AUTHORIZING USE OF CAPITOL GROUNDS FOR GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 356) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 356

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF SOAP BOX DERBY RACES ON CAPITOL GROUNDS.

The Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association (in this resolution referred to as the ''Association'') shall be permitted to sponsor a public event, soap box derby races, on the Capitol Grounds on June 22, 2002, or on such other date as the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate may jointly designate.

SEC. 2. CONDITIONS.

The event to be carried out under this resolution shall be free of admission charge to the public and arranged not to interfere with the needs of Congress, under conditions to be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board; except that the Association shall assume full responsibility for all expenses and liabilities incident to all activities associated with the event.

SEC. 3. STRUCTURES AND EQUIPMENT.

For the purposes of this resolution, the Association is authorized to erect upon the Capitol Grounds, subject to the approval of the Architect of the Capitol, such stage, sound amplification devices, and other related structures and equipment as may be required for the event to be carried out under this resolution.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

The Architect of the Capitol and the Capitol Police Board are authorized to make any such additional arrangements that may be required to carry out the event under this resolution.

SEC. 5. ENFORCEMENT OF RESTRICTIONS.

The Capitol Police Board shall provide for enforcement of the restrictions contained in section 4 of the Act of July 31, 1946 (40 U.S.C. 193d; 60 Stat. 718), concerning sales, advertisements, displays, and solicitations on the Capitol Grounds, as well as other restrictions applicable to the Capitol Grounds, with respect to the event to be carried out under this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 356 authorizes the use of the Capitol grounds for the greater Washington Soap Box Derby qualifying races to be held on June 22, 2002.

The event is open to the public and free of charge and the sponsor assumes responsibility for all expenses and liabilities related to the event.

The races are to take place on Constitution Avenue between Delaware Avenue and Third Street Northwest. The participants competing in the events are residents of the Washington metropolitan area and range in ages from 9 to 16. Participants will compete in three open divisions based on their experience in building their vehicles. This event is currently one of the oldest of its kind in the country, having taken place for over 55 years. The winner will go on to represent the Washington metropolitan area at the national finals to be held in Akron, Ohio, later in the summer.

Participants in these events learn the value of hard work, dedication and attention to detail, since any loose parts or screws may affect their time in the event.

I support the resolution and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join the sponsor in supporting H. Con. Res. 356 and acknowledging the efforts of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), who has been such a great champion for his constituents for this event.

As usual, this event has bipartisan support with co-sponsors including the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), and myself.

H. Con. Res. 356 authorizes use of the Capitol grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby. Youngsters ages 9 through 16 construct and operate their own soap box vehicles. On June 22, 2002, these youngsters of the greater Washington area race down Constitution Avenue to test the principles of aerodynamics in hand-designed and -constructed soap box vehicles.

Many hundreds of volunteers donate considerable time supporting the events and providing families with a fun-filled day. The event has grown in popularity and Washington is now known as one of the outstanding race cities. In keeping with standard procedures, the event is conducted under conditions prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol and the Police Board. It is free and open to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I support H. Con. Res. 356 and thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for his work in originating this resolution.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, for the past ten years, I have sponsored a resolution for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby to hold its race along Constitution Avenue.

Once again, I am proud to have sponsored H. Con. Res. 356 to permit the 65th race of the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby. It is scheduled to take place on the Capitol grounds on Saturday, June 22, 2002.

This resolution authorizes the Architect of the Capitol, the Capitol Police Board, and the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby Association to negotiate the necessary arrangements for conducting the race in complete compliance with the rules and regulations governing the use of the Capitol grounds.

I request my colleagues to join with me, and other co-sponsors including representative JIM MORAN, CONNIE MORELLA, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, FRANK WOLF, and ALBERT WYNN in supporting this resolution.

The Soap Box Derby has been in the Washington, D.C., area since 1992. It has attracted over 50 contestants each year. The participants range from ages 9 to 16.

The participants work very hard to prepare for the local Soap Box Derby. They are given an opportunity to learn basic skills of workmanship. They build their own race cars from a kit provided by the All-American Soap Box Derby Program. The participants are able to enhance their building skills to create a basic style car.

