

Mr. Speaker, health care demands the most attentive and considerate among us, those who are faithful, loyal, and steadfast. It is a profession that requires individuals who are courteous, thoughtful and kind. Mrs. Olga M. Jones has reflected those qualities in all that she has done, over the years. She is an inspiration, a breath of fresh air, a pillar of strength, a tough lady with a tender heart. She has dared to be different, and she has made a difference.

One must gasp for air when reviewing all that Mrs. Jones has done. She has taught nursing classes. She has given instruction in nutrition. She has organized exercise classes. She has recruited many, many volunteers for community work. She has coordinated youth programs. She has organized blood drives. And, she is a member of numerous civic organizations. Despite all that she does, this loving wife and devoted mother keeps the proper priorities in perspective, reserving important time and effort to family and church. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in saluting, Mrs. Olga M. Jones, a 1999 Distinguished Woman of North Carolina.

IN HONOR OF ANTHONY C. REGO
AND DONNA KELLY REGO

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Anthony C. Rego and Donna Kelly Rego, on the occasion of being honored with The John R. Cunin Lamplighter Humanitarian Award. This award is to honor philanthropic leaders whose involvement in business and community assists individuals and families in meeting their needs through programs of service and empowerment.

Anthony C. Rego is a dedicated businessman in the supermarket industry. As a teenager, he started his career in the supermarket industry by working in the family grocery business. He helped the family business grow from two supermarkets to ten stores by dedicating 25 years of his life in the Rego's Stop-n-Shop Supermarket chain. His motivation and hard work has granted him several awards such as, Cleveland Food Dealers Association "Retailer of the Year" Award in 1983, the "Leadership and Service Award" in 1989 from the Associated Grocery Manufacturers Representatives, and the Cleveland Food Dealers "Honor Award" in 1993. In 1997 Mr. Rego received the Ohio Grocers Association's "Industry Service Award."

Donna Kelly Rego presently serves as Chairperson of the MetroHealth System. For the past twenty-one years, Mrs. Rego has served as Pastoral Associate at St. Malachi Church and is presently engaged as an organization specialist working with religious and non-profit organizations. Also, Mrs. Rego is an educator and a certified pastoral Minister in the Diocese of Cleveland. Mrs. Rego currently chairs the Board of Trustees for the St. Malachi Center and serves as trustee for the Cleveland Health Network, the Center for Health Affairs, the Federation for Community Planning and the Benjamin Rose Center. She has received several awards such as: The Henry F. Meyers Award, Outstanding Women

of Achievement (Cleveland YWCA, 1992), Belle Sherwin Award (League to Woman Voters 1993), Crain's Women of Influence (1997).

I ask that my distinguished colleagues join me in commending Anthony C. Rego and Donna Kelly Rego for their lifetime dedication, service, and leadership to their community. Their large circle of family and friends can be proud of the significant contribution these prominent individuals have made. Our community has certainly been rewarded by the true service and uncompromising dedication of Anthony C. Rego and Donna Kelly Rego.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TAMPON
SAFETY AND RESEARCH ACT OF
1999 AND THE ROBIN DANIELSON
ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year I introduced two important pieces of women's health legislation—H.R. 890, The Tampon Safety and Research Act of 1999, and H.R. 889, The Robin Danielson Act. The research and reporting called for in these bills will finally give women the accurate information they need to make informed decisions about their health as it relates to tampon use.

Why is the issue of tampon safety important? Because tampons are used by 73 million American women—that's 53% of American women and almost a third of the total population. A woman may use as many as 16,500 tampons in her lifetime. Given these numbers, shouldn't we be certain that these products are safe?

I introduced two tampon safety bills because there are two separate issues that must be addressed.

Why is The Tampon Safety and Research Act important? Because tampons and other related products often contain additives, synthetic fibers, and dioxin. Dioxin is a toxic by-product of the paper manufacturing process. Wood pulp, as well as the rayon used in nearly all tampons, undergo several production processes, including bleaching. The majority of pulp and paper producers use a chlorine bleaching method that results in the formation of dioxin and other contaminants. As a result, trace amounts of dioxin are present in most paper products, from toilet paper to tampons.

Dioxin is also found in varying levels throughout the environment, but are women being subjected to additional and potentially avoidable exposures to dioxin through tampon use? Let me put dioxin in perspective, because we only have to consult recent history to know of the potentially disastrous effects of this substance. Dioxin is a member of the organochlorine group, which includes the contaminants found in Agent Orange, the Vietnam War-era defoliant, and at Love Canal.

But let's consult the experts as well. According to a 1994 report issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, dioxin is a known cancer-causing agent in animals, as well as a probable human carcinogen. My bill is specifically concerned with the possible links between dioxin in tampons and ovarian, cervical, and breast cancers, as well as other potential hazards.

