

One particular company, MBNA America, which is based in Wilmington, DE, was recently honored as one of the top 10 family-friendly companies by Working Mother magazine.

This is the second straight year that MBNA has been named as one of the top 10 companies for working mothers and the fifth straight year that it has been named in the top 100.

Also, in the September 16 issue of Business Week, MBNA was named as one of the top 10 businesses in terms of their work and family strategies. This is the first time that Business Week has rated companies for their family-friendly practices, and it shows that businesses are most successful if they take their work and family strategies seriously.

Speaking about MBNA, Business Week stated that "the bank won the highest grades, from employees, who cited strong programs and job flexibility."

MBNA is to be commended for instituting policies and programs that are sensitive to the realities of two-income families. None of this happens without leadership—especially leadership at the top. And in this case, it comes from Charles Cawley, chairman of MBNA and a renowned business and community leader.

Let me tell you about some of the things that MBNA does for its workers. MBNA offers three on-site day care centers that serve MBNA employees. I have had the opportunity to visit one of the two centers that are in Delaware, and I cannot stress enough what a benefit it is for workers to be able to take advantage of these day care centers. In Delaware, these centers give the parents of around 400 children the peace of mind that their child is in good hands.

Also last year, 109 men and 264 women took advantage of childbirth leave of absences that averaged 13 weeks. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to be there for those precious first weeks of their child's life.

Another important benefit that is offered by the company is adoption assistance of up to \$5,000. This allows employees to provide a stable home and family to a child who needs that love and stability so badly. Just another way that companies can help build strong families.

Employees can take advantage of \$849,000 in company-sponsored college scholarships that allow those who wish to better themselves the opportunity to do so. After all, education is the greatest investment this country can make.

Working Mother magazine also applauded MBNA for having flexible work hours by utilizing job-sharing strategies and compressed work weeks.

And, the study showed that women account for a high percentage of executive positions at MBNA. Women make up 39 percent of vice presidents at MBNA and 16 percent of all senior executives are women.

Besides MBNA, two other Delaware companies were honored recently as family friendly companies. DuPont and DuPont-Merck Pharmaceutical were named as 2 of the top 100 companies by Working Mother magazine for their leadership in creating job strategies that are sensitive toward families. DuPont was also named in Business Week's top 10 list, and other companies with facilities in Delaware, such as Hewlett-Packard and Nations Bank, have been praised for their family oriented policies.

Mr. President, these work strategies that take into account everyday family life do not just benefit the employees, but also the employer. There is little doubt that recruitment, retention, morale, and therefore productivity all increase when companies implement family-friendly policies.

I am proud that MBNA and other Delaware companies have emerged as leaders in creating family work strategies, and I hope that this trend continues throughout Delaware and throughout the country. ●

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT ACT

● Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, on Monday I introduced S. 2167, the Children's Health Insurance for Long-Term Development Act—the CHILD bill. In simple terms, this legislation will require private health plans to cover all necessary health and screening services for infants and children through age 3. But it has a broader purpose. It will close the gap between two entities that serve America's children, the health system and the school system, by addressing an important health risk that has implications for children's educational achievements and later development.

A significant body of research demonstrates that the first 3 years of life are critical to children's development—mentally, physically, and emotionally. In particular, during the first 3 years of life the human brain and central nervous system undergo their most rapid period of neurological development. This time period—the Infant Neurological Risk Exposure Period—provides both a substantial risk and an important opportunity. If we can ensure that children receive the health care, parenting, and environmental influences they need during their first 3 years, we can give our children a strong start in life. If, however, we neglect their physical and mental development during this crucial period, we have lost an important opportunity to promote learning and prevent damage to brain functioning.

Obviously, there are many influences on a child's early development, such as parental influence and childrearing practices, comprehensive health care, environment, mental stimulation, and community support. As a nation, we have an opportunity and an obligation to provide children with a safe,

healthy, stimulating environment during their early years. This bill takes an important step toward this goal.

First, this legislation identifies a critical period in children's development—the Infant Neurological Risk Exposure Period [INREP]. Brain and nervous system development during this period has a long-lasting impact on the child's life. I hope that by singling out this particular timeframe, this legislation will focus greater attention on improving health care and supportive services during infancy and early childhood.

Second, this bill will require private health insurers to cover comprehensive preventive and curative services through age 3. These third-party payors will therefore be financially responsible for the care children need to be adequately monitored and treated through this important developmental period.