Winners of three levels of the local race become eligible to compete in the National Soap Box Derby races held in Akron, Ohio. Prior to the National races, they attend a week of camp in ''Derbytown'' where they make lasting friendships while participating in a variety of sporting activities. The National races are held in August and give the participants a chance to win scholarships and merchandise prizes.

Mr. Speaker, this even has been called ''The Greatest Amateur Racing Event in the World''. This is a wonderful opportunity for our children from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia to venture into the world of science, while experiencing the spirit of competition.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 356.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolutions 347, 348, 354, 356, the measures just considered by the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 358) supporting the goals and ideals of National Better Hearing and Speech Month, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 358

Whereas the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) reports that approximately 42,000,000 people in the United States suffer from a speech, voice, language, or hearing impairment;

Whereas almost 28,000,000 people in the United States suffer from hearing loss;

Whereas 1 out of every 3 people in the United States more than 65 years of age suffers from hearing loss;

Whereas although more than 25,000,000 people in the United States would benefit from the use of a hearing aid, fewer than 7,000,000 people in the United States use a hearing aid;

Whereas sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous and can lead to hearing loss;

Whereas the number of young children who suffer hearing loss as a result of environmental noise has been increasing;

Whereas every day in the United States approximately 33 babies are born with significant hearing loss;

Whereas hearing loss is the most common congenital disorder in newborns;

Whereas a delay in diagnosing a newborn's hearing loss can affect the child's social, emotional, and academic development;

Whereas the average age at which newborns with hearing loss are diagnosed is between 12 and 25 months;

Whereas more than 1,000,000 children received speech or language disorder services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) during the school year ending in 1998;

Whereas children with language impairments are 4 to 5 times more likely than their peers to experience reading problems;

Whereas 10 percent of children entering the first grade have moderate to severe speech disorders, including stuttering;

Whereas stuttering affects more than 2,000,000 people in the United States;

Whereas approximately 1,000,000 people in the United States have aphasia, a language disorder inhibiting spoken communication that results from damage caused by a stroke or other traumatic injury to the language centers of the brain; and

Whereas for the last 75 years May has been celebrated as National Better Hearing and Speech Month in order to raise awareness regarding speech, voice, language, and hearing impairments and to provide an opportunity for Federal, State, and local governments, members of the private and nonprofit sectors, speech and hearing professionals, and the people of the United States to focus on preventing, mitigating, and curing such impairments: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Better Hearing and Speech Month;

(2) commends the 41 States that have implemented routine hearing screenings for every newborn before the newborn leaves the hospital;

(3) supports the efforts of speech and hearing professionals in their efforts to improve the speech and hearing development of children; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to have their hearing checked regularly and to avoid environmental noise that can lead to hearing loss.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 358.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 358, which supports the goals and ideals of a National Better Hearing and Speech Month. Approximately 42 million Americans suffer from a speech, voice, language or hearing disability. For the last 75 years, the month of May has been celebrated as National Better Hearing and Speech Month to help raise awareness on how to prevent, mitigate and cure these impairments.

Communication is indispensable for learning, working, playing, and enjoying family life and friendships. Children with listening difficulties due to hearing loss continue to be an underidentified and underserved population. The earlier the problem is diagnosed and addressed, the less serious the long-term impact. That is why I was so pleased that provisions relating to hearing loss in infants were included in the Children's Health Act of 2000. My good friend from New York (Mr. WALSH) was instrumental in this effort.

This resolution commended the 41 States that have implemented routine hearing screening for every newborn delivered in a hospital. I am happy to report that my home State of Florida vigorously promotes this policy by screening the newborns at all birthing facilities prior to discharge. Recent developments have shown that interventions to address auditory problems in newborns greatly enhanced the success rate in overcoming hearing-loss issues. Each adult and child with hearing loss is affected differently, which is why it is critical to detect hearing loss early and to determine the extent of loss in order to intervene appropriately.

This resolution encourages all Americans to have their hearing checked regularly and encourages individuals to avoid environmental noise that can lead to hearing loss.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 358.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders reports that some 40 million people suffer from a speech, voice, language, or hearing impediments.

Many of these impairments are found at birth. Every day about 33 babies are born with hearing loss, the most common congenital disorder in newborns. For the past 75 years, May has been celebrated as National Better Hearing and Speech Month, raising awareness about speech, voice, hearing, and language impairments.

