

by her family and the many lives in her community that she has touched. My fellow colleagues, please join me in wishing a great lady a very happy birthday and many more delightful years to come.

SUPPORTING THE ETHNIC AND MINORITY BIAS CLEARINGHOUSE ACT OF 1999

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 24, 1999

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of greater diversity in our national media. If we learned anything this past year, it is that the media has a tremendous influence in our day-to-day lives. The impact of this "Information Age" influence needs to be examined because it does not always promote accurate images. To address this important issue, I introduced H.R. 125, the "Ethnic and Minority Bias Clearinghouse Act of 1999."

While this legislation will shed a good deal of sunshine upon our media, it will not attempt to place any mandates upon broadcasters. H.R. 125 will direct the Federal Communication Commission to begin compiling data on complaints, grievances and opinions regarding radio and television broadcasters depiction of ethnic and minority groups. This information will be released to the public on a yearly basis and will be discussed in an annual conference to examine our nation's perception of the media's depiction of our great ethnic diversity.

In support of my legislation I submit for the RECORD a letter that was sent by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) to the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences which illustrates the need for my legislation.

September 7, 1999.

MS. MERYL MARSHALL,
Chairwoman and CEO, The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, North Hollywood, CA.

DEAR MS. MARSHALL: The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is pleased to note that a large number of Italian Americans have been nominated by The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for their contributions to primetime television.

Your September 12th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards has nominated NIAF supporters such as Stanley Tucci for Outstanding Lead Actor In A Miniseries Or Movie; Joe Mantegna for Outstanding Supporting Actor in the same category; and Tony Danza as Outstanding Guest Actor In A Drama Series. Italian Americans are also up for awards in comedy, drama, direction, editing, hairstyling, makeup, and music.

These nominations confirm the tremendous contributions that Italian Americans have made in the fields of art and entertainment. However, NIAF is greatly concerned about the amount of attention and acclaim which has been given to the Home Box Office series, "The Sopranos", and how it relentlessly focuses only on Italian Americans in organized crime.

NIAF appreciates and recognizes the acting skills and hard work of Emmy nominated performers like James Gandolfini, Lorraine Bracco, and Edie Falco, as well as the work of the rest of the cast and crew. But NIAF agrees with writer Bill Dal Cerro, who wrote in the June 20th Chicago Tribune that the show "not only exploits popular prejudice about Italian Americans, but allows the audience to giggle at such images guilt-free."

This past year has seen an open season assault by the entertainment industry on people of Italian American heritage. Whether it be a Pepsi television ad featuring a little girl speaking in an Italian American "God-father" voice, derogatory films such as Spike Lee's "Summer of Sam", or TNT's despicable "Family Values: The Mob & The Movies", your industry has reinforced the stereotype that all Italian Americans are losers, or mobsters, or both.

The stereotyping is also insidious: type in the phrase "Italian Americans" in the internet search box of HBO's parent company, Time Warner, and you get a glossary of terms from "The Sopranos" with words like "Stugots", "Ginzo gravy" and "Wonder Bread Wop." These words are offensive to Italian Americans and should not be glamorized on the world-wide web in so careless a fashion.

Clyde Haberman of the New York Times, wrote the following in a July 30th article entitled "An Ethnic Stereotype Hollywood Can't Refuse":

"In this age of correctness, other groups have managed to banish the worst stereotypes about them. How often these days do you see shuffling blacks, grasping Jews or drunken Irishmen on the screen? . . . (but) Among major ethnic groups that have formed the country's social bedrock for at least a century, Americans of Italian origin may be the last to see themselves reflected in mass culture, time and again, as nothing but a collection of losers and thugs."

A study by the Italic Studies Institute, Floral Park, New York, bears out Mr. Haberman's assertion. The Institute analyzed 735 Hollywood films that featured Italian Americans from 1931 to 1998. It found 152 films were positive and 583 were negative towards Italian Americans.

