

grief of those who have suffered loss is beyond what words can express, all of us are asking the questions: "Why? How did this happen? What can we do to keep it from happening again?" The State Board of Education, adhering to its Constitutional responsibility, joins the Columbine community and the rest of the State in seeking the lessons that may be drawn from the awful tragedy of April 20, 1999.

As we seek the why behind this infamous event, we must find answers beyond the easy and obvious. How weapons become used for outlaw purposes is assuredly a relevant issue, yet our society's real problem is how human behavior sinks to utter and depraved indifference to the sanctity of life. As our country promotes academic literacy, we must promote moral literacy as well, and it is not children, but adults in authority who are ultimately responsible for that.

Our tragedy is but the latest—albeit the most terrifying and costly—of a steadily escalating series of schoolhouse horrors that have swept across the nation. The senseless brutality of these calamities clearly reveals that a dangerous subculture of amoral violence has taken hold among many of our youth.

We cannot pretend that we have not known about this subculture or about those elements of the mass media, from films to video games, from which it derives sustenance. Further, we must honestly admit that essentially we have done nothing to prevent these cultural cancers from spreading through our schools and society.

How often have adults questioning highly dubious youth speech, dress, entertainment, or behavior been denounced as old-fashioned, or worse, attacked as enemies of individual expression? How often have parents or teachers reporting alarming predictors of violent behavior been told nothing can be done until someone actually commits a crime? So we do nothing, and then look upon the ruin of so many young lives while hearing those saddest of words: Too Late.

As a Board we believe, with Edmund Burke, that all that is required for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing. We further believe that society must act now before it is too late for more innocent children. We also recognize that failing to act shall make us all accomplices in such future tragedies as may engulf our schools.

Accordingly, we make the following recommendations for renewing that unity and strength of purpose that has historically bonded our schools, our homes, and our society.

I. IN OUR SCHOOLS

While our schools are at once the mold and the mirror of the democratic society they serve, they are not democracies themselves. Schools are founded and controlled by adults for the benefit of children.

The adults accountable for running schools must have the courage, ability, and authority to establish and maintain a safe and orderly environment maximally consonant with the purposes of schooling, i.e. the fullest possible achievement for every single child.

We recognize that in every time, and every society, there is tension between liberty and license, and frankly, we believe that the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of the latter.

Be that as it may, our school children should not be routinely victimized by the quarrels of the wider society. They deserve the shielding mantle of adult authority while they form and strengthen themselves for their own entry into adulthood.

We also recognize the routine cruelty and torment that can occur among adolescents in an unchecked peer culture. This is all the more reason for a strong and vigilant adult authority to prevent victimization of the vulnerable.

We know this won't be easy, and that it must begin with a decisive rollback of those harmful precedents that have so undermined the confident and successful exercise of legitimate adult authority upon which every good school depends.

We must stop disrespecting those who urge discipline and values. We must recognize that their cry is the legitimate voice of the American people. We must listen to respected voices—liberal and conservative—like Albert Shanker and William Bennett—when they tell us flat out that our "easy" schools will never get better or safer without a massive renewal of their values, discipline, and work ethic.

Finally, we must remember, respect, and unashamedly take pride in the fact that our schools, like our country, found their origin and draw their strength from the faith-based morality that is at the heart of our national character.

Today our schools have become so fearful of affirming one religion or one value over another that they have banished them all. In doing so they have abdicated their historic role in the moral formation of youth and thereby alienated themselves from our people's deep spiritual sensibilities. To leave this disconnection between society and its schools and unaddressed is an open invitation to further divisiveness and decline. For the sake of our children, who are so dependent upon a consistent and unified message from the adult world, we must solve these dilemmas. Other civilized nations have resolved divisions that are far more volatile. Surely, America can do as well.

II. IN OUR HOMES

We routinely preach about cooperation between home and school, yet too often our actions tell a different story. Too often, we undermine rather than support the values and authority of parents. Too often, we find them handy scapegoats for our own failures.

When countless surveys show our parents to be deeply concerned about the state of public education, something is seriously wrong and we ignore this at our peril.

This alienation has as much to do with parental concerns about safety and values as it does with persistent learning deficiencies. If we are to ask parents to use their authority to support those educating their children, then educators must use their authority to support the work and values of parents. Some schools are already doing this, but sadly in too many instances, these historic bonds of trust and mutual support have frayed badly or broken altogether.

We deeply believe that without a unified adult world, our children will continue to suffer the consequences of our doubts and divisions.

