TEACHER EMPOWERMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 20, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1995) to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to empower teachers, improve student achievement through high-quality professional development for teachers, reauthorize the Reading Excellence Act, and for other purposes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Chairman, the problems with H.R. 1995 are abundant in nature, however, one of its greatest flaws deals with the lack of language about the school counselors of this country. H.R. 1995 eliminates over one million personnel from eligibility for professional development under Title II of ESEA. Without the assistance of other school personnel, undue burdens and demands will be placed on teachers. TEA will actually increase, not decrease, the workload and responsibilities of teachers. H.R. 1995 decreases local flexibility to train and hire needed school personnel—America's schools need school counselors, the recent school shootings remind us that students have needs that must be served by qualified counseling professionals. H.R. 1995 eliminates pupil services from eligibility for professional development by completely rewriting title II of ESEA. H.R. 1995 limits students with disabilities access to education—by eliminating professional development for pupil services, school staff will be unprepared to meet the special needs of students with disabilities. These are just a few of the shortcomings with H.R. 1995, if we are in this for the children, how can we simply sit back passively and allow such grossly inadequate legislation which blatantly ignores those who fight so hard for the welfare of our children—school counselors.

IRAN NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION PREVENTION ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 19, 1999

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1477, the Iran Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1999, of which I am an original co-sponsor. This provision, which passed the House of Representatives in the 105th Congress by an overwhelming margin, would ensure that we hold the International Atomic Energy Agency accountable for its programs in Iran, and would reinforce our commitment to peace and stability in the Persian Gulf.

Despite its plentiful oil and gas resources, Iran has sought for years to complete the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on its Persian Gulf coast. Iran is a notorious sponsor of international terrorism, and as such its plans to utilize nuclear energy should not go unchecked by the United States and our allies. I have little faith that a nation which thinks nothing of murdering innocent civilians and of rounding up innocent Jews and throwing them into jail on trumped-up charges possesses the commitment to safety that would prevent such a reactor from being a threat to the entire Gulf region, if not the world.

The November 1998 pact between Iran and Russia to expedite the construction at Bushehr is illustrative of the urgency of this threat. As a nation, we need to pay close attention to the progression of this project, and we should ensure that we do not contribute to Iran's acquisition of technology or expertise during the course of this project which could contribute to its procurement of nuclear weapons know-how.

As Iran continues to build its military arsenal—testing engines for ballistic missiles capable of carrying warheads to Israel and other nations in the region, we should make sure that our money—both directly and indirectly—does not help Iran's conquest of nuclear technology. This measure, which would withhold assistance to the IAEA pending certain State Department certifications, is a necessary step toward that goal. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

BRENT BAUKNECHT ACHIEVES RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Brent Bauknecht for his attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout.

Eagle Scout is the highest honor that a Boy Scout can earn. This high honor requires years of dedication and hard work both to himself and most importantly, the community.

Each Eagle Scout must earn 21 merit badges including First Aid; Camping; Citizenship of the Community; Citizenship of the Nation; Citizenship of the World; Family Life; and Personal Management. In addition, each Eagle Scout must plan, finance, and execute a service project that benefits the community. Furthermore, each Eagle Scout must hold a variety of leadership positions in which he gains important life skills that will always remain with him.

Brent has accomplished this and more. He has proven himself to be an exceptional young man by living by the Scout Law; Scout Oath; Scout Motto; and Scout Promise. Only two percent of all boys entering scouting achieve the Eagle Badge, and this accomplishment is a true testament to Brent's abilities, dedication, and commitment.

I ask you to please join me in congratulating Brent for his achievement and outstanding work.

TRIBUTE TO DEAN AND SHARON TRAVIS

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dean and Sharon Travis of Gratiot County, Michigan, who will be honored at a special ceremony in Midland on July 24 when they will be presented with a Centennial Farm marker by Consumers Energy.

At this celebration, the Travis family and other farm families will have the opportunity to share their stories. The Travis family will relay with appropriate pride how their farm, located in Pine River Township, was purchased by their great-great-grandfather in 1857 and has remained in their family ever since.

The festivities are being held in conjunction with a special Smithsonian Institution exhibit, ''Barn Again: Celebrating an American Icon.'' This exhibit celebrates America's rich agricultural heritage, telling the story of farmers and their varying needs throughout our history.