NIAF agrees with Bergen, New Jersey Assemblyman Guy Talarico, who recently said that Italy has produced some of the finest artists, scientists, athletes and other professionals. Mr. Talarico introduced a resolution condemning the film industry's negative portrayal of Italians and warned that "it is inaccurate and insensitive to insinuate that a small number of people (in organized crime) represent an entire ethnic group." Or to put it another way, Energy Secretary Frederico Pena told a conference last year that stereotyping "is the package in which racism finds a home." And if allowed to continue, Pena said "we depersonalize each other and we see not the faces of the personal stories we can all share but the face of an impersonal group."

In fact, because Hollywood has been reluctant to reduce harmful stereotyping of Italian Americans and other minorities, NIAF has given its full support to "The Ethnic and Minority Bias Clearing House Act of 1999." The bill, HR 125, sponsored by New York Congressman Eliot Engel, would create an office, probably within the Federal Communications Commission, to collect and analyze the media's portrayal of ethnic, racial and religious minorities, with an annual report on such portrayals in the industry prepared for Congress.

NIAF has begun a major effort to "Stamp Out Italian American Stereotyping," and we need the help of influential people in the entertainment community like yourself to help us achieve success.

We have enclosed NIAF's report, "Fact Sheets On Italian Americans In US History And Culture", and ask that you review it and distribute it to all members of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The 37-page document contains a listing of significant contributions Italian Americans have made to the US in such fields as politics, edu-

cation, entertainment, sports and law enforcement. Academy members who read this document, which is also available on NIAF's web site, www.niaf.org, would get a fuller representation of Italian Americans which could lead to depicting our people on television and in the movies in a more positive fashion.

We also ask that the Academy consider for next year's awards the Arts and Entertainment (A&E) film "Italians in America" and the History Channel film "Ellis Island." Both will be shown in October and both document Italian American history and achievements.

Finally, we would ask that the Academy agree to participate in an NIAF-sponsored workshop on "Italian American Stereotyping" which will take place in the second quarter of the Year 2000. Your participation will convince others in the entertainment industry that this is a problem which needs to be addressed if 20 million Americans of Italian descent, the nation's fifth largest ethnic group, are to be fairly depicted, as honest, hard-working individuals.

I have designated Dona De Sanctis, head of the NIAF's Media Institute Board, as your direct contact on these issues. Please contact her at NIAF headquarters, 1860 19th St., NW, Washington, DC, 20009, telephone: (202) 387-0600.

Sincerely,

FRANK J. GUARINI,
NIAF Chairman.

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN SCHOOL
DRUG TESTING

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 24, 1999

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, there has been occasional controversy about drug-testing high school students.

Evidence is showing that this is the single most effective way to actually reduce drug abuse at school.

The Concordia Lutheran school system in Fort Wayne, Indiana is the largest Lutheran School system in the nation.

The following is an excellent summary of their reasons and debate around implementing a drug testing program.

I hope other school systems will show the commitment to improving the lives of their students that Concordia has.

FORT WAYNE LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION,
CONCORDIA LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL,

Fort Wayne, IN, September 21, 1999.

To The Honorable Mark Souder,
Re Substance Abuse Prevention Program
Concordia Lutheran High School.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information on our newly-instituted program of substance abuse prevention, including the requirement of random drug testing for all students and staff.

A bit of the history of this effort . . . The student surveys we have had conducted by research firms in Fort Wayne over the past 5-8 years have clearly confirmed our sense that the problem of student use of drugs and alcohol was in many ways similar to that of other schools. We have never hid from that reality, yet it was not until the spring of 1998 that we finally moved in a significant way to address and "do something" about the problem.

Two incidents of illegal use and possession were the "last straw" for us to act! Our goal was to do something about the problem, not study it. We were beyond further study.

The school administration formed a task force comprising students, staff, administrators, pastors, lawyers, professionals in the field, and officials from law enforcement. Judge Charles Pratt was also a member. The question was not, "Is there a problem?" Rather, the compelling issue was what can we do about the problem. I chaired the task force because I wanted it to do the right thing and get at the problem. I believed I had to demonstrate the commitment we had to the issue. Their interest and enthusiasm was inspiring, especially when they realized we were serious about this problem and getting at it!

