

Band secured 2nd place in the New Jersey State Finals, along with awards for the best trumpet section and rhythm section in the State. Additionally, the band has received a Superior Rating at every festival they have performed in. The members of the Spring 2000 Jazz band are: Zachary Andrews; Frank Cuccio; Kristin Cuccio; Julia DePasquale; Anthony DiDomenico; Steven Engel; Eli Ferrer; Steven Forrest; Tim Gerard; Rob Hill; Christine Hinton; Rich Johnson; Ken Juray; Brian Kilpatrick; Nathan Kranefeld; Joe Lucidi; Jim MacKenzie; Ben Markowitz; Corey Mossop; Louis Muzyczek; Dominic Natale; Jeff Rivera, Rich Slack; Ernest Stuart; Perry Sutton; Vincent Williams. I wish you all the best and continued success in your endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ROUND II EZ/EC FLEXIBILITY ACT

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2001

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Round II EZ/EC Flexibility Act of 2001, bipartisan legislation I introduced yesterday with my colleague from New Jersey, Mr. LOBIONDO.

The bill we introduced makes a number of small changes to the EZ/EC program that will provide these communities with greater flexibility in administering their economic development plans. Specifically, the bill authorizes \$100 million in appropriations for each of the fifteen urban Empowerment Zones, \$40 million for each of the five rural Empowerment Zones, and \$3 million for each of the twenty rural Enterprise Communities.

The legislation also ensures that Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities that apply for one of the new Renewal Community designations will continue to receive the EZ/EC funding they were promised in 1999. Finally, the bill allows these communities to use their funding as the local match for receiving grants from other federal programs. This will help EZ/EC communities leverage additional resources to undertake economic development initiatives and provide job training and other vital social services.

Mr. LOBIONDO and I have worked hard over the last several years to secure funding for the communities across the nation that were designated as Round II Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. We both know first hand the successes of the EZ/EC program, and we will continue to work together in a bipartisan manner to ensure that these communities are allocated the resources they need to bring economic opportunity to all Americans.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONTACT LENS PRESCRIPTION RELEASE ACT OF 2001

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2001

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I join with several colleagues to introduce bipartisan legislation, the Contact Lens Prescription Release

Act of 2001. This bill would enhance consumer fairness in the contact lens industry by requiring eyecare professionals to release contact lens prescriptions after completing the fitting process.

Currently, consumers throughout the United States enjoy unobstructed access to their eyeglass prescriptions. That's because back in 1973, the Federal Trade Commission issued a regulation requiring the automatic release of eyeglass prescriptions. Through this regulation, the FTC recognized that possession of both the prescription and the product constituted an unfair advantage for eye doctors and that consumers could safely manage their eyeglass prescriptions.

At the time, it made sense that this rule was not extended to contact lenses, which were a brand new technology. Furthermore, most were hard lenses that needed to be ground and fitted to each particular eye. Today, the contact lens market looks very different. Thirty-four million Americans wear contact lens and 85% of them choose soft contacts.

Contact lenses are fast replacing eyeglasses as the corrective instrument of choice for consumers. Yet despite this trend, in most states, prescribing eye care professionals can refuse to release contact lens prescriptions—even after patients complete the initial fitting process and even to longtime contact lens wearers who simply need their time-limited prescriptions renewed.

Eye doctors cite health concerns, yet the reality is they have a strong financial incentive to restrict consumer access to the contact lens market. Without their contact lens prescription, consumers are often forced to purchase contact lens from their prescribing eye doctor.

With contact lens wearers effectively denied the right to receive their own prescriptions, anti-competitive behavior has flourished. In fact, the American Optometric Association and Johnson & Johnson's, maker of the popular ACUVUE disposable contact lens, just reached a preliminary settlement in an anti-trust lawsuit filed by the attorneys general of 32 states.

The attorneys general alleged that defendants conspired both to force consumers to buy replacement contact lenses from eye care professionals only and to eliminate competition from alternative distributors, including pharmacies, mail-order, and Internet retailers. Contact lens manufacturers CIBA Vision and Bausch & Lomb have previously reached settlement agreements on the same charges.

While the resolution of these anti-trust lawsuits is a step toward putting contact lens wearers on equal footing with eyeglass wearers, more action is needed. Contact lens wearers must be assured the same access to their prescriptions that eyeglass wearers currently enjoy. Yet the FTC has repeatedly failed to update its rule and extend prescription release requirements to contact lenses. This does not bode well for consumers. It means that in many states, people who wear contact lens cannot shop around for the best value and quality products.

In fact, this is exactly what happened to my wife back in 1994. Despite her request, this doctor refused to release her prescription, but was more than happy to sell her contacts through his professional office. At the time, it struck me as fundamentally unfair that eye doctors stand to profit from holding their patients captive. It still does.

My wife's predicament is hardly unique. Over the past few years, Consumers Union has issued several reports detailing similar problems in Texas. A 1997 survey found that 65% of Texas optometrists refused to release contact lens prescriptions upon request, yet 91% of these same individuals did not hesitate to fill a prescription released by another eye doctor. Where are the health concerns here?

The time has more than come for contact lens wearers to enjoy the same rights as eyeglass wearers. The Contact Lens Prescription Release Act would require the FTC to promulgate a prescription release rule for contact lenses paralleling the 1973 rule for eyeglasses. This would require eyecare professionals to release a patient's contact lens prescription to the patient after completing the fitting process. Upon request, contact lens prescriptions must also be released to an agent of the patient, such as an alternate contact lens distributor. Furthermore, eyecare professionals must promptly verify the information contained in a patient's prescription when an agent of the patient contacts them for such verification. To ensure that consumers are protected from misleading advertisements, the contact Lens Prescription Release Act would also make it an unfair trade practice to state or imply that contact lenses can be purchased without a valid prescription.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation, what has been endorsed by Consumers Union. There is absolutely no reason for the law to be inconsistent relative to vision correction by eyeglasses vs. contact lenses. More fundamentally, there is no reason why any American should be denied the basic right to receive their prescription, whether they wear eyeglasses, contact lenses, or both.

NASA GLENN: A REGIONAL ECONOMIC ENGINE

HON. TOM SAWYER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 26, 2001

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, Northeast Ohio is home to an outstanding NASA Agency Center bearing the name of one of our nation's true heroes, and our former colleague from the other body, John H. Glenn.

Just as John Glenn was a leader in space exploration, the NASA Glenn Research Center is a leader in aeronautics, space transportation, spacecraft technology, materials science, and even microgravity research.

NASA Glenn is an integral part of the NASA mission. But while it serves a national mission, it also serves as an incubator for industries and ideas throughout the Cleveland-Akron region and the state. The Greater Cleveland Growth Association estimates that the annual statewide spin-off from NASA Glenn comes in at nearly \$1 billion and 12,000 jobs.

In my district, one of the results has been more than 30 grants to the University of Akron, which is itself a national leader in polymer science and engineering. Polymer technology, including nanopolymer technology which builds advanced materials at a molecular level, holds great promise for NASA programs.