

on its enemies remains substantial, despite current difficulties in Iraq. While it is now difficult to contemplate military action against Syria or Iran, continued sponsorship of terror against other states will eventually provoke the American people, if not the international community, to exercise their right of self-defense through affordable wars of destruction instead of costly nation-building exercises.

No one can convey this message more effectively than George Bush, who remains determined to prevent a future of state-sponsored terror. He should accept the Study Group's sound message on negotiating with enemies but supplement it with the toughness that effective diplomacy demands.

IN OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, today I rise to observe National Black HIV and AIDS Awareness Day. In doing so, I ask my colleagues and I ask the Nation this question: How many more reports on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States and its disproportionate, detrimental and devastating impact on the African American community must be published before we, as a Congress and as a Nation, acknowledge, observe and uphold the objectives of National Black HIV and AIDS Awareness Day?

African Americans have been and continue to be the hardest hit by this epidemic. Today, HIV/AIDS kills African Americans during the most productive years of life, robbing them of their opportunity to follow their dreams and pursue their destinies and to contribute, not only to their families and their communities but to our society and our Nation. What's more, the numbers are not improving.

African Americans have a HIV diagnosis rate that is more than eight times that of whites. African Americans, who are represented in about 13 percent of the population, account for nearly 50 percent of all new HIV infections, and more than 40 percent of all individuals currently living with AIDS, and 40 percent of all AIDS deaths. The AIDS case rate among African Americans is nearly 10 times, 10 times higher than that among whites.

Particularly affected by HIV and AIDS are African American women. In fact, in 2002, AIDS was the leading cause of death for African American women age 25 to 34 years of age. African American women today are represented in about 7 in 10 new AIDS cases among women and are roughly 25 more times more likely than their white counterparts to be infected with HIV.

Madam Speaker, often as Members of Congress we take to the floor to discuss and debate an issue that resonates with us, not only because of our constituents who are affected but because we personally identify and are dis-

turbed by the issue. And not only as a physician and as chair of the Health Brain Trust of the Congressional Black Caucus but as an African American woman with daughters and granddaughters, this issue is particularly salient. The numbers are particularly disturbing, and our inaction as a country inspires me to stand here today and call on my colleagues to stand up and do more.

I also rise today, Madam Speaker, not only to observe National Black HIV Awareness Day but to encourage my colleagues in Congress on both sides of the aisle to do the same in a manner that is consistent with the day's intent. That intent is to get educated, to get tested and to get involved.

We know that, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, almost all of whom have been tested, we have a key role to play. I urge all of my colleagues to embrace these objectives today, February 7, and beyond. The HIV epidemic in the United States will not be conquered until we not only encourage but also embrace the destigmatization of the disease among not only African Americans but also all people living and struggling with HIV/AIDS. How one gets infected is irrelevant. HIV affects all people the same way. And we, along with all Americans, should extend a hand of compassion, understanding, fellowship and, most of all, action to help.

Madam Speaker, in this new time with new opportunities, we need to leverage ourselves as Members of Congress to fully fund the Minority AIDS Initiative to at least \$610 million, although we should be asking for more in order to really build the capacity in the minority communities that are hardest hit by the epidemic. That includes the Latino community as well. We should expand voluntary testing, especially among incarcerated, ex-offenders and other high-risk groups, and ensure that all individuals who need it are enrolled in adequate HIV/AIDS related care.

We should also work together to reduce the social determinants of health that put people at greater risk for HIV infection. And we should expand access to culturally appropriate substance abuse prevention programs as well as to drug treatment and recovery services.

Madam Speaker, the budget that was released on Monday clearly deprioritizes the health and health care needs of all people with HIV and AIDS and their families. However, our new political climate has brought us a new day, and we, therefore, must leverage ourselves to redeclare HIV and AIDS as a state of emergency. We must demand that this administration responds to this emergency with adequate funding and resources instead of tax breaks to the wealthy. The lives of far too many people literally depend on it.

And so, today, Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand with my colleagues to

observe National Black HIV and AIDS Awareness Day. I affirm, and we all must stand to affirm that HIV and AIDS in the African American community and communities of color has long been a state of emergency, and from today forward we must respond with compassion and justice. And we, the representatives of the people who are infected and affected, as all of us are, must act.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RAY BECK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of football all-star and community hero Ray Beck, who passed away recently in Cedartown, Georgia.

Mr. Beck is a football legend both in my home State of Georgia and across the Nation. After 4 years as a star on the Cedartown High School football team, Ray attended Georgia Tech, my alma mater, to play guard for the legendary coach Bobby Dodd.

In 1951, he was named an All-American by the American Football Coaches Association and the Football Writers Association. That same year, he helped lead Georgia Tech to an 11-1 record and an Orange Bowl victory over Baylor University.

After college, Beck was drafted by the New York Giants. He was part of the 1956 World Championship Team. And Madam Speaker, that team included the likes of Y.A. Tittle, Kyle Rote and Sam Huff. They led the Giants to a 56-7 victory over the Chicago Bears, a far more lopsided score than the Indianapolis Colts achieved this past weekend.

On the football field, Ray was known as a team player, someone who gave his all to the game. Because of his tremendous work ethic he was inducted into the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and the College Football Hall of Fame.

But Ray was more than just a football player. He was an active and enthusiastic supporter of the Cedartown community. The same attitude that made him a star on the field made him a hero in his community. There is hardly an organization in Cedartown that hasn't been touched by Beck's generosity.

Madam Speaker, he was chairman of the Cedartown Development Authority. He was president of the Cedartown Chamber of Commerce, a member of the Polk Medical Center Advisory Board, a board member of the Georgia Motor Trucking Association.

But perhaps he will be best remembered for a charity golf tournament he arranged with his long time friend, Doc Ayers. This annual event raised thousands of dollars for Polk County, for charities such as children's literacy and all the way to local food banks.

It is a little wonder Beck was named Citizen of Excellence by the Cedartown