

Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I closely followed reports last year that increased funding for breast cancer research had resulted in the discovery of the BRCA1 gene linked to breast cancer. This knowledge has tremendous potential for improving the ways we identify, treat, and hopefully cure disorders. At the same time, there is also the very real possibility that this information could be used to discriminate against individuals.

No American should have to worry that their genes—which they did not choose, and over which they have no control—will be used against them. My legislation would prohibit health insurers from using genetic information to deny, refuse to renew, cancel, or change the terms and conditions of coverage. It would prevent insurance companies from requesting or requiring genetic tests, and would require written informed consent before an insurer may disclose genetic information to a third party.

These protections are absolutely critical, because genetic discrimination is already occurring. Numerous individual cases have been reported in the press. In addition, polls and studies demonstrate clearly how much the American people fear genetic discrimination by health insurers. This anxiety is so strong that many people are foregoing genetic testing—even when they have a clear family history of genetic illness and a positive test could lead them to take advantage of effective preventive medicine.

This is a human tragedy Congress can and must prevent. In the 104th congress, I introduced similar legislation which garnered 76 cosponsors and was endorsed by a wide range of health and consumer groups, including: Alzheimer's Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Medical Women's Association, American Nursing Association, American Public Health Association, Center for Patient Advocacy, Council for Responsible Genetics, Foundation on Economic Trends, and March of Dimes.

Leadership Conference of National Jewish Women's Organizations, which includes: American Jewish Congress, Amit Women, B'nai B'rith, Emunah Women of America, Hadassah, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans, Jewish Women International, Na'amat USA, National Council of Jewish Women, Inc., National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Women's American ORT, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism; and National Association of Black Women Attorneys, National Breast Cancer Coalition, National Osteoporosis Foundation, National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, National Women's Health Network, National Women's Law Center, Women's Bar Association, and Women's Legal Defense Fund.

I am hopeful that the 105th Congress will build upon the foundation established by the Kassebaum-Kennedy health reform bill. With this new legislation, it is my goal to ensure that no American woman will have to worry that if she takes a genetic test for the BRCA1 or BRCA2 breast cancer gene, she will lose her insurance coverage; or, that if she develops breast cancer, she will be denied coverage for treatment because her genetic predisposition will be considered a "pre-existing condition." Congress has the power to protect all Americans from genetic discrimination in

health insurance. We should do so quickly and decisively by passing the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance Act.

SALUTING DIXIE WILKS-OWENS

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Dixie Wilks-Owens, who is retiring from the California Employment Development Department after 27 years of dedicated service. Throughout her career, Mrs. Wilks-Owens has earned a reputation among her peers as an outstanding communicator and public servant genuinely enthusiastic about her job and the opportunities it provides to affect positive change.

Most recently, Mrs. Wilks-Owens served as chairperson of the 1996 Work Force Preparation Conference, a highly successful public forum on workforce preparation issues which was held in conjunction with the Federation of Conferences.

While at the office of work force policy, Mrs. Wilks-Owens was staff to the State job training coordinating councils' planning committee. She prepared agendas and policy issue papers, analyzed Federal and State legislation and made presentations to the SJTCC, task forces, and other committees on work force preparation issues.

Prior to this position, Mrs. Wilks-Owens was the manager and assistant deputy director of the EDD Marketing Services Office. In this role, she is noted for having developed the first biennial strategic marketing plan and for writing and producing the EDD employee handbook. In addition, she was an integral force in the planning, developing, and management of a full-functioning reemployment center for displaced legislative staffers left unemployed by Proposition 140. Additionally, she oversaw the planning and coordination of a broad retraining and reemployment program serving 5,000 former General Motors workers in Fremont, CA.

Mrs. Wilks-Owens also served as a Federal legislative specialist in the EDD legislative liaison office. There, she tracked and analyzed Federal legislation, spearheaded the successful 1989 job service campaign and made legislative presentations.

As an active member of the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security [IAPES], she has served as California Legislative chair, California vice president, California president, International Legislative chair and District XV representative and California Legislative chair.

In addition to her professional pursuits, Mrs. Wilks-Owens has demonstrated a unique commitment to her community and is noted as a tireless volunteer and master organizer.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize Dixie Wilks-Owens for her outstanding commitment to her profession. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing her continued success in all of her future endeavors.

