that would minimize losses of life due to earthquakes. But, in addition to this, we must prepare for the rebuilding and relief efforts that would be necessary in response to disastrous earthquakes and other natural phenomena including, tsunamis, hurricanes, and