A 1996 EPA study has also linked dioxin exposure with increased risks for endometriosis, an often painful menstrual-related condition that is a leading cause of infertility. Further, the EPA has concluded that people with high exposure to dioxin may be at risk for other effects which could suppress the immune system, increase the risk of pelvic inflammatory disease, reduce fertility, and possibly interfere with normal fetal and childhood development.

The EPA conclusions regarding dioxin exposure are particularly alarming in light of a 1989 Food and Drug Administration report, which stated that "possible exposures from all other medical device sources would be dwarfed by the potential tampon exposure." Why? Because the average woman may use as many as 16,500 tampons during her lifetime. If dioxin is putting women at risk, could the long-term use of tampons increase that risk?

What makes these toxic residues in tampons even more disturbing is they come in direct contact with some of the most absorbent tissue in a woman's body. According to Dr. Philip Tierno, Jr., director of microbiology and immunology at New York University Medical Center, almost anything placed on this tissue—including trace amounts of dioxin—gets absorbed into the body.

According to researchers, dioxin is stored in fatty tissue—just like that found in the vagina. And women have more body fat than men, possibly allowing them to more efficiently store dioxin from all sources, not just tampons. Worse yet, the effects of dioxin are cumulative, and can be measured as much as 20 or 30 years after exposure. This accumulation is cause for particular concern, because a woman may be exposed to dioxin in tampons for approximately 55 years over the course of her reproductive life.

The question, of course, is why it is acceptable to have this toxic substance in tampons—despite the advice of an FDA scientist to the contrary. A 1989 agency document reported that "the most effective risk management strategy would be to assure that tampons, and menstrual pads for good measure, contain no dioxin." Why has there been far more testing on the possible health effects of chlorine-bleached coffee filters than on chlorine-bleached tampons and related products? My bill seeks to address this inadequacy, and finally give women the most accurate, up-to-date information available regarding this critical health concern.

Although the FDA currently requires tampon manufacturers to monitor dioxin levels in their finished products, the results are not available to the public. When I—as a Member of Congress—requested the information, the FDA told me it was proprietary and therefore could not be released. It should be noted the dioxin tests relied upon by the FDA are done by the manufacturers themselves, who, not surprisingly insist their products are safe. Some of my constituents have written to say that this is the equivalent of the fox guarding the henhouse.

How much dioxin exposure is considered safe for humans? And does the fact that tampons are in direct contact with absorbent tissue, and for extended periods of time, make whatever levels of dioxin tampons possess even more dangerous? Is this the equivalent of a ticking time bomb, capable of increasing women's risks for several life-threatening or fertility-threatening diseases? Unfortunately

there are no easy answers. We simply don't have instructive, persuasive evidence either way.

Many experts believe, however, if the slightest possibility exists that dioxin residues in tampons could harm women, the dioxin should simply be eliminated. I also believe we should err on the side of protecting women's health. Tampon manufacturers are not required to disclose ingredients to consumers, although many have taken the positive step of voluntarily disclosing this information. Unfortunately, women are still being forced to take the word of the industry-sponsored research that these products are completely safe.

I should also note that this is not the first time a Member of Congress has expressed concern about this issue. In 1992, the late Representative Ted Weiss of New York brought the issue up in a subcommittee hearing of the Committee on Government Operations. He did this after his staff had uncovered internal FDA documents which suggested the agency had not adequately investigated the danger of dioxin in tampons.

My bill, The Tampon Safety & Research Act (H.R. 890), would direct the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct research to determine the extent to which the presence of dioxin, synthetic fibers, and other additives in tampons and related menstruation products pose any health risks to women. An NIH study would provide American women with independent research, so they will not have to rely solely on research funded by tampon manufacturers.

The second bill I have introduced, The Robin Danielson Act, calls for a program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track instances of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). This bill is named in memory of Robin Danielson, a 44 year-old mother of two who last year of TSS. This bill addresses the many potentially harmful additives in tampons, including chlorine compounds, absorbency enhancers, and synthetic fibers, as well as deodorants and fragrances. Most people are surprised to learn these additives are commonly found in these products.

Toxic Shock Syndrome is a rare bacterial illness which caused over 50 deaths between 1979 and 1980, when the link between tampons and TSS was first established. According to a 1994 study, of the Toxic Shock cases occurring in menstruating women, up to 99% were using tampons. Obviously Toxic Shock Syndrome is still a women's health concern, and its link to tampons has become more clear. We do not know enough about the potential risks associated with such additives. Independent research has already shown synthetic fiber additives in tampons amplify toxins, which are associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome.

