

H. Res. 208

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

April 20, 2005.

Whereas Dr. William S. McEllroy, Dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, in 1947 recruited Dr. Jonas Salk to develop a virus research program at the University of Pittsburgh;

Whereas Dr. Salk, the first member of his family to attend college, had prior to moving to the University of Pittsburgh served in an appointment at the University of Michigan for 5½ years, and during this period at the University of Michigan, which was during World War II, Dr. Salk became known for his expertise on the immunology of influenza and developed the vaccine that continues to be used against influenza;

Whereas Dr. Salk set up a research laboratory in The Municipal Hospital for Contagious Diseases, now Salk Hall at the University of Pittsburgh;

Whereas the epidemic of polio peaked in 1952, having affected nearly 58,000 people, mainly children and young adults;

Whereas many of those affected were confined to mechanical ventilators known as iron lungs to breathe while many others were crippled and needed crutches for mobility;

Whereas University of Pittsburgh faculty member Dr. Jonas Salk and his team of researchers developed the first vaccine against polio;

Whereas in April 1955, at the University of Michigan's Rachkam Auditorium, Dr. Francis announced the results of the most comprehensive field trial ever conducted in the history of public health, involving 1,830,000 children in 217 areas of the United States, Canada, and Finland, indicating the vaccine was safe and effective;

Whereas the Salk polio vaccine was approved for widespread public use and the incidence of polio in the United States fell by 85–90 percent during the first 3 years of widespread use of Salk's polio vaccine (1955–1957);

Whereas the Salk polio vaccine developed at the University of Pittsburgh is considered one of the most significant medical achievements of the twentieth century;

Whereas the international immunization of children and young adults at that time resulted in the worldwide eradication of polio by 1962 and since that time has prevented any significant re-emergence of the disease;

Whereas in 1963 Dr. Salk founded the Jonas Salk Institute for Biological Studies, an innovative center for medical and scientific research; and

Whereas Dr. Salk's last years were spent searching for a vaccine against AIDS: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Michigan on the fiftieth anniversary of the discovery and the declaration that the Salk polio vaccine

was potent, virtually eliminating the disease and its harmful effects;

(2) recognizes the pioneering achievement of Dr. Jonas Salk and his team of researchers at the University of Pittsburgh in the development of the Salk polio vaccine;

(3) recognizes the unprecedented scope and magnitude of the field trials conducted by Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., and his team of more than 100 statisticians and epidemiologists at the University of Michigan; and

(4) states its appreciation to—

(A) the University of Pittsburgh for the elimination of a disease that caused countless deaths and disabling consequences;

(B) the members of Dr. Salk's research team;

(C) the individuals, a majority of whom were residents of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, who generously agreed to participate in clinical trials to validate the efficacy of the polio vaccine;

(D) the family members of Dr. Salk for their participation in medical history;

(E) the University of Michigan for its efforts in proving the Salk polio vaccine was safe and effective; and

(F) the members of Dr. Francis' team of statisticians and epidemiologists.

Attest:

Clerk.