I was startled to learn that 86 percent of children who are privately insured are not covered for comprehensive well-child care. Children who receive health coverage through the Medicaid program are covered for a comprehensive array of well-child care, diagnostic assessments and treatment services through the EPSDT program, yet most children who are privately insured do not have similar coverage. Health screenings and periodic check-ups provide an important opportunity for physicians to ensure that a child's neurological development is progressing along normal patterns—and to intervene as appropriate if it is not.

This comprehensive approach will also address other problems in pediatric health care, such as ensuring that children are completely covered for immunizations through this time period. This coverage will counter current immunization trends that leave 60 percent of children in most States with incomplete immunizations at age 2.

I should also emphasize that this bill, by its very nature, cannot help children who are uninsured. We need to pursue further legislation that addresses this important problem. In a recent study on children's health insurance, the GAO noted that the proportion of children who are uninsured—14.2 percent, or 10 million children—is at the highest level since 1987. This decline in children's health insurance coverage has been concentrated among low-income children.

Mr. President, all children should have health insurance that covers their complete developmental needs. We are the wealthiest, most powerful, and most advanced nation on this planet. But it is discouraging that we still have so far to go when it comes to caring for our own children.

My friend and respected colleague Senator JOHN KERRY has offered one approach to this problem using sliding-scale subsidies; we should explore this option and others in order to ensure that America's infants and young children achieve their highest potential.

My proposal represents the first step towards this important goal—the next step is health coverage for all children.●

KIDS, GUNS, AND DEATH

● Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, last summer the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence asked kids how their lives had been affected by guns and gun violence. Over 200 school-age children wrote and submitted essays. Last Sunday, the Chicago Sun Times printed the three winning essays. The expression, out of the mouths of babes, has never been more true than when reading the three winning essays. These three winners, a second-grader, a seventh-grader, and an eleventh grader, get what far too many of their elders do not: bullets, guns, and violent death should not be an increasingly routine part of these children's lives. I ask that the three winning essays printed in the Chicago Sun Times be printed in the RECORD.

[From the Chicago Sun-Times, Sept. 29, 1996]

KIDS, GUNS, AND DEATH

It is a sad fact of life: Children today are profoundly aware of the threat of gun violence. Last summer, the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence asked school-children how this omnipresent danger touches their lives, and what they thought should be done to end it. Asked to speak for themselves, more than 100 children from nearly two dozen schools submitted essays. It is powerful testimony. Many wrote of their personal brushes with gun violence; far too many told of losing family members and friends, and a few of actually witnessing fatal shootings. Here are the winning essays from three age categories. These young authors will read their entries Oct. 5, when the 14th Annual Walk Against Handgun Violence steps off from the Daley Center Plaza at 11 a.m.

ZACHERY JEFFERSON

Last week, when I layed down to rest for the night. I couldn't sleep because I heard the sound of gunshots in the air. My heart just pound and pound, until I heard the lock turn and the door slam. After I heard my mommy's voice. I was able to sleep.

I was worried about my mother walking to our building. I live in a tall building called Stateway Gardens. My mother Ms. Jefferson's work day begins in the afternoon and ends late night about 12:30 midnight. I know it isn't safe for my mom to walk the street in my neighborhood at night alone. She has to work to take care of my sister and I.

When I grow up I want to be a policeman, not just a policeman but the Chief of Police. I want to change things. It should be against the law for people to just shoot. Those bad people who are shooting guns like crazy mustn't realize how it feels to worry, or maybe they don't have a mother who works to take care of a family.

Well, my heart pounds and beats like a drum when I am upset or worried. For those who don't know what it feels like, I'll tell you. It's like losing something very special and that moment when you realize it's gone, your heart races real fast and sweat pops on your face and your knees shakes.

Please stop now. If you don't, watch out for me later! I will be coming with my badge on.

RHEA JACKSON

Guns are something very serious. Many people think that a gun is the answer to

solving their problems that won't go away. This isn't true. There are many other ways to solve your problems. People today don't care if a younger child gets injured, shot, killed or even paralyzed because all that really matters to them is to kill their problem that won't go away.

Today many boys are killing each other over some crazy things like money, drugs, shoes, name-brand clothes and even girls. That affects me a whole lot because that might be me one day. Instead of the boy getting shot I might get shot in his place.

