

Bendross, and her son and daughter-in-law Eric and Angela Bendross. They have our deepest sympathy, and our hearts go out to them for their loss.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR.
VICTOR J. CONNORS

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to Dr. Victor J. Connors from Middleton, WI. On June 21, 2003, in San Diego, CA, optometrists from around the Nation will elect my constituent, Dr. Connors, as the 82nd president of the American Optometric Association. Dr. Connors' enthusiasm and contributions to his profession have earned him this prominent recognition.

Dr. Connors has an impressive record in his profession at the local, State and national level demonstrating his leadership in the field of optometry. He served as president of the Wisconsin Optometric Association in 1987 and was recognized as our State's Optometrist of the Year in 1990. Dr. Connors has also served as the president of the North Central States Optometric Council and was elected to the American Optometric Association's board of trustees in 1997.

In addition to his extraordinary leadership in his profession, Dr. Connors has been an energetic leader in many civic organizations. He has served as president of the Middleton Optimist Club, chairman of the Middleton Park, Recreation and Forestry Commission, chairman of the Middleton Police Commission, president of the Middleton Area Development Corporation, president of the Middleton Chamber of Commerce, president of the Middleton Good Neighbor Festival and president of the church council at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Middleton.

Dr. Victor J. Connors' vast achievements and commitment to public service have led him to develop a distinguished record of leadership in his profession and his community. It is evident that his dedication and motivation will allow him to have a successful term as president of the American Optometric Association. I join his many friends, colleagues and his wife, Becky, and children, Sara, Colleen and Colin in congratulating him and wishing well as the new president of the American Optometric Association.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2286, THE
WORKING FAMILIES TAX CREDIT
ACT OF 2003

HON. CHRIS BELL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. BELL. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle tout "No Child Left Behind" when in actuality they deliberately choose to leave millions of children behind. Last week, President Bush signed a new law

that would provide tax cuts of \$93,500 to the 200,000 taxpayers making over \$1 million. Fifty three percent of all taxpayers would get less than \$100 under the GOP law. Here is another example of the Administration choosing the wealthiest over America's working families.

What is even more egregious is that the Administration chose not to provide or increase the child tax credit to working families making between \$10,500 to \$26,625 per year. Mr. Speaker, Republicans in the Senate dropped a provision, added by Senator LINCOLN, that would have helped nearly 12 million children and their families get a tax credit. Out of that 12 million, a staggering 8 million receive no child tax credit under the GOP law.

Mr. Speaker, their plan in no way, shape or form protects the children that need it the most. Instead, their plan deliberately excludes these children. In actuality, the Republican plan should be called the "Plan to Leave Children Behind."

This is why I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2286, the Rangel-Davis-DeLauro bill. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill. This is a great start to repairing the damage inflicted by the Administration's reckless and negligent tax package. H.R. 2286 would restore the child tax credit to families making minimum wage by providing greater tax relief to working families. Nineteen million children and their families will benefit from this bill. In fact, over 2 million children in my home state of Texas would benefit under Rangel plan.

In addition to the child tax credit, H.R. 2286 would create more jobs. The provisions in this bill are key elements of the House Jobs and Economic Growth package and will create more than 1 million jobs without adding one penny to the deficit. Lastly, this bill has key elements that would ensure our brave men and women in uniform are not denied tax relief just because they are on active duty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2286—this tax plan is fair—it helps: America's economy, America's men and women in uniform and America's working families. Most importantly, this child tax credit helps America's children by leaving no child behind.

THE INCLUSIVE HOME DESIGN ACT

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that today I am reintroducing the Inclusive Home Design Act. I want to thank my colleagues BARBARA LEE and LOUISE SLAUGHTER for joining me today as original cosponsors of this legislation. I hope that all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us. I also want to thank my friend Marca Bristow of Access Living for her dedication and outstanding leadership. Finally, I want to offer my gratitude to all of the architects and community leaders who worked with me to craft this legislation. The Inclusive Home Design Act will greatly increase the number of homes that are accessible to people with dis-

abilities. It is supported by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and countless other national and local disabilities rights organizations.

The Inclusive Home Design Act requires all newly-built single family homes receiving federal funds to meet three specific standards: an accessible route, or "zero step," into the home, "32" clearance doorways on the main level, and one wheel chair accessible bathroom. These nationally mandated standards for homes built with federal dollars will close a major loophole in our current housing laws.

Under current law, 95 percent of federally supported homes do not have to meet any accessibility standard. This creates unnecessary barriers for disabled veterans and other people with mobility impairments. It defies logic to build new homes that block people out when it's so easy and cheap to build new homes that let people in. Many states and localities have already incorporated visitability standards. This list includes Naperville, Bollingbrook, and Champagne, Illinois, Atlanta, Vermont, Texas, Kansas, Arizona and others. Also the United Kingdom passed a law in March 1998 mandating that every new home become accessible. A federal law will build on the momentum that has already been created here and abroad.

The proposed legislation is based on the concept of Visitability, an affordable, sustainable and inclusive design approach for integrating basic accessibility features into all newly built homes and housing. Architects and builders will have latitude in how they comply with the act. For example, the zero step entrance can be placed at the front, side, or back of the home. The accessible route can even go through an attached garage.

When homes are accessible, it benefits not only today's disability community, but also all of us who are friends and family members of people with disabilities. Often, the prohibitive cost of making an existing home accessible deprives seniors of their independence and pushes them into nursing homes. It generally costs thousands of dollars for a homeowner to retrofit their home. However, on average experts estimate that it only costs \$300 to \$400 to add visitability features into a new home. In addition, the zero step entrance requirements can be waived if the terrain makes compliance impractical.

By making new homes accessible, we guarantee that many seniors can age at home instead of moving into expensive assisted living facilities. This will save taxpayer money and it will help improve the quality of life of our senior citizens. As the population becomes older, this will become more important. Fifty-eight percent of people over eighty years old suffer from physical impairments. In 2000, there were 30.5 million people between 65–84 years old. This number will grow to 47 million by 2020. Today, over 4.3 million individuals are over 85. By 2020, this number is projected to grow to 6.8 million. There is no question that the Inclusive Home Design Act will enable many of our seniors to remain at home.

Homes that meet visitability standards are essential for people with disabilities and sensible because 3 out of 10 people will face a disability before they are 67, practical, and cost effective. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to pass this legislation, the Inclusive Home Design Act, into law.