The barn represents growth and prosperity of Americans, and it is important to recognize the agricultural community's contribution to our nation. This year the exhibit tours Michigan for the first time; residents of Alabama, Illinois, Oregon, Utah, Ohio, Missouri, West Virginia and Georgia have already been privileged to see it.

It is with great pleasure that I recognize the Travis family today. Their success has been a source of pride to Gratiot County, and their barn and Centennial Farm designation symbolize the hard work and determination that is characteristic of mid-Michigan's farm families.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to honor them today in the U.S. House of Representatives and I wish them many more generations of bounty.

ELECTRIC BICYCLE LEGISLATION

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce a bipartisan, non-controversial, and much-needed piece of legislation. This bill will clarify for purposes of Federal law and regulations that electric bicycles are consumer products and not motor vehicles. This clarification is necessary, as the interpretation of existing law is that electric bicycles are motor vehicles and must conform to all motor vehicle safety standards.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to clarify what an electric bicycle is. An electric bicycle is defined as a bike with all the same features of a conventional bike save one. It carries a small electric motor system that, when engaged by the flip of a switch, augments the power of the rider. This motor empowers the rider to easily pedal speeds up to, but not over, 20 mph.

Because of this feature, electric bicycles are very popular with recreational riders, seniors, commuters, fitness riders, and police and other law enforcement agencies, just to name a few. These bicycles have the potential to mitigate traffic congestion and parking problems, enhance law enforcement agencies' ability to perform certain designated duties; reduce air and noise pollution; promote cost-effective alternative-fuel vehicles; and enhance mobility for those who are physically unable either to drive or access essential services on pedal-only bicycles. In fact, in Southern California, electric bicycles have already begun to demonstrate their significant contribution to improving the quality of life for all.

It is clear that, as defined under my legislation, an electric bicycle is not a moped or a motorcycle, and it is certainly not a motor vehicle. To require it, therefore, to meet all the federal standards of a motor vehicle, which require the implementation of brake lights, turn signals, a speedometer, an odometer, wide tires, and other mandates, is contrary to the notion of what you and I hold as a bike.

The bill I'm introducing today would clarify this situation once and for all. It simply provides that electric bicycles are consumer products and are subject to consumer product rules and regulations. This will not eliminate all safety standards for electric bicycles. My legislation will still provide for these products to be subject to strict safety standards.

As I stated, this is a common sense, noncontroversial bill. Electric bicycles should be held to the same federal safety standards as bicycles, not motor vehicles. I encourage you to join in co-sponsoring this bill and in supporting passage.

HOLDING MANAGED CARE ACCOUNTABLE

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring an editorial from today's Chicago Tribune to the attention of my colleagues. The editorial is titled ''Holding Managed Care Accountable.'' I hope that my colleagues take the time to read this informative and interesting commentary.

[From the Chicago Tribune, July 22, 1999]

HOLDING MANAGED CARE ACCOUNTABLE

(By Philip H. Corboy)

CHICAGO—John McCarron suggests that the best Congress can do for America's health-care system is to do nothing (''Medical malpractice? When Congress plays doctor, pray for gridlock,'' Commentary, July 12). Perhaps some agree with him that ''there's not much wrong with managed care.'' They may not have experienced a major medical crisis and the chance to see their HMO in action.

Supporters of the Patients' Bill of Rights point to scores of incidents around the country. Workers pay for medical coverage for themselves and their families, then find that needed care is delayed or denied—even over the objections of their own doctors. Often the result is that the patient suffers more serious harm, or even death.

Mr. McCarron's argument that this is the employer's fault for choosing the HMO is misguided. All managed-care plans have strong financial incentives to minimize care and maximize profits, which amounted to some $10.5 billion for the industry last year. There is no disincentive to keep administrators from interfering with patient care by denying needed services, understaffing or imposing cumbersome authorization requirements. Unlike every other private business or profession, employee managed-care plans cannot be sued and held accountable for the harm they cause.

This unusual immunity is not something Congress intended, or even considered. In 1974 the legislature passed the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), a complicated statute designed to promote and to protect employee pension funds. To avoid conflicting regulations, Congress pre-empted state law. As a result if a plan denies or delays testing for a premature baby at high risk for retinopathy and the child becomes permanently blind, the maximum amount of compensation that the parents can recover is the cost of the test itself. To avoid this harsh result, Congress should fix the problem it created.