JOB SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1997

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Job Skill Development Act of 1997. This is a narrowly tailored bill which amends the Fair Labor Standards Act [FLSA] of 1938 to ease some of the restrictions on volunteering.

The FLSA requires covered employers to compensate individuals defined as an "employee" with minimum wage and overtime. While there are numerous exceptions for volunteers, these exceptions primarily focus on humanitarian and charitable activities. Unfortunately, individuals seeking to gain valuable work experience and exposure in a competitive profession are often prohibited from doing so because of restrictions on volunteering.

The FLSA revolves around a complex scheme of regulations and exceptions. When the Department of Labor and the Federal courts determine who is and is not exempt, they take into account the type of services provided by the individual, who benefits from the rendering of the services, and how long it takes to provide the services. Some of the most common exceptions are for trainees or student learners better known as interns. These exceptions were developed because of their educational benefit as well as the potential to learn valuable skills for future employment.

However, just as the FLSA protects some, it can be an obstacle for others. Capitol Hill provides an excellent example. Each year hundreds of college and high school students travel to Washington, DC, for internships. Many of these positions are unpaid or offer a stipend, well below the minimum wage and overtime requirements. These individuals gain a better understanding of the legislative process, develop office skills, and make contacts that are invaluable in securing employment. Meanwhile, the employer is able to evaluate the intern in a work environment. For both it is a win-win situation.

Two particular individuals on my staff volunteered in my office for several months before they were hired on as full-time paid employees. However, because these two staffers were recent college graduates and produced work that benefited my office, they would have been prohibited from volunteering their services if at the time I would have been forced to comply with the FLSA.

Though Congress has since passed the Congressional Accountability Act and now must adhere to the FLSA, the point is not moot. Congress and hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals over the years have benefited from such programs. In fact, many have become employed for the first time because of the opportunity and experience they gain through interning. I hope we could learn from these instances and not turn our backs on those who wish to gain valuable work experience.

Moreover, as we enter the 21st century and the global marketplace becomes even more competitive, we must strive to help those who wish to enter the work force. Programs like Careers and School to Work offer some the

opportunity to gain the necessary skills to compete, but there is still room for improvement. Congress cannot standby and allow individuals to forego valuable training experience because we have failed to act.

The Job Skill Development Act will offer outstanding opportunities for future work forces. Its passage will help college graduates and individuals who have been out of the work force develop the professional skills and experience they need to become employed. It is a great job training program that does not cost the taxpayers a dime.

As I mentioned before, this legislation is narrowly tailored and while it eases the restrictions on volunteer activity, it does not jeopardize the important safeguards against employer coercion and worker displacement. Moreover, the intent is not to undermine any of the requirements of minimum wage and overtime, but focuses on providing individuals with the opportunity to gain the necessary skills to become gainfully employed.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to give future work forces the same opportunity Congress and many hill staffers have benefited from for many years. I look forward to working with my colleagues on passage of the Job Skill Development Act of 1997.

HOUSING LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM EXTENSION ACTS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. Speaker, today this Member is introducing two bills designed to extend important alternatives to traditional Federal housing direct lending.

The first bill, the Rural Multifamily Rental Housing Loan Guarantee Extension Act of 1997, permanently authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] administered section 538 program which, as the name implies, guarantees repayment of loans to build multifamily rental housing in rural communities. The section 538 program was patterned after the highly successful section 515 loan guarantee program, which is also administered by the USDA. While the section 538 program was only fully authorized in the last Congress through the Housing Opportunity Program Extension Act of 1996, it has been already been well received in rural America and certainly merits permanent authorization in the 105th Congress.

The second bill this Member is introducing today permanently authorizes the section 184 loan guarantee program for Indian housing, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. This guarantee program, which I authored and was enacted into law in 1992, is designed to bridge the obstacles that have prevented private lenders from participating in housing finance on Indian trust land. Because of the unique trust status of these reservations, private lenders have been reluctant to make loans due to the fact that they have no legal recourse should the borrower default. Under the section 184 guarantee program, the Federal Government eliminates this obstacle by guaranteeing that the lender will be repaid should the borrower default. This program has

already proven to be widely popular in Indian country and provides incentive for private lenders to participate in housing one of our Nation's most underserved populations.

