

99th anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scouts of America. This organization, which was incorporated on February 8th, 1910, under the laws of the District of Columbia, has long been the largest youth organization in the nation and has done well in producing responsible citizens of strong character.

The Boy Scouts of America was rapid in its initial growth; only two years after its founding, Boy Scout troops were established in every state. Time and time again the Boy Scouts of America has proven its commitment to our nation, with initiatives such as, "Every Scout Feed a Soldier" and "A Good Turn for America". The past 99 years have seen more than 112 million youth bear the traditions of excellence rooted in the history of the Boy Scouts of America.

In the Chicagoland Area, Scouting is as prevalent of a force as it has always been. Currently, nearly 10,000 youth are actively involved in the Scouting program of our local council. In addition, through the Chicago Area Council's involvement in Learning for Life Programs, over 35,000 additional youth are immersed as well in the principles of scouting. Combining the two programs, nearly one in every seven youth in Chicago is in some way involved in the Scouting program.

I am sure that the spirit of Scouting is present in this very body, as it has been in the past. A survey conducted by the Boy Scouts of America revealed that nearly 60 percent of the membership of the 110th Congress had at some point participated in Scouting.

I am grateful that the twin pillars of the Scout Oath and Scout Law have served to shape the character of both young men and women of all ages, colors, codes, and creeds. With the continued contributions of the Boy Scouts of America and organizations like it, we can be sure that our youth are developing into good citizens.

IN SUPPORT OF RESTORING THE
WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF CON-
SUMER AFFAIRS

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 13, 2009

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, over the past eight years, American consumer safety has taken a back seat to the special interests. As a result, many Americans have been exposed to dangerous toys for their children, hazardous household products for their families and even contaminated food, resulting in illness. Now is the time to support consumer advocates across the country by encouraging the new administration to restore the White House Office of Consumer Affairs.

Our country gave the government a clear mandate for change in November. Without question, a new focus on consumer safety should be part of this change. Under President Clinton, consumers had an effective advocate with a long record of commitment to protecting consumers in Ann Brown, former Chairwoman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Unfortunately, staff cutbacks suffered by the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission have undermined effective efforts to protect consumers.

While bipartisan legislation has attempted to address these challenges, it is clear that more progress is required. We must act now. Americans should have confidence that the products they use are safe and will not pose any dangers to them or their families. The new Administration can make significant progress toward this goal by restoring the Office of Consumer Affairs to its rightful place in the Executive Branch. I strongly encourage President Obama's administration to do so, and I echo the New York Times and their call to action.

The editorial follows.

[From the New York Times, Jan. 4, 2009]

A VOICE FOR THE CONSUMER

The time has come to give the American consumer a much stronger voice in Washington. President-elect Barack Obama has already named what amounts to an energy and environmental czar in the White House, and America's beleaguered consumers deserve no less.

Mr. Obama should restore the White House Office of Consumer Affairs, which vanished during the Clinton years, and appoint a director who has both the president's ear and the authority to rebuild the consumer protection agencies that were undercut or hollowed out by the fiercely anti-regulatory Bush administration.

There is no shortage of agencies ostensibly designed to protect consumers. But without an emergency like killer spinach or lead in children's toys, the Bush administration has mostly failed to hear customers' complaints. The consumer safety net is simply far too weak.

The Food and Drug Administration has suffered cutbacks in expert personnel, and still relies too heavily on industry to police itself. Credit-card holders who have been subject to all kinds of Dickensian tricks and traps were finally told by the Federal Reserve that relief is in sight—in 2011. Not so long ago, there was only one official toy tester at the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and oversight generally was so weak that Congress was forced to step in with new protections, which still could be strengthened.

It will be up to the Obama administration to bring these agencies back to life. In part this means restoring the morale of government workers who have too often been stymied by the anti-regulators at the top. It will also mean stronger consumer protection policies and hiring more skilled people. It will mean giving one official responsibility for coordinating the entire apparatus.

Presidents Johnson and Carter both recognized the need for a strong person to do that job. Both chose Esther Peterson, who during about eight years in office pushed for then-radical ideas like nutritional labeling on food and truth in advertising. As the Reagan anti-government era began, the consumer protection job steadily lost clout until it was shuttered in the late 1990s.

During his campaign, Mr. Obama promised consumers that he would help them get a fairer deal. As the victims of lead toys and predatory lenders can attest, they certainly need one. Restoring the Office of Consumer Affairs and appointing a director as strong and capable as Mrs. Peterson would be an encouraging first step.

LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR LONG-
TERM CARE

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 13, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, with an ever aging population, most families at one point or another are forced to make a decision regarding the future of a loved one who needs assistance with everyday living. These decisions are made upon few available options and are very costly—many find themselves struggling between the high price of nursing homes or informal family care. The financial and emotional burden on families is vast and action such as the "Long-term Care Retirement and Security Act of 2009" must be taken.

Long-term care is a variety of services that includes medical and non-medical care to people who have a chronic disability or illness. This form of care may be provided at home, in the community, in assisted living or in nursing homes. While long-term care is often used for the elderly, it is important to remember that it could be needed at any age.

It is important to note that families who choose to care for their loved ones are left responsible for otherwise costly services because Medicare does not pay for long-term care. Adult children or grandchildren are cited as the main care givers to the elderly population. According to research conducted by the American Association of Retired People (AARP), two-thirds of older people with disabilities relied solely on "informal" help; approximately 75% of which was unpaid care from friends and family. The AARP Public Policy Institute reported that the annual economic value of unpaid long-term care in the United States is approximately \$354 billion, based upon an estimation that 34 million adults provided some type of long-term care in 2006.

It is time to address the growing needs of our aging population and motivate younger generations to take the necessary steps toward insuring their long-term care needs. For this reason, I have reintroduced the Long-term Care and Retirement Security Act, H.R. 897.

This legislation would encourage individuals to plan for their own long-term care needs by amending the Internal Revenue Code to allow a tax deduction for eligible long-term care insurance premiums for a taxpayer and the taxpayer's spouse and dependents. This legislation would also establish an applicable tax credit for eligible caregivers caring for individuals with long-term care needs, multiplied by the number of individuals receiving care. The Long-term Care and Retirement Security Act would also permit long-term care insurance to be included in employee benefit cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements, resulting in more active employees participating in long-term care policies. Finally, this long overdue measure would establish consumer protections based on the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' recommendations for qualified long-term care policies.

It is my hope that this legislation will encourage more Americans to take personal responsibility for their long-term care needs through these incentives and help families afford long-term care insurance.