

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 352

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Better Hearing and Speech Month, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 2008

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York (for herself, Mr. WALSH of New York, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. EHLERS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Better Hearing and Speech Month, and for other purposes.

Whereas the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders reports that approximately 42,000,000 people in the United States suffer from a speech, voice, language, or hearing impairment;

Whereas approximately 15 percent of, or 3,250,000, American adults report some degree of hearing loss;

Whereas 1 out of every 3 people in the United States over 60 years of age have a hearing problem;

Whereas 1 in 6 baby boomers, aged 41 to 59 years, have a hearing problem;

Whereas 1 in 14 Generation X-ers, aged 29 to 40 years, already have hearing loss;

Whereas at least 1,400,000 children have hearing problems;

Whereas traumatic brain injury (TBI) has been labeled the signature injury of the war in Iraq, with estimates as high as 20 percent of the number of soldiers who have experienced concussions while deployed;

Whereas TBI patients may have difficulty with spoken language, a disorder called dysarthria, if the part of the brain that controls speech muscles is damaged, resulting in slowed, slurred, and garbled speech;

Whereas approximately 1,400,000 traumatic brain injuries occur annually in the United States from accidents and athletic injuries, with related direct and indirect medical costs totaling over an estimated \$6,000,000,000;

Whereas soldiers sent to battle zones are over 50 times more likely to suffer noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) than soldiers who do not deploy;

Whereas thousands of American soldiers sent to Iraq have suffered from NIHL due to a lack of education about hearing protection, a reduced force of military audiologists, and a lack of monitoring for changes in hearing;

Whereas although more than 32,500,000 adults in the United States would benefit from the use of a hearing aid, only 1 out of 5 people who could benefit actually wear a hearing aid;

Whereas at least 12,000,000 people in the United States have tinnitus, or ringing in the ears, with at least 1,000,000 who experience this condition so severely that it interferes with their daily activities;

Whereas sounds louder than 80 decibels are considered potentially dangerous and can lead to hearing loss;

Whereas the number of young children who suffer hearing loss as a result of environmental noise has increased;

Whereas every day, approximately 33 babies are born with significant hearing loss in the United States;

Whereas hearing loss is the most common congenital disorder in newborns;

Whereas a delay in diagnosing a newborn's hearing loss can affect the child's social, emotional, and academic development;

Whereas even mild or unilateral hearing loss left undetected can result in delayed speech and language acquisition, and inappropriate identification of behavioral problems;

Whereas those with undetected mild or unilateral hearing loss are 10 times more likely to be held back at least one school grade;

Whereas during the 2003 school year, more than 1,500,000 children had speech, language, or hearing impairments, and received services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

Whereas children with language impairments are 4 to 5 times more likely than their peers to experience reading problems;

Whereas 10 percent of children entering the first grade have moderate to severe speech disorders, which include stuttering;

Whereas it is estimated that more than 3,000,000 Americans stutter;

Whereas approximately 1,000,000 people in the United States have aphasia, a language disorder inhibiting spoken communication that results from a stroke or other traumatic injury to the language centers of the brain; and

Whereas for the last 80 years, May has been celebrated as National Better Hearing and Speech Month in order to raise awareness regarding speech, voice, language, and hearing impairments, and provide an opportunity for Federal, State, and local governments, members of the private and nonprofit sectors, speech and hearing professionals, and all people of the United States, to focus on preventing, mitigating, and curing such impairments: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That Congress—

3 (1) supports the goals and ideals of National
4 Better Hearing and Speech Month;

5 (2) urges increased coordination of community-
6 based, comprehensive care for soldiers, veterans,
7 athletes, and accident victims who have experienced
8 traumatic brain injury;

9 (3) supports the efforts of speech and hearing
10 professionals in their efforts to improve the speech
11 and hearing development of children;

12 (4) encourages the people of the United States
13 to have their hearing checked regularly and to avoid

1 environmental noise that can lead to hearing loss;
2 and
3 (5) commends the 46 States that have imple-
4 mented routine hearing screenings for every newborn
5 before leaving the hospital.

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