Federal, State, and local governments, as well as members of the speech and hearing profession, have used May as an opportunity to educate the public about preventing, mitigating, and treating these impairments.

This resolution commends their work and that of the 41 States that have implemented routine hearing screening for every newborn.

I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN), and others for introducing this resolution; and I hope my colleagues would support it.

I would add, Mr. Speaker, as we occupy time on the House floor today doing not inconsequential things but things that do not directly have major positive impact on people's lives, passing resolutions like this, which I do support, and using them to educate the public about preventing and mitigating and treating speech and hearing loss, I think this Congress needs to do more on real health issues. That means issues like prescription drugs, issues like access to health care, issues like ensuring 40 million Americans are insured. Because to be sure, Mr. Speaker, checking for hearing, doing screenings, all of these things are programs that we can do something about.

In addition to doing a resolution, I would hope this Congress would put aside its fervor to cut taxes on the wealthiest people and instead would be using some of those resources for prescription drugs, for hearing and speech screening, for all the kinds of things that will make people's health care better and make people's lives better.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN), who not only is the author of this resolution but who has personally experienced this problem and who has shared that with many of us over the years.

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, today I come to the House in support of the National Better Hearing and Speech Month. For 75 years, the month of May has been designated as a time to celebrate the hope available to Americans with speech and hearing impairments and to raise awareness about the need to protect their hearing.

Speech and hearing impairments impair the lives of many Americans. In fact, almost 28 million people in the United States suffer from a hearing loss. One out of every three people in the United States of an age greater than 65 suffer some sort of a hearing loss and every day in the United States approximately 33 babies are born with significant hearing loss.

As someone who has had a hearing impairment, I certainly know what a gift sound is, and I also know some of the struggles that go along with finding a proper hearing aid. My hearing loss is as a result of an illness that I had as a child. It was discovered a time later, and then it was decades before I could find the proper hearing devices to help me.

My wife, Ann, served as my hearing aid. She graciously helped me communicate for years before I could find the solution that would help me and I could work with.

Many dedicated professionals have assisted me over the years in my quest to find the help I have sought. And I would like to thank them for the work they have done in making not only my life better but so many others.

For those who have yet to have a hearing loss and have good hearing, I urge you to avoid harsh environments with noises that can damage your hearing and cause permanent hearing loss. Any sounds over 85 decibels can damage your hearing. For example, listening to an ambulance siren for 9 seconds, a smoke alarm for a minute and a half, or airplane cabin noise for a couple of minutes can damage your hearing. And I will say it is not retraceable. It is much easier to protect your hearing now than to suffering from hearing impairments.

I urge my colleagues to support May as National Better Hearing and Speech Month. It would be an encouragement not only to your constituents but those who suffer some sort of hearing and speech impairment back in the district, as well as those dedicated professionals who have worked together to help make this a better field.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, speaking earlier today, in fact, walking over from my office in Rayburn to the House floor to work with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) on the Ryun legislation today, and I was talking to some people whose families have Alzheimer's, who are advocating for Alzheimer's patients, again, this Congress is falling short on substantive kinds of issues to help people with Alzheimer's. There are some four or five million people suffering from Alzheimer's today.

If we do not do the research right, if we do not take care of those people well enough, that number is going to be as high, they say, in the next few years as 14 million patients.

We are falling short on what we are doing for community health centers and the National Health Service Corps, from the Community Access Program that my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), has worked on, the Chronic Disease Prevention program with CDC, nurses shortage, pharmacist shortage, the problems with home health care reimbursement, the problems with physician reimbursements, the problems with hospitals, especially rural hospital and inner-city hospitals reimbursement.

Those are the kinds of issues this Congress should work on. Not to belittle this resolution, which is important to educate people on speech and hearing loss, but this Congress needs to get its act in gear and begin to deal with issues like prescription drugs and reimbursements issues for providers and all the kinds of public health issues that this Republican Congress does not seem too very interested in.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the chairman of our subcommittee, has done yeoman's work in trying to bring these issues forward. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership is not nearly so interested as many of us are on the committee in moving forward on public health issues, on prescription drug issues, community health centers and community access programs and CDC, and all the things that really will make a difference beyond the passage of a few resolutions that this Congress seems intent on doing week after week after week.