III. IN OUR SOCIETY

The connection between murder in our schools and elements of the mass culture is now beyond dispute. Only those who profit from this filth, and their dwindling bands of apologists deny the evidence of violence, hatred, and sadism routinely found in films, video games, and the like.

We believe it is no longer acceptable for an entertainment industry that spends billions to influence the behavior of children to deny that their efforts have consequences or that they have no accountability for sowing the seeds of tragedy.

If a utility poured sewage into our streets, an outraged public would not tolerate it. Should those responsible for the stream of moral sewage entering our homes and communities be any less accountable?

If we deem it proper to boycott, withhold public investments, and otherwise impose an economic penalty on companies for their labor practices, environmental policies, or countries in which they operate, how could we fail to move at least as aggressively against those who create, promote, and distribute media and other products for which there is no imaginable justification.

In closing we should be reminded that throughout our history our people have demonstrated a remarkable capacity for moral courage and self-renewal in times of great danger and challenge.

Perhaps across the ages we can hear the timeless words of Abraham Lincoln, and, applying them to our own circumstance renew his pledges, "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom".

With history as our judge, let us go forward together with a strong and active faith.

Authorized at a Special Meeting of the State Board of Education, April 21, 1999 and issued by our hand in the city of Denver, Colorado, at the regular meeting May 13, 1999.

Clair Orr, Chairman, 4th Congressional District; Pat M. Chlouber, Vice Chairman, 3rd Congressional District; Ben Alexander, Member-At-Large, John Burnett, 5th Congressional District; Randy DeHouff, 6th Congressional District; Patti Johnson, 2nd Congressional District; Gully Stanford, 1st Congressional District; William J. Moloney, Commissioner of Education.

HONORING H. STEPHEN LIEB

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute and thanks to Stephen Lieb who is retiring as Director of the Northeast Bronx Education Park. For many years he taught our children, before rising to administrative posts in the school district.

He was born and raised in New York City, educated in its public schools and has a B.S. from Hunter College, his M.S. from Fordham University and additional graduate work at Pace University and the University of Washington.

His initial assignment was teaching science at J.H.S. 163. In 1970 he transferred to I.S. 180 as Science Chairman and he was named Planetarium Director when that facility was completed.

Among his accomplishments was the full air conditioning of the five schools in the Park, and the installation of the data communications system. He has worked for 30 years with the Greater New York Council, Boy Scouts of America and takes 30 fatherless boys to camp every year. He also founded a scholarship program. In his retirement as Director of the Education Park, he leaves a hole that will be difficult to fill. I congratulate him for all of his good work and wish him the very best in retirement.

IN HONOR OF THE SALVATION
ARMY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor The Salvation Army's Harbor Light Complex in the Greater Cleveland area on their 50th Anniversary.

The Harbor Light Complex has a strong commitment to helping those in the greater Cleveland area who are less fortunate. Through this institution, programs of Correction, Emergency Sheltering Services, Food Services, New Hope Citadel Corp., Residential Services, as well as Detox & Substance Abuse Programs help people deal with difficulties they face and gives them the courage and the tools to fight through them.

The Harbor Light Complex continues to provide in its historically established tradition the caring services needed to offer comfort, shelter sustenance, education and hope to the Greater Cleveland Community. The Salvation Army's continuing commitment to serving a diverse group of people in need in the Greater Cleveland area, sets an example of how caring individuals can change the world one life at a time.

I would like to recognize the Salvation Army's Harbor Light Complex for 50 years of quality service. They have truly met the needs of those who do not have a voice in our community.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FOR
THE HEALTH CARE WORKER
NEEDLESTICK PREVENTION ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleagues, MARGE ROUKEMA, GEORGE MILLER, and ROB ANDREWS to introduce the Health Care Worker Needlestick Prevention Act, a bill to prevent dangerous, costly and preventable needlestick injuries to our nation's health care workers.

For far too long, we have stood by and watched as health care workers suffer needlestick and sharps injuries in our nation's hospitals and health care system. According to a 1997 report by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), approximately 800,000 hospital-based workers are injured annually from accidental needlesticks. Many of those injuries infections from bloodborne diseases, the worst of which include HIV/AIDS, and Hepatitis B & C.

OSHA estimates that approximately 16,000 needlesticks are contaminated by the HIV/AIDS. As of December 1998, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) had documented 54 cases of HIV seroconversions from needlesticks and more than 110 "possible" cases among U.S. healthcare workers. In addition, according to the International Health Care Worker Safety Center at the University of

Virginia, there are an estimated 18 to 35 new occupational HIV infections of health care workers occurring from accidental needlesticks each year.

