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HONORING ALBIN GRUHN

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I rise with sadness today to honor Albin Gruhn of San Anselmo, California, who passed away March 18 at the age of 94. Mr. Gruhn was a respected and beloved labor leader and consumer rights activist whose calling was the welfare of the working people of California. His 36 years as president of the California Labor Federation and his role as a founder of the Association of California Consumers were at the heart of a remarkable career.

Mr. Gruhn was born in Eureka, California, in 1915. At the age of 19 he began working for the Hammond Lumber Co. where he joined the Sawmill and Loggers Federal Union. A strike shortly afterwards resulted in the deaths of three union picketers and deeply affected him, resulting in a life-long commitment to the labor movement.

He was also blacklisted as a result of his participation in the strike but soon found employment in construction, joining the Laborers Local where his membership continued for over 60 years. At the age of 22, he became secretary of the Central Labor Council of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties and led that council for over 20 years.

In 1940 Mr. Gruhn was first elected to what is now the California Labor Federation as district vice president and became its president in 1960. He led with skill, enthusiasm, and passion until his retirement in 1996. He helped build the organization into a strong and effective advocacy group for the rights of workers, inspiring several generations of political and labor leaders along the way.

During the 1960s, Mr. Gruhn was also a founder of the Association of California Consumers, California's first consumer group, and later became a founding officer and then president emeritus of the Consumer Federation of California. He also devoted some of his considerable energies to the California Apprenticeship Council and the California Constitution Revision Commission as well as serving on various state commissions. These were appointments over the decades by five California governors and covered a variety of issues from fair housing to air pollution. One

of the commissions dealt with children and youth, reflecting his deep involvement in the annual scholarship program established by the California Labor Federation.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE PROSTHETIC AND CUSTOM ORTHOTIC PARITY ACT OF 2009

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to introduce the “Prosthetic and Custom Orthotic Parity Act of 2009 (PCOPA).” At a time when health care costs are rising by about 7 percent annually, the financial hardship on those in need of prosthetic and custom orthotic devices is devastating. Yet, by expanding coverage for prosthetic and custom orthotic devices so that it is on par with other types of essential care, not only will provide amputees with proper treatment, which will allow them to experience a better quality of life, but save our health care system money in the long-term. That is, prosthetic and orthotic devices often dramatically decrease secondary health problems for those in need of such a device.

The Prosthetic and Custom Orthotic Parity Act would address the significant health insurance inequity that amputees in our society currently face by requiring insurance companies that offer prosthetic and custom orthotic services to provide the same level of coverage as they do for medical and surgical services. Specifically PCOPA would provide coverage of prosthetic and custom orthotic devices, as well as their repair and replacement, under the same terms and conditions applicable to the other medical and surgical benefits provided under the health insurance policy.

Currently, eleven states have addressed this problem and have enacted prosthetic and/or custom orthotic “parity” legislation. Furthermore, prosthetic and/or custom orthotic parity legislation has been introduced and is being actively considered in thirty other states.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation that will help put an end to the inequity many Americans who have lost a limb by way of a tragic event as well as those living with cerebral palsy and

alike, experience when denied coverage by their insurance company.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. CARNEY. Madam Speaker, on Monday, May 18, I was absent for three rollcall votes. If I had been here, I would have voted: “yea” on rollcall vote 267; “yea” on rollcall vote 268; and “yea” on rollcall vote 269.

INTRODUCTION OF COERCION IS NOT HEALTH CARE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Coercion is Not Health Care Act. This legislation forbids the Federal Government from forcing any American to purchase health insurance, and from conditioning participation in any Federal program, or receipt of any Federal benefit, on the purchase of health insurance.

While often marketed as a “moderate” compromise between nationalized health care and a free market solution, forcing every American to purchase a government-approved health insurance plan is a back door approach to creating a government-controlled health care system.

If Congress requires individuals to purchase insurance, Congress must define what insurance policies satisfy the government mandate. Thus, Congress will decide what is and is not covered in the mandatory insurance policy. Does anyone seriously doubt that what conditions and treatments are covered will be determined by who has the most effective lobby. Or that Congress will be incapable of writing a mandatory insurance policy that will fit the unique needs of every individual in the United States?

The experience of States that allow their legislatures to mandate what benefits health insurance plans must cover has shown that politicizing health insurance inevitably makes health insurance more expensive. As the cost of government-mandated health insurance rises, Congress will likely create yet another fiscally unsustainable entitlement program to help cover the cost of insurance.