□ 1630

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), I would thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for his kind remarks. Certainly I do not disagree with them. I think it is important that all of us, rather than just a lot of rhetoric, sit down and try to work these things out, and if we have basically hard, fast, nonobjective thoughts about how things ought to be, nothing is ever going to get done.

I dare say that the gentleman from Ohio is not among the category of some people who would rather have an issue November. I really feel with my heart that he wants to do something about these things, and hopefully, working together, we can accomplish it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he might consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), the author of the hearing bill in the year 2000, who along with the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN) has really been the conscience of the Congress on this issue.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for the leadership that he provides in this Congress on health issues and especially those that affect children.

I would respectfully disagree with my colleague from Ohio who spoke earlier. There is no partisanship in this issue. There is great leadership on both sides of the aisle from both parties. Our health is something we all hold in common.

I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 358 designating May 2002 as National Better Hearing and Speech Month. I commend my colleague, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN), for introducing this resolution and also for his hard work and contributions as a co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Hearing Health Caucus. Because of his personal experience with hearing loss, he brings firsthand knowledge of living with hearing loss to our caucus and to the public as a whole.

Thirteen years ago I began working with the deaf and hard-of-hearing community to craft legislation to have all infants screened for hearing loss at birth. At that time, only three hospitals in the country had programs, and only 3 percent of all infants born in the United States were being screened.

Since passage of the Newborn Infant Hearing Screening and Intervention Act of 1999, which gives States seed money through HRSA and CDC to set up their own screening and intervention programs, we are now screening 66 percent of infants born. This is remarkable progress, and yet we have much more to do.

Unfortunately, this year's budget zeros out funding at HRSA for these programs and basically level-funds the programs at CDC. I am working very closely with my fellow caucus co-chairs, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN), the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS), and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY), to ensure that this critical program receives additional appropriations so that we can screen all children.

The science in this area is clear. By identifying children with hearing loss by age 3 months and beginning intensive intervention by age 6 months, these children can and do develop communication skills on par with their normal hearing counterparts by the time they are ready to enter school. The next step is to ensure that children identified get appropriate interventions through the medical, audiological, educational and community support systems. All of these components are equally important.

Before I close, I want to invite all of my colleagues to a hearing health fair to be held on Wednesday, May 8, 2002, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Rayburn House Office Building foyer. At this event our Federal agency counterparts, as well as several advocacy groups, will have representatives at booths to meet with anyone needing information on hearing health issues. I encourage everyone to attend as this will be a wonderful opportunity to have questions answered on anything from hearing aids to testing and living with hearing loss.

While most of my comments have focused on infants with hearing loss, the issue affects people of all ages. Regardless of whether hearing loss is genetic, disease-based, a function of the aging process or of unknown etiology, most people can be helped to maximize their hearing capabilities and communication skills, and I encourage my colleagues to take the opportunity to get a hearing screening during National Better Hearing and Speech Month.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would just like again to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for his leadership. He is one of the newest members of the Health Hearing Caucus. We are delighted that he is and we urge him to continue his important leadership.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, for 75 years, May has been designated Better Hearing and Speech Month. With an estimated 42 million Americans affected by speech, language, and hearing disorders, audiologist and speech language pathologist have made a special effort during this month to inform, educate, and raise awareness about this critical health care issue.

It is estimated that one in six Americans has a hearing, speech, or language problem—a condition that makes it difficult to communicate with others. An impairment of the ability to hear, speak, or understand effectively can affect anyone, of any age, at any time. If left untreated these problems can limit a person at home, school, and work. With proper treatment, however, the isolating effects of communication disorders can be minimized or completely eliminated.

As with most health care conditions, it is critical that communication disorders be diagnosed early. As the most common congenital birth defect, hearing loss can severely affect a child's social, emotional, and academic development. That is why I urge all 50 states to follow the example of my home state of Michigan, and implement routine hearing screens for every newborn before they leave the hospital. Also, hearing loss among Americans age 65 and over affects one out of three people, but without effective screening, many are condemned to suffer in silence. We must seek comprehensive hearing screening for all Americans.