The industry's primary strategy in its fight to keep its special immunity has been to frighten Americans with dire predictions of a flood of lawsuits and skyrocketing premiums. Fortunately Americans can see for themselves what happens when managed care is made accountable.

For example, ERISA does not apply to government workers. A study by the Kaiser Family Foundation of approximately 1 million government workers in California from 1991 to 1997 found that only 20 had filed lawsuits. The study estimated that permitting liability actions added only between 3 and 13 cents to each policyholder's monthly premium.

In 1997 Texas enacted a statute that created an external review for managed-care decisions and allowed patients to sue their HMOs. The number of lawsuits that have flooded Texas courts: three. The Texas Department of Insurance, the designated external review board, predicted that there would be 4,400 complaints in the first year. Only 531 were registered, 46 percent of which were resolved in favor of the patients. Texans' liability premiums are almost exactly what they were in 1995.

Missouri also chose in 1997 to allow liability suits. So far there have been none. The experience in Texas and Missouri suggests that the deterrent effect of legal accountability has encouraged managed-care insurers to provide better patient care.

Doctors, unions and groups that represent patients, consumers, veterans and seniors all support the Patients' Bill of Rights. They want more accountability for managed-care plans. The industry claims that it needs immunity to save money, which keeps premiums low. Yet in many cases delay necessitates a much more expensive and risky course of treatment.

Congress should do something. Close the loopholes that encourages managed-care bureaucrats and administrators to interfere with doctors caring for patients.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN HONOR OF STRONGSVILLE SAVINGS BANK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Strongsville Savings Bank for their 38 years of service to Northeastern Ohio.

Strongsville Savings Bank was established by a group of local community businesses in May of 1960. In April 1961 it initiated its service to the Strongsville community, as an Ohio chartered, federally insured savings association. Since then, Strongsville Savings Bank has grown and expanded to 16 offices in Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Medina counties.

Nevertheless, the Bank has remained community-oriented, with an emphasis on customer service. Its services include consumer and commercial checking accounts savings accounts, certificates of deposit, residential and commercial real estate loans, home equity line of credit, use of proprietary ATMs, electronic fund transfer services, access to a network of ATM and many other services. The Strongsville Savings Bank is very active in its support of developers and builders of residential housing in their market area by providing a wide array of loans and retail financial services.

Recently, in 1996, Emerald Financial Corporation became the Bank's parent company and unitary thrift holding company. Mike Kalinich, one of the Bank's original shareholders, is chairman of both Emerald Financial Corp. and Strongsville Savings Bank. Of the original 128 shareholders, 38 years ago, 21 continue to be owners of Emerald Financial Corp. stock, and many others are the children and grandchildren of the original shareholders.

Historically, Strongsville has had such success, with strong community involvement and investment in local interests. I would like to congratulate Strongsville Savings Bank for their 38 years of success and service, as well as wish them continued success in the years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 1999

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent and unable to vote due to my recovery from heart surgery, July 19, 1999—July 22, 1999.

On July 16, 1999:

I would have voted in favor of H.R. 1033 (Roll Call number 308).

I would have voted in favor of H. Con. Res. 121 (Roll Call number 309).

I would have voted in favor of H.R. 1477 (Roll Call number 310).

On July 20, 1999:

I would have voted in favor of H. Con. Res. 158 (Roll Call number 311).

I would have voted in favor of the Campbell amendment to the Smith amendment to H.R. 2415 (Roll Call number 312).

I would have voted against the Sanford Amendment to H.R. 2415 (Roll Call number 313).

I would have voted against the Paul Amendment to H.R. 2415 (Roll Call number 314).

I would have voted against H. Res. 253 (Roll Call vote 315).

I would have voted in favor of the Goodling amendment to H.R. 1995 (Roll Call number 316).

I would have voted in favor of the Mink amendment to H.R. 1995 (Roll Call number 317).

I would have voted in favor of the Crowley amendment to H.R. 1995 (Roll Call 318).

I would have voted in favor of the Martinez amendment to H.R. 1995 (Roll Call 319).

I would have voted against H.R. 1995 (Roll Call number 320).

On July 21, 1999.

I would have voted against the Gilman amendment to H.R. 2415 (Roll Call number 321).

I would have voted against the Sanders amendment to H.R. 2415 (Roll Call number 322).

I would have voted in favor of the Gibbons amendment to H.R. 2415 (Roll Call number 323).