

BAT FOR THE CURE

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, each year, about 33,000 Americans die from prostate cancer and 256,000 are diagnosed for the first time. Aside from lung cancer, the disease kills more men than any other form of cancer.

On November 8, 1999, Ed Rendell, one of the country's foremost baseball authorities, was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Early detection and the care of doctors like Nicholas Romas at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York City saved Ed's life.

In late 2002, Ed founded Bat for the Cure, a non-profit charity dedicated to the eradication of prostate cancer. With its prominent Board of Directors, including Bob Costas, Mario Cuomo, Len Elmore, Kathy Giusti and John Hennessy III, the charity has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fight the disease.

The organization has also enlisted well-known sports stars who are joining in the fight, such as Dustin Baker, Frank Robinson, Tom McCraw, Bob Watson, Don Baylor, Dave Winfield, and Rafael Palmeiro. Many of these celebrities have personal experiences with the tragedy of cancer.

Fortunately, prostate cancer is one of the slowest growing cancers, so proper detection and treatment can save lives. With Bat for the Cure's support, St. Luke's-Roosevelt, the hospital that saved Ed Rendell's life, is now helping many other cancer patients become survivors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make prostate cancer research and early detection a national health care priority. Congress should act without delay to double prostate cancer research funding at the National Institute of Health, fully fund the National Cancer Institute, and save prostate cancer research at the Veterans' Administration.

STATE OF THE AFRICAN
AMERICAN MALE**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the State of the African American Male conference, a national initiative of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation to focus our Nation's attention on solutions to the escalating crisis in the Black community.

This past Friday, December 3, I hosted this national initiative in Oakland. Included were a visit to a prison college program, free health screenings at the conference and concurrent solutions-focused workshops. It was attended by nearly 400 people, more than 60 of whom were formerly incarcerated individuals.

The focus of the Oakland conference was on solutions for formerly incarcerated individuals and the challenges that prevent them from smoothly re-entering our communities. The Oakland Police Department reports that some 80 percent of the 114 homicides com-

mitted in Oakland in 2003 involved people on parole or probation. For that reason, I felt compelled to focus the conference in my district on the steps that we as a community and as Members of Congress can take to begin to reverse this alarming trend.

The Oakland Conference was an important opportunity for us to examine closely what were the factors associated with the failure of our corrections system. I wanted to look at the needs and solutions for successful re-entry to our communities.

On the morning before the afternoon conference, I invited my distinguished colleague from the Judiciary Committee, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, and members of the clergy to join me for a visit to San Quentin College. Offering an Associate of Arts degree, the college program at San Quentin prison is the only on-site, degree-granting college program in the entire California corrections system. It is one of only a few in the United States. It is an extension site of Patten University in Oakland, California. The curriculum at San Quentin includes courses such as American Government, literature, ethics and communication.

Without the warden and without other prison officials present, we spent nearly an hour listening carefully to five prisoners who are serving sentences of various lengths. These gentlemen described the rewards of getting a college education while serving their sentences. Even a prisoner serving a life sentence described the positive influence it has had on his life and that he encourages other prisoners to get an education. Another prisoner told us how his bond with his school-age daughter was strengthened by their sharing each other's homework. He talked of the pride he felt at being able to help her with her math for the first time. Yet, these prisoners reported that it is often difficult to maintain the motivation to make major life changes when it takes nearly two weeks for them to receive their mail from loved ones, and costs them \$15 for a ten-minute telephone call.

When family and community ties are so essential to a successful transition, then why do we permit such barriers to be erected between prisoners and the people who care most about them?

The difficulties these prisoners face during the re-entry process are further exacerbated by the fact that since 1994, Pell grants have been denied to individuals who are incarcerated. Why do we permit such barriers to remain when it is clear that education and job training are essential to a successful transition to our communities?

These funding cuts are part of a broader trend that began in 1977, when the California Department of Corrections eliminated rehabilitation from its mission and since then its mission has been solely to punish. When I was in the California Assembly, my colleagues and I attempted to correct this, but were prevented by a prevailing, but ill-informed "tough on crime" ideology. It is outrageous and immoral and in my district in the City of Oakland, we saw the consequences in 2003 in the 114 homicides.

Cost benefit analyses demonstrating the value of college over prisons are well known and well documented. When it is clear that college is better than prison, why do we continue to incarcerate more black males than we educate?

At the Oakland conference, education was just one area of the re-entry process that we

examined. In addition, health screenings were provided in the areas of HIV, prostate cancer, hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol, and all tests were free and open to the public. Provided by National Black Nurses Association, Kaiser Permanente, the Ethnic Health Institute and California Prevention and Education Project this component of the program addressed basic health concerns of Black men.

Congressman DANNY DAVIS, who began the State of the African American Male initiative, joined Congresswoman JACKSON-LEE and me for the Conference. Solutions Conferences have been held around the United States in order to create a clearinghouse of best practices. In the Oakland Conference in my district, Topics for the concurrent Solutions Workshops included: Re-Entry Programs; Record Expungement; Sentencing Alternatives; Employment and Training; Health; Housing; Education; and Funding Sources. When the workshop moderators reported out their solutions, it was abundantly clear that the expertise and assistance and innovative programs exist.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to announce at the Oakland Conference that one Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Scholarship per year in my district will be designated for a formerly incarcerated person. I was also proud to announce that a second event will be held on Saturday, January 22, 2005 where I will bring together 60 attorneys from the Charles Houston Bar Association and the San Francisco Bar Association to provide record expungement assistance to formerly incarcerated individuals. This will be an opportunity for several hundred people to get a clean slate.

What is needed, Mr. Speaker is for such programs to become a national priority.

Rather than setting up people in the correction system for failure by offering them little means of turning their lives around, we must restore Pell grants to incarcerated individuals. One of the programs in Oakland—Project Choice—provides support services to prisoners before they get out and stays with them. But Project Choice only has funding to support 40 of the 3,000 people paroled each year to Oakland.

Without programs like San Quentin College, Project Choice and others, without the support of their families and communities, these prisoners will return to the life that led them to prison in the first place. As a nation, we must provide alternatives. This is not only a matter of public safety, but is truly our moral responsibility. It is our obligation as members of the human race.

HONORING HERITAGE ELEMEN-
TARY SCHOOL STUDENTS,
THOMPSON'S STATION, TEN-
NESSEE**HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2004

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, Tennessee is known as the "Volunteer State" because we have a proud tradition of giving back to our community and our country. Today the students at Heritage Elementary School in Thompson's Station, Tennessee are reaffirming our state's reputation for volunteerism by working to support America's military families.