

INTRODUCING THE FOSTER
CHILDREN SELF SUPPORT ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Foster Children Self Support Act." This bill will correct a long-standing injustice that has deprived thousands of foster youth of Social Security benefits and will provide some of our most vulnerable children with a chance to succeed. I am proud to introduce this bill in partnership with Congressman LANGEVIN, who is a tireless advocate for children and individuals with disabilities.

In nearly every state in the country, foster children eligible for Social Security benefits because of a disability or the loss of a parent are having those benefits taken by the very state agencies charged with their care. The "Foster Children Self Support Act" would end that practice. Instead, it would require states to use a child's Social Security benefits to meet the immediate needs of that child or set aside those benefits to assist the child with transitioning to adulthood when that child emancipates from care.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) estimates that approximately 30,000 foster children (out of 500,000 nationwide) receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or OASDI (Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance) benefits each month. Unfortunately, hardly any of these children will benefit from these funds. Nor will the children have the option to conserve the funds to use when they leave care. This is because state child welfare agencies routinely make themselves the representative payee so that they have control over the child's benefits. Often, neither the child nor the child's advocate knows that Social Security benefits are being sent to the agency. Once the welfare agency controls the benefits there are few limits on what they can do with the funds.

State welfare agencies take an estimated \$156 million per year from foster children, according to a CRS analysis. The practice has devastating consequences for youth who age out of the system without supports. Former foster children face tremendous challenges. Foster children often enter care having suffered from serious emotional, mental, and/or physical abuse. For example, they suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at a rate twice as high as Iraq War veterans. When youth emancipate from care, 37 percent experience at least one episode of homelessness and 16 percent of men are incarcerated by the age of 24. Only 48 percent of former foster youth are employed at age 24 and only 6 percent had a college degree. The "Foster Children Self Support Act" is especially important since it is safe to assume that those foster youth who have lost their parents or are eligible for SSI due to severe mental or physical disabilities are among the most vulnerable.

The "Foster Children Self Support Act" provides a way to help these young people. It does so by mandating that states develop a plan for foster children who receive Social Security benefits. The plan would describe how to use a child's Social Security benefits as a

resource to best meet the current and future needs of that child. The plan must be specific to each child receiving Social Security benefits and made in partnership with the child and the child's advocate. If this bill were law, states would no longer be allowed to simply use children's Social Security money as they see fit. Instead, this money would have to be used as any parent would use it: to provide for the child's particular needs and help plan for the child's future.

The bill will:

Require that states screen all foster children for Social Security eligibility and assist them in application;

Require states to identify other appropriate representative payees for eligible children, such as family members, before becoming the payee themselves;

Require states to develop a plan, with a child and that child's advocate(s), on how to best use the Social Security benefits to provide for the current and future needs of the child;

Provide for the conservation of Social Security funds in dedicated accounts that a child can access when they leave care to pay for things like housing, education, transportation, and other life expenses;

Exclude the conserved funds from the \$2,000 SSI resource limit to ensure that youth can accumulate a substantial amount of assets without losing their eligibility for future benefits;

Ensure that youth are provided assistance to maintain eligibility for benefits after they transition out of care;

Require the GAO to report back to Congress on states' progress in screening all foster children for Social Security eligibility.

As Members of Congress, we are the grandparents and guardians of all foster youth. We have a moral obligation to provide foster children with the resources they need to become independent adults, just as we would our own children. The "Foster Children Self Support Act" is a small part of fulfilling this obligation and a large step toward helping one of the most vulnerable groups of foster children.

I urge my colleagues to join Congressman LANGEVIN and me in support of this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
TO EXPRESS CONDOLENCES AT
THE LOSS OF LIFE OF 72 PEOPLE
EXECUTED IN TAMAULIPAS,
MEXICO

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution to express our condolences at the loss of life of the 72 people who were executed in Tamaulipas, Mexico by a drug syndicate on August 25, 2010.

The United States and Mexico have a unique relationship that is vitally important to both countries and to the world.

The loss of life and the utter callousness of this act need to be on the forefront of public consciousness.

The proliferation of criminal gangs like the one responsible for this atrocious crime highlights the extreme insecurity faced by migrants.

This act only reiterates the importance of comprehensive immigration legislation on both sides of the border to place safety above all other concerns.

I ask for my colleagues' support of this resolution which calls on the governments of the United States, Mexico, and nations throughout Latin America to commit to greater collaboration on the management and reform of migration policies within and between countries, to reduce the loss of life and establish safe, legal, and orderly migration that respects and protects human rights; and work together to address the factors driving high rates of irregular migration that increasingly exposes migrants to exploitive and life-threatening conditions.

HONORING WARREN EDWARD
DIFFENDALL

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American. Warren Edward Diffendall of Deep River, Connecticut passed away earlier this year and will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery this week. As a soldier and active citizen, Warren gave much of his life to our great nation.

Warren was a veteran of World War II—a Tech Sergeant in the Eighth Air Force, 489th Bomber Group, in England. He was a waist gunner on a B-24 Liberator that flew 2 historic missions on D-day. With such an honorable record in the armed services under his belt, Warren went on to serve his country for a long time after the war.

He spent many years doing good work to protect the environment and its inhabitants as a special agent for the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and for the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service. Having worked extensively with these organizations in Connecticut, I can tell you from firsthand experience how crucial people like Warren are to protecting the livelihoods of Connecticut's fisherman and the safety of our land and waterways. In addition, he became a passionate grower of fruits, vegetables, and flowers after settling in Deep River.