These injuries are largely preventable through use of newer technologies that use engineering devices to minimize accidental needlesticks. Hundreds of hospitals across the country have already converted to the use of these devices, but there are still thousands that haven't done so. Our legislation would make such safety devices the norm rather than the exception.

The Health Care Worker Needlestick Prevention Act is modeled after a California state law. Last year, California became the first state in the nation to require needlestick protections. The legislation was signed into law by then-Governor Pete Wilson and was endorsed by a wide coalition including the California Health Care Association (the state hospital trade association), Kaiser Permanente, health care workers, and labor unions alike.

The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal-OSHA) has estimated that each needlestick injury costs between \$2,234 and \$3,832 for treatment, testing, and prophylactic drugs. Cal-OSHA has also estimated that the California safe needles and sharps law, passed last year and effective this August, will save affected businesses and facilities over \$100 million per year in excess of the cost of the new devices. Similar bills are now pending in state legislatures across the country.

While states are stepping to the plate to address this pressing concern, this is a national crisis and it deserves a national solution. The Health Care Worker Needlestick Prevention Act would amend OSHA's bloodborne pathogens standard to require the use of safe needle technology as the means for preventing needlestick injuries. It is a real-life solution that recognizes that these technologies are still not available or appropriate for use in every situation. To that end, it includes an exception process if the device would interfere with patient or worker safety, interfere with the success of a medical procedure, or if no such device is available in the marketplace. It would also require stricter reporting of needlestick injuries and creates a new clearinghouse on safer needle technology within NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) to collect the data and to assist employers with training curriculum and other advice on available technologies.

We stand here today with broad-based support similar to that which made the California law possible. Our legislation is endorsed by numerous organizations including: the Service Employees International Union; the American Nurses Association; the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Kaiser Permanente; The Consumer Federation of America; Becton Dickinson, a major medical device manufacturer; and the Emergency Nurses Association, the American Public Health Association, and AIDS Action.

It is time to take the appropriate step of protecting our health care workers. They simply should not be forced to risk their lives while trying to save ours.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank Congresswoman ROUKEMA for her leadership on this issue and urge my colleagues on both

sides of the aisle to join us in support of this crucial effort.

Attached is a more detailed summary of the bill.

HEALTH CARE WORKER NEEDLESTICK PREVENTION ACT OF 1999, INTRODUCED BY REPS. PETE STARK AND MARGE ROUKEMA

BILL SUMMARY

Purpose: This bill would correct a dangerous problem in today's health care system in which health care workers suffer preventable needlestick injuries because appropriate technologies to prevent such injuries are not being utilized.

The bill would require the use of engineered safety mechanisms for needles and sharps in the health care arena to protect health care workers from life-threatening injuries caused by needlesticks and other sharps injuries.

OSHA Amendment: The bill amends OSHA's bloodborne pathogens standard to require that employers utilize needleless systems and sharps with engineered sharps protections to prevent the spread of bloodborne pathogens in their workplace.

In carrying out this requirement, employers are to work with direct care health care workers who use such devices to ensure the appropriate selection of technology.

Exceptions: Safe needle technology will not be immediately, universally available and appropriate for all uses in the health care arena. Recognizing this fact, the bill provides for an exceptions process if an employer can demonstrate circumstances in which the technology: Does not promote employee safety; interferes with patient safety; interferes with the success of a medical procedure; and is not commercially available in the marketplace.

Exposure Control Plan: Employers would develop written exposure control plans to identify and select existing needleless systems and sharps with engineered sharps protections and other methods of preventing the spread of bloodborne pathogens.

Sharps Injury Log: While we know that more than 800,000 health care workers suffer needlesticks every year, there is currently no uniform collection of data on sharps injuries to enable these incidents to be tracked, learned from, and prevented.

The bill would create a sharps injury log that employers would keep containing detailed information about any sharps injuries that occur.

Training: Employers would be required to adequately train direct care health care workers on the use of needleless technologies and systems with engineered sharps protections.

National Clearinghouse on Safer Needle Technology: The bill would establish a new clearinghouse within the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to collect data on engineered safety technology designed to help prevent the risk of needlesticks and other sharps injuries. NIOSH would have access to the sharps injury logs in order to carry out these duties. The clearinghouse would also create model training curriculum for employers and health care workers. In order to carry out these new tasks, the institute is authorized \$15 million in new funding.

Application to Medicare Hospitals: HHS would promulgate new regulations regarding conditions of participation in Medicare for those hospitals that are not covered by OSHA so that all hospitals across the country would, in effect, be covered by these new bloodborne pathogens requirements.