Reporting of TSS to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently optional and uneven. No one knows the actual number of TSS occurrences or deaths. Because doctors do not report all cases of TSS and because local health departments are swamped with other higher-ranking concerns, Toxic Shock is greatly under-reported. My bill establishes a CDC program to implement mandatory collection of Toxic Shock Syndrome data.

I want to share an excerpt from a letter written to me by a TSS survivor addressing the importance of The Robin Danielson Act and TSS research: "I think women are mis-

informed about the dangers and risks that go with using tampons. I know that I remember hearing about it years ago but had always thought that tampons now were very safe to use. Apparently this is not true and many women today are dying from this disease and it goes unreported.

Women, like Robin Danielson, are still dying from this terrible disease. It is imperative that we are able to accurately inform women of the risk of Toxic Shock associated with tampon use, and that women are well aware of that risk. We know there is a dangerous link between tampon use and TSS. What we don't know is how prevalent the disease is among tampon users. The only means to determine the current risk of Toxic Shock and to raise awareness of the disease is to require systematic reporting through the CDC.

Currently, the CDC believes that women are at increased risk for developing Toxic Shock due to a false sense of security, believing that there is no longer a risk for developing the disease. To make matters worse, the diagnosis of Toxic Shock is difficult because the symptoms are flu-like and can be easily misdiagnosed or ignored. Knowing the continued risk for contracting Toxic Shock is the only way to raise awareness among women and their physicians. More knowledgeable women and physicians will recognize TSS symptoms earlier, diagnose Toxic Shock more readily, and prevent needless deaths.

The fact is, women do not have the information they need to make sound decisions about their health. For the sake of women's well-being, we need accurate, independent information. American women have a right to know about any potential hazards associated with tampons and other related products. It is only when women fully understand the consequences that they can make truly informed decisions about their reproductive health.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in this fight to get accurate health information to the women of America. Their future fertility, and perhaps their lives, may depend on it.

HONORING COLORADO BOYS
STATE TRACK 2A CHAMPIONS—
HOLYOKE

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartiest congratulations to the Holyoke boys track team on their impressive State 2A Championship. These young men displayed an impressive combination of talent, determination, and teamwork to earn a share of the 2A State Championship.

The State 2A Championship is the highest achievement in high school track. The champions receive a coveted trophy which symbolizes more than just the team and its coach, Mr. Vann Manly. It also represents the staunch support of the runners' families, fellow students, school personnel and the community. From now on, these people can point to the 1999 boys track team with pride, and know they were part of a remarkable athletic endeavor. Indeed, visitors to Holyoke and the school will see a sign proclaiming the boys 2A

State Championship, and know something special had taken place there.

The Holyoke track team is a testament to the old adage that the team wins games, not individuals. Each team member should be proud of his own role. These individuals are the kind of people who lead by example and serve as role-models. With the increasing popularity of sports among young people, local athletes are heroes to the youth in their home towns. I admire the discipline and dedication these high schoolers have shown in successfully pursuing their dream.

The memories of this storied year will last a lifetime. I encourage all involved, but especially the Holyoke runners, to build on this experience by dreaming bigger dreams and achieving greater successes. I offer my best wishes to the team as they move forward from their State 2A Championship to future endeavors.

IN MEMORY OF DONALD L.
ALFIERO

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great sorrow on the passing of Donald L. Alfiero of Norwich, Connecticut. Don was a friend to me and thousands in Norwich, a dedicated husband and a tireless public servant.

Don Alfiero worked hard day-in and day-out on behalf of everyone in Norwich. He served on several boards and commissions and was a senior member of the City Council. He recognized the importance of education and fought to ensure that the students in his community had the very best. Don Alfiero was more than a remarkable public servant, he was a great person. He was gregarious and outspoken, but compassionate above all else. I have attached an editorial from the Norwich Bulletin that describes Don well which I request be included following my statement.

Mr. Speaker, Don Alfiero's memory will live on and endure in Norwich. He will always be a model for those of us in public service.

[Editorial from the Norwich Bulletin]

LOSS OF DON ALFIERO STUNS AND DIMINISHES
NORWICH AND COUNCIL

Donald L. Alfiero died suddenly yesterday morning and his loss has stunned and saddened this city.

As husband, neighbor, alderman, volunteer—and simply a good guy—Don Alfiero touched a lot of people hereabouts and always for the better.

Don was 62, retired from Electric Boat, and the senior member of the Norwich City Council. A Democrat, Don represented Precinct 9. But you didn't have to be a Democrat or live in his precinct to call Don Alfiero a friend.

If ever there were anyone of whom it could be said led by example, Don Alfiero was that man. He was involved, he listened and—regardless of what others thought—Don always spoke his mind and did what he thought best. That didn't always win him great popularity; but for Don being popular was secondary to being right.

His service to the city was extensive. Don was vice chairman, then chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, and remained