Members should remember and be reassured by the fact that the disposition of loan guarantee programs provides oversight in that Congress must appropriate loan subsidies for all loans to be guaranteed under these programs. Thus, the end result of such a permanent authorization will be smoother operating programs without interruptions resulting from expired authorizations and congressional oversight maintained through the annual appropriations process.

Thank you Mr. Speaker. This Member invites his colleagues to join him as a cosponsor of both of these important housing measures.

INTRODUCTION OF THE OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, on May 10, 1996, a tanker moored in Delaware Bay spilled 10,000 gallons of light grade crude oil. Strong winds pushed the slick toward the beaches of Cape May, NJ, posing a threat to wildlife and migrating waterfowl. The tanker had been anchored 17 miles off the Cape May shore in an area known as the Big Stone Anchorage. It was involved in a process known as lightering. A tanker lighters by pumping some of its cargo into a smaller barge. This is usually done because there is insufficient depth of water to allow the tanker to safely make passage to secure oil terminals. Transferring oil over open water between two or more vessels is a risky process which greatly increases the possibility of spills or more serious accidents.

While the Cape May incident was a relatively minor accident and the environmental impacts were quickly contained, I am greatly troubled about the prospect of an accident in the New York Harbor. Thirty billion gallons of oil of every type are shipped through the Port of New York and New Jersey each year. One billion gallons is lightered from deep water anchorages beyond the Verrazano Narrows. That is 100 times the amount of oil spilled by the *Exxon Valdez* off the Alaskan coast. These barges are often single hulled and sometimes have no crew or anchor. The situation in the New York Harbor is doubly dangerous because of an institutional failure to dredge. The lightering process is used to reduce the weight of oil tankers and thereby lessen draft to enable these great ships to negotiate the shoaled-in channels and berths of the upper bay and the connecting channels in the Kill Van Kull and Arthur Kill. It is only the exceptional skill and dedication of the pilots serving the Port of New York and New Jersey that have prevented a catastrophe, but there have been a number of near collisions.

To reduce this threat, I am introducing the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Improvement Act. This legislation requires the Coast Guard to develop requirements for lightering and towing operations. It provides incentives for converting to the use of double hull ves-

sels. The bill will also reduce the economic hardship on the victims of oil spill, particularly in fishing communities. This bill is a good starting point at improving the Oil Pollution Act and improving the safety of barges that move a commodity that is essential for our economy safely and without harm to the environment.

IN HONOR OF HOWARD W. COLES

HON. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay special tribute to the life and legacy of Mr. Howard Wilson Coles, a pioneering African-American journalist, who for 62 years resided in New York's 28th Congressional District. Mr. Coles' life came to a peaceful end on December 10, 1996, at 93 years of age.

Upon completion of his formal education, Mr. Coles returned from New York City to Rochester, NY, in 1934 to become the founder and publisher of the Frederick Douglass Voice, known at this time as Rochester's only Negro newspaper. This newspaper, for 62 years, has been dedicated to showcasing the issues, challenges, and accomplishments of Rochester's African-American population.

Howard Wilson Coles shall long be remembered, not only for his journalistic talents, but also for his tireless efforts and extraordinary skills in the area of civil rights. He was as well, an author, broadcast journalist, and formerly served as president of Rochester's NAACP.

I take great pride in having known Mr. Coles, and in knowing his family; several of whom have followed in his giant footsteps as journalists. A true freedom fighter is now at rest. He will be sorely missed by his family, his numerous friends, and a community that he enhanced.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE AICHI KENJIN

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Aichi Kenjin Kai, a social and cultural institution now celebrating its 100th anniversary in northern California.

The first large population of immigrants from Aichi-ken was established in the central valley during the late 1800's. By 1896, some 300 Aichi-kenjins had settled in the Sacramento region. For most of these immigrants, the standard of living was poor. Most of them carried their possessions in a suitcase. They made their living as seasonal workers, moving from place to place as jobs were offered.

At this time in history, there was no welfare plan offered either by the Federal or State governments to care for such individuals when they fell ill or died. As such, this community of immigrants determined that it was necessary to establish an organization which would care for their fellow countrymen should they fall ill and assist their families when they passed away.

In 1895, one of the first immigrants to northern California, Yoshio Yamada, recommended