Therefore, I support this resolution recognizing May as Better Hearing and Speech Month and urge the people of the United States to focus on preventing, mitigating, and curing communication disorders.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 358 and in celebration of May, National Better Hearing and Speech Month.

Did you know that 28 million people in the United States today suffer from hearing loss, and 16 million people have a speech or language disorder? 42 million people have a speech, language, voice or hearing impediment. Hearing loss is the most common congenital disorder found in newborns, and ten percent of children entering the first grade suffer from mild speech disorders like stuttering.

As a nurse, I know the issue of speech and hearing health affects many different people, from infants to adults to senior citizens. You can be born with a disorder, or you can develop one later in life due to late onset of a specific impediment, a stroke or traumatic event. But many Americans don't realize the extent to which our society deals with speech and hearing disorders. That is why, since 1927, the speech and hearing community has celebrated May as a month to increase national awareness of this health problem.

As a nurse, I understand the importance of getting the right healthcare immediately, especially when it comes to our children. Deafness is the most common birth defect; that out of the 12,000 babies born in the U.S. each year with hearing loss, 4,000 of them are profoundly deaf and need a cochlear implant, and 8,000 need hearing aids. Unless a child gets medical attention by the time they are two, permanent damage is done to his or her language and speech.

A newborn hearing test is simple and easy, and only costs $35. Our babies are subjected to batteries of other tests, and I think it's crucial for this one to be included.

As a founding member of the Congressional Hearing Caucus, I am extremely proud of H. Con. Res. 358. Not only does this resolution support the goals and ideals of National Better Hearing and Speech Month, it calls attention to and commends the 41 states that have implemented routine hearing screenings of every newborn before the baby leaves the hospital.

The resolution also supports the efforts of speech and hearing professionals to improve the speech and hearing development of children and encourages all Americans to have their hearing checked regularly and to avoid environmental noise that can lead to hearing loss.

All across the United States, people are trying to make a difference. I commend everyone in the speech and hearing community for their education and awareness efforts, as well as the extraordinary level of care and medical attention they give to their patients.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I do not have any further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 358.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES MONTH

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 388) expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Minority Health and Health Disparities Month, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 388

Whereas in 2000, the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service announced as a goal the elimination by 2010 of health disparities experienced by racial and ethnic minorities in health access and outcome in 6 areas: infant mortality, cancer screening, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and human immunodeficiency virus infection, and immunizations;

Whereas despite notable progress in the overall health of the Nation there are continuing health disparities in the burden of illness and death experienced by African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Asians, and Pacific Islanders, compared to the United States population as a whole;

Whereas minorities are more likely to die from cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, chemical dependency, diabetes, infant mortality, violence, and, in recent years, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome;

Whereas there is a national need for scientists in the fields of biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and health services research to focus on how best to eliminate health disparities;

Whereas individuals such as underrepresented minorities and women in the workforce enable society to address its diverse needs; and

Whereas behavioral and social sciences research has increased awareness and understanding of factors associated with health care utilization and access, patient attitudes toward health services, and risk and protective behaviors that affect health and illness, and these factors have the potential to be modified to help close the health disparities gap among ethnic minority populations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) a National Minority Health and Health Disparities Month should be established to promote educational efforts on the health problems currently facing minorities and other health disparity populations;

(2) the Secretary of Health and Human services should, as authorized by the Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000, present public service announcements on health promotion and disease prevention among minorities and other health disparity populations in the United States and educate the public and health care professionals about health disparities;

(3) the President should issue a proclamation recognizing the immediate need to reduce health disparities in the United States and encouraging all health organizations and Americans to conduct appropriate programs and activities to promote healthfulness in minority and other health disparity communities;

(4) Federal, State, and local governments should work in concert with the private and nonprofit sector to emphasize the recruitment and retention of qualified individuals from racial, ethnic, and gender groups that are currently underrepresented in health care professions;

(5) the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality should continue to collect and report data on health care access and utilization on patients by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and where possible, primary language, as authorized by the Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000, to monitor the Nation's progress toward the elimination of health care disparities; and

(6) the information gained from research about factors associated with health care utilization and access, patient attitudes toward health services, and risk and protective behaviors that affect health and illness, should be disseminated to all health care professionals so that they may better communicate with all patients, regardless of race or ethnicity, without bias or prejudice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).