When the cost of government-mandated insurance proves to be an unsustainable burden on individuals and small employers, and the government, Congress will likely impose price controls on medical treatments, and even go so far as to limit what procedures and treatments will be reimbursed by the mandatory insurance. The result will be an increasing number of providers turning to “cash only” practices, thus making it difficult for those relying on the government-mandated insurance to find health care. Anyone who doubts that result should consider the increasing number of physicians who are withdrawing from the Medicare program because of the low reimbursement and constant bureaucratic harassment

from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Madam Speaker, the key to effective health care reform lies not in increasing government control, but in increasing the American people's ability to make their own health care decisions. Thus, instead of forcing Americans to purchase government-approved health insurance, Congress should put the American people back in charge of health care by expanding health care tax credits and deductions, as well as increasing access to Health Savings Accounts. Therefore, I have introduced legislation, the Comprehensive Health Care Reform Act (H.R. 1495), which provides a series of health care tax credits and deductions designed to empower patients. I urge my colleagues to reject the big government-knows-best approach to health care by cosponsoring my Coercion is Not Health Care Act and Comprehensive Health Care Reform Act.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VACCINE SAFETY AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE ASSURANCE ACT OF 2009

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today I am reintroducing important legislation with my colleague Mr. SMITH that I hope will go a long way to restoring public confidence in governmental vaccine-safety monitoring agencies. Public confidence in vaccine-safety is critical to maintaining the effectiveness of our Nation's vaccine program in preventing the spread of infectious disease. However, this confidence has been shaken by the actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in the current system by which federal government agencies compete for funds or promote high immunization rates while concurrently promoting vaccine-safety. In addition to possible conflicts of interest, the public has serious concerns with the safety of vaccines or multiple vaccine schedules that may result in vaccine-related injuries. This legislation aims to build and maintain public confidence by putting measures in place to ensure the integrity and quality of vaccine-safety research. It is absolutely necessary that the American public have total and complete trust in the safety of our Nation's vaccine program, which is why I introduce this legislation today.

GRATITUDE FOR THE SERVICE OF MARIO V. DISPENZA

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, Judiciary Crime Subcommittee Chairman BOBBY SCOTT and I would like to take this opportunity to thank one of the most productive and dedicated members of the Judiciary Committee staff, Mario Dispenza. For the past two years, Mario has served as a counsel for the Committee, working principally with the Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Subcommittee.

Mario came to the Judiciary Committee on a detail from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), where he has worked for 20 years. After graduating with honors from Kean University, he began his distinguished career with the ATF as a special agent in Cleveland, quickly moving up through the ranks to become a Program Manager in the Office of Professional Responsibility and Security Operations. While working for the ATF, Mario studied in the International Human Rights Programme at the New College of Oxford University, and earned his law degree with honors from The George Washington University Law School.

Mario's tenure with the Committee included work on legislation of critical importance to our nation's criminal justice system. He ushered several important measures through the Committee and the full House, including during the 110th Congress: H.R. 923, the "Emmet Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act"; H.R. 1199, the "Drug Endangered Children Act of 2007"; H.R. 1759, the "Managing Arson Through Criminal History (MATCH) Act of 2007"; H.R. 1943, the "Stop AIDS in Prison Act of 2007"; H.R. 2286, the "Bail Bond Fairness Act of 2007"; H.R. 2878, the "Enhanced Financial Recovery and Equitable Treatment Act of 2007"; H.R. 3480, the "Let Our Veterans Rest in Peace Act of 2007"; H.R. 3456/S. 231 to Reauthorize the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistant Grant Program at Fiscal Year 2006 Levels through 2012; H.R. 3971, the "Deaths in Custody Reporting Act of 2008"; H.R. 4056/S. 2565, the "Federal Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Act of 2007"; H.R. 4238, the "Literacy, Education and Rehabilitation Act of 2007"; H.R. 4300, the "Juvenile Justice Accountability and Improvement Act of 2007"; H.R. 5057, the "Debbie Smith Reauthorization Act of 2008"; H.R. 5938, the "Former Vice President Protection Act of 2008"; H.R. 6083, To authorize funding to conduct a national training program for State and local prosecutors; H.R. 6295/S. 3598, the "Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act of 2008"; H.R. 6838, the "Campus Safety Act of 2008"; H.R. 4110/S. 973, the "Restitution for Victims of Crime Act of 2007" and H.R. 845, the "Criminal Restitution Improvement Act." During the 111th Congress, Mario has been integral to the progress of: H.R. 738, the "Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2008"; H.R. 748, the "Center to Advance, Monitor, and Preserve University Security (CAMPUS) Safety Act of 2009"; H.R. 503, the "Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2009"; H.R. 1741, the "Witness Security and Protection Grant Program Act of 2009"; H.R. 1667, the "War Profiteering Prevention Act of 2009"; and the Department of Justice reauthorization appropriations.

We would like to thank the ATF for their generosity in lending such an able, responsible, and genial member of their team to the Congress. Mario will be missed, for he has become a trusted colleague, mentor, and friend to many members of the staff and Committee. We wish him the best of luck and extend our deepest gratitude for his service and professionalism.

HONORING ALBIN GRUHN

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise with sadness today to honor Albin Gruhn of San Anselmo, California, who passed away March 18 at the age of 94. Mr. Gruhn was a respected and beloved labor leader and consumer rights activist whose calling was the welfare of the working people of California. His 36 years as president of the California Labor Federation and his role as a founder of the Association of California Consumers were at the heart of a remarkable career.

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