

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. VITO FOSSELLA**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 12, 2001*

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am not recorded on rollcall Nos. 483, 484, and 485. I was unavoidably detained and was not present to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on all three measures.

## PUBLIC HEALTH SECURITY AND BIOTERRORISM RESPONSE ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. BOBBY L. RUSH**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2001*

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2001, H.R. 3448. Since the September 11 terrorist and the subsequent anthrax attacks, we in this country have become acutely aware of our vulnerability to bioterrorism, and I particularly became a cosponsor of this legislation because of those concerns.

One of my major concerns has been the unique vulnerability of medically underserved populations to a bioterrorist attack. Many of the residents of these areas do not have access to even basic health services, much less comprehensive health insurance or preventive and specialty care. In addition, state and local governments which provide many of the health services to these communities are finding their resources depleted due to the recent recession and terrorist attacks.

This legislation goes a long way towards protecting medically underserved communities and strengthening state and local health departments. Specifically, I thank Chairman TAUZIN and Mr. DINGELL for agreeing to work with me to include a provision in this bill which investigates the unique needs of medically underserved areas in case of a bioterrorist attack.

Also, the bill strengthens state and local public health infrastructure through a series of grants, which include funding for: the purchases or upgrades of equipment, supplies, pharmaceuticals or other countermeasures; the training and education of health care professionals where there are shortages; and laboratory services and poison centers.

In regards to funding for poison centers, these entities are critical first responders, particularly to urban and rural underserved areas. In my home state of Illinois, the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council operates the Illinois Poison Center which provides 24-hour poison prevention and treatment advice statewide. The center acts as a liaison to federal, state & local agencies and serves as a resource for information on weapons of mass destruction, including chemical & biological agents. The Center is the preeminent center in Illinois dedicated to the treatment of incidents of pediatric poisoning. If a bioterrorist attack occurred in Illinois, undoubtedly the Illinois Poison Center would play an invaluable role in alerting the community.

For far too long our public health infrastructure has been divided between those with access to services and those without access to services. This legislation will help close the gap between these two groups where bioterrorism is concerned.

## PUBLIC HEALTH SECURITY AND BIOTERRORISM RESPONSE ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2001*

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3488, the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2001.

On September 11, our way of life changed. Something that has been on everyone's minds since the beginning of the anthrax scare in the United States is the state of our public health system. Everyone wants to know if the United States is equipped for a possible chemical or biological attack, and I'm proud to say we are working to ensure our readiness.

Before September 11, it was important for the United States to allocate money for improvements to our public health system. After September 11, it became a necessity. Congress is taking a step in the right direction by passing the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Response Act of 2001. Since our public health infrastructure is spread among different agencies and departments, this \$2.96 billion package addresses a variety of funding necessities to infuse our public health system with desperately needed funds to protect the American people in case of chemical or biological attacks.

My colleagues and I realize the important role played by state and local offices of the public health system. Often, it is our local health officials who are deeply embroiled with the day-today assistance for those involved in chemical and biological attacks. This legislation allocates almost \$2.7 billion across a variety of agencies that prepare for public health emergencies such as bioterrorism attacks. \$1 billion will be given to states, local governments, and public and private health care facilities in the form of grants. It allows them to improve planning and preparedness for attacks, enhance their laboratories, educate and train their health care personnel, and develop new treatments and vaccines.

\$1 billion is earmarked for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expand our current national stockpile of antibiotics and vaccines, including those for smallpox. Since the Centers for Disease Control play an important role when it comes to bioterrorism, \$450 million will go to it for bioterror program expansion. It is crucial they renovate their facilities and improve lab security. The package also calls for the creation of a national database of hazardous pathogens and establishes registration, safety and security requirements on the 36 most deadly biological agents and toxins.

Congress is finally addressing some major deficiencies in our food inspection process, and water supply security. This bill gives \$100 million to the Food and Drug Administration, which will allow them to better protect our food

supply by hiring more border inspectors and finding new methods to detect contaminated food. An additional \$100 million will be distributed specifically to safeguard our drinking water by increasing vulnerability analyses and emergency response plans.

I applaud my colleagues' hard work on this legislation, and I'm glad we were able to address this issue before the holidays.

## BASIC PILOT EXTENSION ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. TOM OSBORNE**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2001*

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of H.R. 3030, the Basic Pilot Extension Act of 2001, which passed the House by voice vote on December 11, 2001. The Basic Pilot is a joint pilot conducted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) in my home state of Nebraska, among others. This pilot, which started in November 1997, involves verification checks of the SSA and the INS databases of all newly hired employees regardless of citizenship. Unfortunately, the Basic Pilot program was scheduled to terminate on November 30 of this year.

The agricultural economy of Nebraska's Third District relies heavily on immigrant labor. For the most part, I believe that employers across my district want to comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which made it unlawful for employers to knowingly hire or employ aliens not eligible to work, and required employers to verify documents of new workers. However, a simple visual check of these documents by employers will not tell them if these are in fact counterfeit documents, and that this potential new hire is in fact an illegal alien.

I have heard from many business people in the Third District about their need for the Basic Pilot program. Employers need the appropriate tools to ensure that they are indeed hiring eligible workers. By checking the new hire's documents against the INS and SSA databases, the Basic Pilot program allows employers to feel more confident about their new hire.

H.R. 3030 will extend the Basic Pilot program for employers in Nebraska for two years. I thank my colleague, Representative LATHAM, for introducing this much needed extension, and I am pleased it passed the House on December 11, 2001.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BOB RILEY**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 12, 2001*

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained for Rollcall No. 483, H. Con. Res. 281, honoring the ultimate sacrifice made by Johnny Micheal Spann, the first American killed in combat during the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, and pledging continued support for members of the Armed Forces. Had I been present I would have voted "yea."