

a regulatory structure that protects workers, consumers, and the environment, but not in a way that is arbitrary or capricious.

Second, we need to ensure that small business remains the catalyst for the American economy. Capitalism, by its very nature, is highly competitive, and most new businesses fail. While government cannot change that central truth about a market economy, we can foster a climate that makes it easier to succeed by ensuring access to capital, targeted tax incentives, by creating a supportive infrastructure, and devising a regulatory framework that offers American business the best chance of success.

Third, we're in a global war for talent, and we must reorient our immigration structure to attract the most promising people from around the world. It is no longer a given that a young Indian or Chinese entrepreneur will want to move to the U.S. if given the chance. Combined with the disquieting trend that American universities are not producing enough home-grown talent in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, we face a daunting challenge. In coming days, I'll be introducing legislation that will make it easier for foreign-born graduates in select STEM fields to stay in this country by starting a new business here and hiring American workers.

Fourth, America cannot compete with the developing world in terms of wages, but a highly skilled work force, buttressed by a revitalized world class infrastructure that reduces the time and expense of getting goods to market and fosters innovation, will keep us competitive. That's why I support investments in infrastructure and education that will lay the groundwork for a newly competitive America while addressing the current unemployment problem acting as a drag on our economy.

Working together on these objectives, we can restore the middle class dream that hard work and perseverance will give the average American the chance to live comfortably. As President Clinton once observed, there's nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America.

NATIONAL ADOPTION WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time to talk about something near and dear to my heart, families.

This week is National Adoption Week, and as adoptive parents of two wonderful boys, my wife, Cathy, and I know how blessed an adoptive family is. Will, our 13-year old, and Sean, who will tell you he's almost 10, are the light of our lives. They're the gifts that give our lives a purpose and a joy we never knew before.

It's a privilege for me to serve the people of the Eighth District of Texas, but it is my highest privilege to be called Dad because two women in two difficult circumstances in two different States made the difficult but life-changing choice to give Cathy and I the greatest gift of all, a family.

This weekend marks the 12th annual National Adoption Day, where judges will open their courts for very special cases, and tens of thousands of children become a part of these forever families.

In my home State of Texas, there are nearly 30,000 children in foster care, and half of them could be adopted tomorrow. I hope that every American who has ever thought about sharing their blessings with a child thinks about these children who just want a seat at a Thanksgiving table they can call their own.

I ask every American, do you have room for one more at your table? If just 1 in 500 of the Americans who were polled recently and said they'd be open to adopting a foster child did so, no foster child would only have dreams of a forever family; they would have that seat at the Thanksgiving Day table.

Right now the average wait for a foster child to find a forever family is over 2½ years. To a child, that seems like forever. And thousands age out of the system every year, never having found a home. In the greatest Nation on God's green earth, we can do better by these kids, one by one, town by town.

A loving, forever family and home not only makes a powerful difference in the lives of these children, I can promise you the joy and love you'll get back will change your family. Being an adoptive parent is a gift. Every day is a present. The love you share comes back to you because adoptions make families. It made mine. Maybe it can make yours as well.

HOME BIRTH CONSENSUS SUMMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an event of critical importance to all current and future childbearing families in this country.

For 3 days in October, a national summit of maternity care stakeholders met in Warrenton, Virginia, to discuss the status of home birth within the greater context of maternity care in the United States. That meeting marked the first time a multidisciplinary group of maternity care providers, consumers, and industry leaders came together to determine what the U.S. maternity care system could do to make home birth the safest and most positive experience possible for moms and babies.

Given the significant controversy over the appropriateness of home birth within the groups represented at the summit, the fact that this conversa-

tion took place at all is historic. The goal of the meeting was not to debate the rightness or wrongness of home birth, but rather to discuss the support, care, consultation, collaboration, and referrals necessary to protect moms and babies in all birth settings.

According to CDC's most recent figures, in 2008, approximately 28,500 home births took place in the United States. While this number represents less than 1 percent of all births in our country, the last available statistics tell us that between 2004 and 2008, the number of women giving birth at home increased by 22 percent.

□ 1050

Without compromising quality of care, women want and expect to have choices for childbirth, including birth setting. Women and families are ill-served when maternity care professionals allow conflict between disciplines to supersede collaboration. The safety of birth in all settings must be the utmost priority.

The delegates who met in Virginia were charged with finding common ground to move the issue of safe home birth beyond professional differences and toward consensus building. The result of their effort was a consensus document released on November 1 of this year. This important document sets out nine essential statements of agreement about the ideal system to promote the safest and most positive birth outcomes across all birth settings.

While I will be submitting the entire document into the RECORD, I want to highlight the following key points agreed upon by all of the delegates at the summit:

First, all childbearing women in all maternity care settings should receive respectful, women-centered care, including opportunities for shared decisionmaking to help each woman make the choices that are right for her;

Second, physiological birth is valuable for women, babies, families, and society, and appropriate intervention should be based on the best available evidence to achieve optimal outcomes for mothers and babies;

Third, collaboration within an integrated maternity care system is essential for optimal outcomes, and when necessary, all women and families planning a birth center or home birth have a right to a respectful, safe, and seamless consultation, referral, transport, and transfer of care;

Fourth, all health professionals who provide maternity care in all settings should have a license that is based on national certification that includes defined competencies and standards for education and practice; and

Fifth, in order to foster effective communication and collaboration across all maternity disciplines, all students and practitioners involved in maternity and newborn care must learn about each other's disciplines and maternity care in all settings.

Additionally, the consensus document calls for medical liability system