

Besides being misguided and offensive, H.R. 3541 is dangerous. This bill would give the federal government the right to inspect people's medical records and interfere with a private doctor-patient relationship.

I oppose this anti-choice and anti-woman bill.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on this offensive, misguided and dangerous piece of legislation and would encourage them to support authentic pieces of legislation that address gender discrimination.

HONORING THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN ON "REPUBLIC DAY"

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 31, 2012

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Republic of Azerbaijan in celebration of the 94th anniversary of Republic Day on May 28th.

Azerbaijan and the United States have developed a robust and growing relationship over the last two decades. I am proud extremely that we have established what Secretary Clinton has called "deep, important, and durable bonds between the United States and Azerbaijan."

Although located in a geopolitically dynamic region sandwiched between Russia and Iran, Azerbaijan has consistently looked to the United States as an ally despite these difficult neighbors. A secular county with a predominantly Muslim population, Azerbaijan has also been home for over a millennia to vibrant Christian and Jewish communities representing a role model for peaceful coexistence and harmony of different religions and ethnic groups.

Azerbaijan was also the first country to open Caspian energy resources to development by U.S. and European companies and has emerged as a key player for global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project, supported by both the Clinton and George W. Bush Administrations, is the most successful project contributing to the development of the South Caucasus region. Exporting around 1 million barrels of oil and gas from the Caspian Sea basin to international markets, Azerbaijan also provides nearly 40 percent of all crude oil supplies to Israel. Additionally, the successful launch and continued exploration of the Shah Deniz project will open up the Southern Gas Corridor delivering alternative gas supplies to Europe, further contributing towards a movement away from dependence on Middle Eastern Oil and energy suppliers.

Azerbaijan has also continued to take steps to ensure the strength and security of its infrastructure in a tumultuous region. The completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad connection expected in early 2013, expansion of cargo and passenger terminal of the Baku international airport, and construction of the brand new Baku International Sea Trade Port all are key contributors to Azerbaijan's increasing role as a transportation hub in the region linking European and Asian markets.

On a security front, Azerbaijan has been a key ally in a post 9–11 era, emerging as one of the first countries to offer strong support and assistance to the United States. Actively participating in joint operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan, Azerbaijan has also extended important over-flight clearances of U.S. and NATO flights and provided key supply routes to Afghanistan by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities providing ground and naval transit for roughly 40 percent of the Coalitions supplies bound for Afghanistan.

As the Co-Chairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, it is my distinct pleasure to honor the Republic of Azerbaijan in celebration of the 94th anniversary of Republic Day and to recognize the valuable bilateral relationship between the United States and Azerbaijan. I also encourage my colleagues who are interested in supporting Azerbaijan to join me as a member of Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, a bipartisan group of more than 50 Members of Congress working to help foster the growing partnership between the United States and Azerbaijan and to advance U.S. interests in this pivotal region.

TRAGEDY ON THE HIGHWAY

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 31, 2012

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because of a terrible tragedy that occurred in my Congressional district nearly 6 years ago.

In 2006, the City of Beaumont was still recovering from Hurricane Rita. The West Brook High School girl's soccer team and their successes were good news that brought joy to a city in need of something to cheer for.

The Bruins were coming off a 14–5–2 record, and they were traveling to Humble, Texas, to take on the Houston Lamar Redskins in the Class 5A playoffs.

The game had already been postponed once and it was raining again, but the game was set to take place at 5 p.m. in Humble.

Unfortunately, the team never made it to the game.

Around 2 p.m., about 28 miles from home in Devers, Texas, the chartered bus carrying the team, swerved to miss debris that had fallen off a truck in front of them.

The bus rolled onto its side into a muddy ditch.

Senior Alicia Bonura and sophomore Ashley Brown lost their lives in this tragedy.

Six other girls were hospitalized in serious condition. Goalie Devin Martindale lost her arm in this accident.

Stephen Forman and Brad Brown, parents of two of the victims of the accident are here today and I would like to thank them for their work on this issue.

Because of this accident, I became involved in the Motorcoach safe issue, and I was happy to work with my colleague Rep. JOHN LEWIS (GA) to push for some common-sense provisions in the Transportation bill to apply to the Motorcoach industry so that another West Brook tragedy can be avoided.

These provisions are:

1. Requiring safety belts to ensure that occupants stay in their seats in a crash.
2. Requiring anti-ejection glazing on windows to help prevent passengers from being easily thrown from the motorcoach.
3. Ensuring that strong, crush-resistant roofs can withstand rollovers.
4. Improving oversight and enforcement requirements for motorcoach companies.

I strongly believe that these long overdue safety improvements can go a long way in making our nations buses safer.

And that's just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO ESTHER FELDMAN

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 31, 2012

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to Esther Feldman, President of Community Conservation Solutions, in recognition of her outstanding achievements as one of the most effective conservation leaders in California.

Under her leadership, Community Conservation Solutions, CCS, has worked to solve the complex and challenging problems that emerge wherever people and nature meet. CCS creates innovative and practical solutions to serious environmental problems affecting California's natural and human communities.

Esther Feldman is one of California's most valued conservation leaders. For nearly three decades, she has worked continuously to protect the environment for future generations. Her technical, financial, community and policy expertise combined with her great organizing ability has led to countless victories for conservation. Nearly every park, wilderness area, river, beach or trail in Los Angeles County has benefited from Esther's work. Esther's ability to unite diverse interests for a common goal created new parks and open space, and established over \$3 billion dollars in new public funding sources to further expand conservation in California and throughout the United States.

Since founding CCS in 1998, Esther has built the organization into a leader in conserving natural lands and water resources and in working with communities. Under Esther's visionary leadership, CCS conceived of and spearheaded the two-square mile Baldwin Hills Park Project in the heart of urban Los Angeles, launched wetland restoration efforts in Upper Newport Bay, and has developed new project and funding approaches to creatively solving polluted runoff problems through CCS's Water Quality Improvement and Green Solution Projects as well as working on multiple projects of vital importance across my district in the San Fernando Valley.

Esther is known for being pragmatic and for her proficiency at acquiring funding to guarantee the longevity of the projects she directs. This has translated into a long list of successful outcomes and lasting public and environmental benefits.

Mr. Speaker and distinguished colleagues, I ask you to join me in recognizing Esther Feldman for her invaluable service and dedication to the community and the environment.