When we honor men and women like Warren Diffendall who served their nation during wartime and peacetime, we are reminded of why these individuals are referred to as our "greatest generation." I stand here today to honor the memory of Warren Diffendall for his service and sacrifice. Anyone who devoted their life to protecting our nation and ensuring its prosperity for future generations, in the manner that Warren did, is worthy of our eternal gratitude. I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning the loss and honoring the life of Warren Diffendall.

SUPPORT OF THE UNITED
NATIONS MILLENNIUM GOALS**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and to strongly urge the United States to do everything in its power to combat global inequalities. This week, as the UN gathers to discuss these important priorities, we must demonstrate our shared commitment to meeting the challenges we face as a global community.

The Millennium Development Goals aim to significantly reduce global injustices including extreme poverty and hunger, inferior education and healthcare systems, and unequal opportunity between the sexes by 2015. Of particular importance is the effort to cut in half the number of people worldwide—nearly one billion—who suffer from undernourishment or malnourishment.

Before the recent global economic and agriculture crises, many developing regions of the world were on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals for hunger. Now, the tremendous progress seen in Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean has been stymied. It is imperative that we address this issue now. Increased food security leads to advances in health, education, and equality in developing nations, all of which are vital to fostering international goodwill and national security.

Rashieda Weaver, president of the African Youth Coalition Against Hunger, Malnutrition, HIV and AIDS, and a constituent of mine, believes the key to solving this crisis lies in a strong local response, particularly through supporting women farmers. Women produce the majority of food in many developing regions, including up to 80 percent in Africa and 60 percent in Asia. However, in many developing nations, inferior education and economic injustice leaves women, and as a result their families and communities, unable to maximize their output. The U.S. should support programs that emphasize empowering women to produce at their full capacity, which studies show can increase yields by up to 20 percent, reducing hunger in the process.

As we approach the deadline, I urge my colleagues to embrace and support the Millennium Development Goals, and take steps to eradicate food insecurity worldwide.

HONORING NICK VAN DER DRIFT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Nick van der Drift. Nick is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 235, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Nick has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the

many years Nick has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Nick has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Nick reached out to local businesses and citizens and successfully collected funds and supplies for the Community Service League of Blue Springs, Missouri, benefitting hundreds of those in need.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Nick van der Drift for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

THE SMALL MANUFACTURERS EXPORT INITIATIVE—INCLUSION IN SMALL BUSINESS BILL

HON. RICK LARSEN

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of our nation's small manufacturers. Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 5797, the Small Manufacturers Export Initiative. I am pleased to see that the provisions of the Small Manufacturers Export Initiative have been included in this Small Business bill that we are voting on today. This legislation, and this Rule, will help small and medium sized manufacturers export their products—not their jobs—overseas. I want to see the label “Made in America” again, continuing our drive to create American jobs, and expand America's manufacturing sector—and this bill is an important step in that direction. When we make it in America, we lead the world economy, we promote competitiveness, and we create jobs. The provisions are simple; they provide resources to the Department of Commerce to help small and medium sized businesses and manufacturers export their products overseas and create jobs here at home. The global market presents a fast and ever growing market for U.S. exports. Nationwide, nearly 3.7 million manufacturing jobs are supported by exports—27 percent of all jobs in the manufacturing sector. In my district alone there are over 170 aerospace manufacturing companies, and in Washington state there are over 100 boat manufacturers—with many of these small businesses exporting their products. We must do all we can to support these manufacturing companies sell their products both here in the United States—and in other countries. The small business export promotion provisions included in this bill will build the infrastructure necessary to connect American Small and Medium Sized manufacturers with export opportunities around the world and help them increase their productivity and expand their businesses. Let's work together to ensure “make it in America” is a reality for today's economy—and the future. I urge support for this legislation and this Rule.

TRIBUTE TO THE TENTH ANNUAL
BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I rise to salute the Tenth Annual Binational Health Week to take place next month. This program was first established in 2001 to facilitate discussion on the challenges and opportunities that face migrant Latino populations. The annual forum allows participant agencies and organizations to effectively strategize public health policies that benefit border populations by addressing issues pertaining to health care.

Established as a partnership between the California-Mexico Health Initiative and the Mexican Ministry of Health and Foreign Affairs, Binational Health Week has become one of the largest mobilization efforts to improve the health and well being of underserved Hispanics in North America. Today, it is the product of relationships between multiple agencies and organizations that minister to immigrant population health issues.

This tradition has become an annual festival of health promotion and education activities which include workshops and medical screenings. Last year, the Binational Health Week was kicked off in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Through the inaugural event forum, five national campaigns were implemented with the aim of increasing the Latino population's awareness of: H1N1 and Preparing for Public Health Emergencies, Prevention of Addictions, Nutrition, Stroke Awareness, and Living Green.

In addition, to celebrate the Binational Health Week last year, an estimated 766,000 people participated in over 5,000 activities throughout the United States and Canada. Over 10,000 agencies, 140 consulates and 17,000 volunteers participated in the organization of the 2009 week long events.

This year, the inaugural forum will take place in Guanajuato, Mexico with the aim of exploring collaborative opportunities to improve the health and well-being of the cross-border migrant and immigrant population. Binational Health Week will be celebrated from October 4th through 15th in 40 states in the U.S. and 3 provinces in Canada. Also participating will be the consular networks of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

During Binational Health Week, a national campaign will take place to create awareness among the underserved Latino community on the topics of prevention of addictions, gang involvement among adolescents, oral health, obesity, diabetes, disabilities, autism awareness, and access to existing health care. During the campaign a series of activities and health education programs will be conducted including informational workshops, free screenings, core exams, and vaccinations to the public.

The expansion of Binational Health Week over the years has contributed to the main partnerships that have been formed between California's Department of Public Health, The California Endowment, The California HealthCare Foundation, the Health Initiative of the Americas at the University of California in Berkeley, the United States-Mexico Border