

SPINA BIFIDA ASSOCIATION,
May 3, 2010.

Hon. ROSA DELAURO,
Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DELAURO: On behalf of the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), the only national voluntary health organization working on behalf of the estimated 166,000 individuals who live with all forms of Spina Bifida and their families, I am writing to express our appreciation to you for introducing the Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction and Awareness Act of 2010. This legislation will provide much-needed support to pregnancy risk information services, which play a crucial role in educating women on how to reduce the risk of preventable birth defects, including Spina Bifida.

One of the primary goals of SBA is to increase awareness of the importance of folic acid consumption among the 65 million women in the United States of child-bearing age. The risk of Spina Bifida and other serious birth defects can be reduced by up to 70%, if women of childbearing age consume 400 micrograms (400 mcg) of folic acid (a B-vitamin) every day. Grants funded under the Birth Defects Prevention, Risk Reduction and Awareness Act of 2010 will help ensure that women who are considering becoming pregnant have access to information on the importance of folic acid supplementation, as well as other key steps they can take to ensure a healthy pregnancy.

SBA thanks you for recognizing the importance of pregnancy risk information services. If we can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

CINDY BROWNSTEIN,
President and Chief Executive Officer.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY,
ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY,
Hon. ROSA DELAURO,
Hon. MICHAEL BURGESS,
Washington, DC.

DEAR Ms. DELAURO AND Mr. BURGESS: On behalf of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, I write to express strong support for legislation you will introduce to fund the national network of pregnancy risk information services that are currently severely underfunded. These services counsel pregnant and breast-feeding women on exposures to medications, chemicals, infections, and other risks to healthy pregnancy and healthy infants.

A pregnant or breast-feeding woman lives in fear of any exposure that might pose a risk to her pregnancy or her baby. This is because of the paucity of information on the impact of exposures to medications, chemicals, infections and illnesses during pregnancy and nursing. Some exposures can be avoided, but for women with chronic diseases such as asthma, epilepsy, hypertension, or depression, continued use of medication may be essential to the health of both the woman and her infant. Asthma affects about 8% of pregnant women—over 300,000 women per year. Some women simply discontinue their asthma medications during pregnancy out of fear of a potential birth defect. However, uncontrolled asthma may pose a greater risk of complicating the pregnancy. Our organization has initiated a major study of asthma drugs in pregnancy in collaboration with the nation's pregnancy risk information services. This study simply could not be done without the resources available through these services. Unfortunately, more than half of the pregnancy risk information services in the country have closed over the past decade, and those that remain have sustained severe funding cuts. The legislation you are introducing will increase support for

these important programs and assure that the vitally important counseling and research services they provide can be reinvigorated.

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology is the largest professional medical specialty organization in the United States representing allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals, and others dedicated to improving the treatment of allergic diseases through research and education. We thank you for your leadership in support of prevention and research related to birth defects and are pleased to offer the Academy's support for your legislation.

Sincerely,

MARK BALLOW, M.D.,
President.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1258, "Expressing support for designation of May 2010 as Mental Health Month."

Mental health issues pose a serious problem for the people of this nation. Roughly 57 million people in the U.S. suffer from some form of mental illness. These illnesses affect not only the quality of life of the individual, but also the health of our communities, families, and our economic stability. Untreated mental illness is the leading cause of lost productivity and absenteeism in the workplace, resulting in an estimated \$193 billion per year in lost earnings.

In addition to lost time and productivity, untreated mental illnesses far too frequently result in lost lives. In recent years, the suicide rate has been double the homicide rate; suicide is the third leading cause of death for people between 15 and 24. While the problem of mental illness and depression knows no demographic boundaries, suicide rates are particularly high among the elderly and Native Americans.

The challenges of mental illness impact our military as well. Roughly a quarter of our service members suffer either psychological or neurological disorders, including depression and PTSD.

I support the designation of May as Mental Health Month, and urge my colleagues to join me. We need to recognize that mental well-being is as important as physical well-being for our citizens, families, and communities, and that our failure, as a nation, to prioritize mental health care is a tragedy. We need to remove the stigma from mental illness and encourage people to seek assistance, promote public awareness of the problem, and improve access to appropriate services for our citizens.

HONORING HANDSON NASHVILLE

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. COOPER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary efforts by the

citizens of Nashville in response to the recent floods, and the critical role that HandsOn Nashville played in coordinating those efforts.

As my colleagues know, earlier this month water levels in Nashville reached 32 feet above normal and 12 feet above flood level, causing devastating damage. Eighteen people died, hundreds were rescued, and many of our city's most beloved and famous attractions were partially submerged. Entire homes were destroyed, and many families have been displaced. Property damage in Davidson County is now estimated at almost \$2 billion.

Most remarkable about Nashville's story, though, is the spirit of giving and volunteering shown in abundance by the people in Nashville during and after this crisis. With very little fanfare or media attention, people from all across Middle Tennessee got to work to help their neighbors in need.

In particular, I want to salute the team at HandsOn Nashville, led by Executive Director Brian Williams. Between May 2 and May 19, over 60,000 volunteer hours were donated to flood recovery by HandsOn Nashville volunteers. During that same period, 14,200 Nashville citizens came forward to serve in flood-related programming coordinated by HandsOn Nashville, serving in over 760 separate projects to aid flood victims.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in honoring HandsOn Nashville for their crucial contributions to the Nashville community.

VOTING AGAINST THE FY 2011 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I supported the version of the Fiscal Year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act that my colleagues and I on the House Armed Services Committee passed through Committee on May 19, 2010 by a unanimous vote of 59-0. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" issue was never debated or considered by the House Armed Services Committee at all this year during consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act.

I associate myself with the remarks of Ranking Member BUCK MCKEON who stated that "The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked Congress to respect the process they developed to study the ramifications of repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell." He further stated that "we have a duty to honor that request and hear directly from our military personnel—and their families—before making a decision on a sensitive issue that directly affects them." I also agree with Chairman SKELTON's statement on this issue: "In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee this spring and in a recent letter, Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen asked Congress to defer any legislative action regarding 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' until after the Department of Defense completes its comprehensive review later this year. In a statement today, the Pentagon indicated that ideally, Secretary Gates continues to prefer that the Department complete this review before