

has not enabled seamless on-the-ground coordination between first responders or the ability to access databanks, fingerprint records, facial recognition software, or streaming video.

To solve the problem, our bill authorizes \$70 million for a research and development grant program to build devices that support data, video, and voice communications.

This bill charges the National Telecommunications and Information Agency to coordinate with a working group, consisting of the Federal Communications Commission, the DHS Office of Emergency Communications, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and public safety stakeholders, to develop criteria, evaluate devices in multiple stages, and select products for funding and licensing. This process will produce devices ready for first responders' use within five years—hopefully sooner. Thereafter, the GAO will study the process by which the program was carried out, the impacts of the grant program on competition in the market and the development of first responder devices. The cost of this program will not add to the deficit because it is offset by extending the authority of the FCC to auction spectrum.

Directed research and development is essential to achieving interoperability because it will drive down cost and develop devices that public safety has a hand in selecting. Equally as important, this bill will accelerate the development of those devices, quickly giving public safety more options with new cost savings to states and localities, and assurance that the technology can be trusted for their important work.

This bill has the support of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, which has identified research and development as one of its top priorities. The Fraternal Order of Police and the National Emergency Numbers Association also endorse the bill, as do Sprint and the Rural Cellular Association.

We in Congress must ensure public safety officials have access to a competitive, dynamic, and innovative market for the devices that are used to save lives and help protect our communities.

I hope that this effort will bring technologists, first responders, and government together to create innovative solutions for a major national security concern, and urge prompt action on this legislation.

THE DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE EMPOWERMENT ACT

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, imagine a very tall corporate office building, and a man is working inside sitting at his desk dressed in a suit and tie. He is talking on the phone while working from his computer and sipping a latte.

Now imagine a very small home in a quiet neighborhood, and a woman is working inside, wearing sneakers and comfortable clothes. She is straining to lift up an elderly man almost twice her size trying to help him put on his t-shirt to get ready for lunch.

Is the work the corporate man is doing more important than the home-worker? More valued? Better paid?

I am here to say that all work has dignity. I am here to say that our nation's laws should respect the work we all do.

Yet, even in America, some workers are paid less than the minimum wage.

Even in America, some are denied overtime pay.

Even in America, some people do not have health insurance or other benefits, and their wages are so low that they need to turn to food stamps to make ends meet.

I am introducing legislation today to show that in America, all work does have dignity.

I am introducing legislation that will say, "Regardless of the work you do, if you do it well, you should be compensated enough to take care of your family and put food on the table."

This legislation is meant to provide equity to those we trust enough to let in our homes and care for our loved ones. Home care workers are the linchpin of our nation's long-term care system, providing essential care and daily living services to more than 13 million Americans.

However, they are among the worst-paying jobs in America—mostly because of Department of Labor regulations that exclude them from federal minimum wage and overtime protections.

In 1975, after Congress had revised the Fair Labor Standards Act to include previously excluded domestic service workers, the Department of Labor issued rules that exempted home care aides from the federal overtime and minimum wage protections.

The Clinton Administration's Department of Labor issued proposed rules to correct this injustice, but the Bush Administration withdrew those proposals.

Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, tasked with the tough job of trying to fix eight years of neglect and anti-worker policies at the Department of Labor, has committed to remedy this injustice by including it on her regulatory agenda. And I commend those efforts.

But I believe that workers not only need the right regulations, but they also need the right law. I want to make sure that any administration—whether it is this one, or one to come, can never tell any worker they are "less than."

The Direct Care Workforce Empowerment Act would do three things: ensure that home care workers receive the federal minimum wage and overtime protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act; improve federal and state data collection and oversight with respect to the direct care workforce; and establish a grant program to help states improve direct care worker recruitment, retention, and training.

Yesterday, someone asked me why this was so important to me. Home care touches all of us—most of us in this room know someone who has required the assistance of a home care worker.

They help their patients with daily living, enabling them to stay in their homes and maintain independence. As the daughter of a father living with Alzheimer's—I know just how important home care workers are.

Yet, every year, home care aides land on Forbes magazine's list of the "25 worst-paying jobs in America." The mean annual wages put them behind parking lot attendants.

Once hired, they leave in droves; turnover rates run 50 to 80 percent a year.

Rights earned decades ago by similar workers continue to be denied to these hard-

working healthcare providers. Yet, even healthcare reform signed into law this year failed to protect these workers, even though their jobs directly relate to quality of care.

People with disabilities, seniors, and anyone needing home care on a permanent or temporary basis deserves caring, decently trained, and well-paid workers caring for them.

Direct-care workers constitute one of the largest and fastest-growing workforces in the country, playing a vital role in job creation and economic growth, particularly in low-income communities.

These workers help their clients bathe, dress, eat, and negotiate a host of other daily tasks. They are a lifeline for those they serve, as well as for families struggling to provide quality care.

If labor conditions are not improved, the demand for more workers may prove difficult to meet and the quality of care may decline. Those who work in the industry will become less and less able to meet basic living expenses for themselves and their families.

Let's make things right for workers—no matter whether they sit behind a desk or care for someone in a home.

Our working Americans—care givers and care receivers—deserve this.

RECOGNIZING THE FREIGHT RAILROAD INDUSTRY

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1401, expressing gratitude for the contributions that the air traffic controllers of the United States make to keep the traveling public safe and the airspace of the United States running efficiently, and for other purposes. I must commend and thank Congresswoman MCCARTHY for her leadership on this legislation and her dedication to recognizing the brave work of air traffic controllers.

Just last week, a plane taking off from my home state of Georgia was forced to make an emergency landing at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport after a tire blew during takeoff. The plane circled the skies for several hours and with the help of air traffic controllers on the ground, the plane was able to land safely. No one was injured, and the passengers were routed to another flight.

This example is just one of many describing the crucial job of air traffic controllers, a group that might remain unrecognized were it not for this resolution. Everyday air traffic controllers work to keep the traveling public safe and U.S. airspace running efficiently. They execute their job with the highest level of efficiency and maintain a calm and professional manner despite the stressful circumstances they may encounter.

H. Res. 1401 serves as a small thank you and acknowledgement to air traffic controllers for their often heroic actions, dedication, and quick and skilled decision making to help avert many accidents and tragedies. Additionally, the resolution serves as an opportunity to encourage greater investment in the modernization of the air traffic control system so that