I come from a very overprotective household with a father who is on me like white on rice. Sometimes I feel that he needs to give me a break and let me go to a friend's house. However, when I go I see people who don't have fathers they can turn to and I realize why my father is like that. He doesn't want me to get caught between gangs cross-firing at each other. Then I begin to see how lucky I am to have him around.

I feel that it must stop because many youngsters, like myself, want to live long, be able to live to see over the age of 21. I think that the gangs should come to a truce and live together in peace. If that doesn't work, then the police should be more aware of the gang activity going on. I'm saying these things because my cousin almost got in a crossfire between two gangs. They don't realize that bullets don't have names like they think. I think that the reason why kids join gangs is because of peer pressure, for attention and because they don't have anyone to turn to.

As you can see there are many things that scare me and other kids. The gangs have little kids, even kids at the age of 5, planning their funerals instead of dreaming about their weddings or Sweet 16 birthday parties.

If my essay gets published in a popular magazine or newspaper, please remember: "Bullets Don't Have Names."

CLAUDIA RUIZ

I personally experienced gun violence with the death of my cousin. I grew up with him and when he died from seven bullet wounds. I lost part of myself. Anyone who loves someone close to them knows that the pain is incurable, except with the dulling that time brings. It changes the lives of all those who knew the victim because part of their life is gone and there are no second chances.

Nothing is worth dying for, especially when the decision is not yours. No one has the right to make that decision for anyone. The anger that accompanies the pain is also destructive. Often when a gang member is killed, his brothers seek revenge. This brings further violence and loss of life. No one gains, and the cycle of violence keeps turning.

The cause of gun violence is that teenagers are joining gangs at an early age. Some of them join gangs because of the lure of money from selling drugs. Perhaps their family is poor and they need the money to support themselves and their family. Selling drugs offers them an easy solution. More often gang members come from families where they were neglected. They are looking for somewhere to belong, somewhere safe.

I believe in each case that the blame lies largely on the parents who do not give their children the support they needed while they were young. However, that is not to say that the parents are not facing tremendous odds trying to raise their children in an environment where gun violence and gang membership is prevalent. In large families, the older children are neglected as the parents are busy looking after the young. Unfortunately, the older children still need their guidance. Often, elder children become lonely and depressed. For these reasons, they may join a

gang to find friendship and belonging. Although the gang may feel like their salvation, their only salvation is to be able to talk to their parents instead of fighting against them. These youth need someone to show them that their families are where they may find safety. They need counseling so that they may talk about their fears and the problems in their family and on the street.

In addition, violence prevention counseling would educate the youth to find other solutions to violence in resolving their anger. They need someone to point them in the right direction and to show them they have choices in the future if they make the right decisions now. They need guidance to learn how to be themselves.●

THE VANCOUVER NATIONAL HISTORIC RESERVE

● Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to express my sincere pleasure that the Vancouver National Historic Reserve will be established as a result of the enactment of legislation by this Congress.

We have worked for several years in a bipartisan fashion to establish this important historic site in Vancouver, WA. This vision for cooperative management of the historic resources at Fort Vancouver began with the city of Vancouver and former Congresswoman Jolene Unsoeld. Congresswoman Unsoeld had the vision, leadership, and determination to develop a broadly supported plan to preserve and promote several chapters in the colorful history of the Pacific Northwest.

This proposal has been 10 years in the making. Throughout these years, the vision has been for a collaborative effort between the city of Vancouver, the Army, and the National Park Service. In recognition of the opportunity to coordinate the management and interpretation of the historic areas around Fort Vancouver, Congress in 1990 established the Vancouver Historic Study Commission to develop a plan for the area and make a recommendation to Congress. In 1993, the five members of the commission—representing the National Park Service, City of Vancouver, Army, State Historic Preservation Office, and the public-at-large—unanimously approved a strategy for the area. The commission's report called for the establishment of a Vancouver National Historic Reserve. The reserve would be cooperatively managed by the various public owners of the area through the Vancouver partnership. Key controversies such as the continued operation of Pearson Airpark were addressed and thoughtfully resolved.

Legislation to implement the commission's recommendations was introduced in 1994 by former Congresswoman Unsoeld but was unable to pass in the closing days of the 103d Congress. In an effort to maintain progress on the historic area, the city entered into a memorandum of agreement with the National Park Service regarding the operation of the area on November 4, 1995. Nevertheless, legislation was still needed to implement the MOA and the commission's recommendations.