The attached brochure outlines the program which was formulated over a period of six months. The Board of Directors of our Association endorsed the effort. The faculty also supported it. It was clearly apparent from the beginning that, if we wanted to do something to impact student use of illegal drugs and alcohol, random drug testing had to be a part of the program. As the professionals indicated, if you are not willing to drug test, we were wasting our time. As a task force, we crossed that hurdle and moved forward in the spring of 1999 with a proactive program of testing and ministry support when a problem occurs.

In the spring of 1999 we began a series of parent meetings at which time we shared the very real and dramatic data from the survey results. Then we outlined the plan and informed them that required random testing will begin with the 1999-2000 school year. We did not survey our parents. We knew we had a serious problem and we needed to act. Quite frankly, it would have muddled the process, resulted in political debate and parent reaction. We were convinced we were doing the right thing and all of the expertise we had totally supported the action plan! The program was built around education, prevention, and treatment [see attached brochure].

There was some opposition from parents who were really bothered by the fact that we were going to conduct random testing of all students, but we concluded that we simply had to do it. Many hours were spent talking with families who expressed concerns. We took the news to the media and made the news ourselves, having concluded that this was the best approach. As you might know, the media made a rather negative issue out of the news, focusing attention only on testing and not the overall program. Publicly it appeared that there were many who objected. Yet there were many who wrote and supported our efforts, including our own students.

I did not receive even five negative letters. Since the spring, as people have talked through the issue of testing and considered it, we have had total cooperation from families. To our knowledge, NOT ONE student did not return as a result of this issue. In fact, we lost fewer students over the summer than we normally do in an average year. Every parent signed a release form. We have had no complaint or refusal.

The procedures we put in place are carefully laid out and had the input of a variety of professionals. We take all the precautions, and more, of the DOT guidelines on testing. We have a doctor certified as a Medical Review Officer who would first review any positive tests. This takes place prior to the school ever being notified.

The testing company in Kansas City has an impeccable record and the percent chance of false positives is scientifically insignificant. We have overcome many fears as a result of

careful and thoughtful planning. That, of course, is part of our philosophy of education. The testing is conducted weekly on students whose numbers come up on the randomization computer program. It works smoothly, and most people are totally unaware that it is even taking place!

All new employees are tested as a requirement of employment. This includes a cafeteria worker as well as an administrator. We have all staff in a randomization pool and have a plan in place should a positive test arise. Both the proactive plan to assist students and the plan for staff members are based on our approach to ministry, part of what makes our education distinctive.

All of the evidence told us that testing WILL reduce the usage among students. That is our prayer and hope, and we have seen and heard evidence that it does. The goal is to deter young people from using illegal drugs and alcohol.

Finally, alcohol is a problem more difficult to test and trace. Parties continue to take place outside of school but our testing program will not impact that behavior directly. It is our hope that the overall impact of the program is also having a positive effect on other student behaviors. Only time will tell. In the mean time, our families, students and staff are dealing with the problem in a very real way. The actual testing takes place almost unnoticed during the day. It has simply become a part of our day and we like it that way. I might add that we have a registered nurse on duty every school day, all day. Our program which the clinic has put together is high impact, connecting with our guidance program. We use urine testing as our method. The current cost is \$16 per test. A courier picks up the material on its way to Kansas City!

It is public knowledge that the son of our head nurse, a good student and athlete, was one of the students arrested in May of 1998, taken away from school in handcuffs, and of course was expelled. He is back in school after one full semester away [our minimum policy] and is doing very well in school. He is a good kid who hopefully learned a huge lesson about selling marijuana! The judge asked us if he could do some of his service hours at Concordia. We agreed and he paid that price in the summer of 1998 leading into his semester away from Concordia.

I also recommended to our administrators that we move our annual Cadets In Cadence Auction out of our facility to an off-campus site. The Board of Directors supported that move, but there were many who simply did not "buy" the argument that we needed to set the example and not serve alcohol, even to adults, on our campus, even to raise money! We made a once-a-year exception and served alcohol in the building. On December 4, 1999, we have our first off-campus auction at the Coliseum . . . and we believe we can make it an even better event!

Concordia took a stand on the issue. We have "laid the issue on the kitchen table" of CLHS parents and many other families in Fort Wayne . . . and we hope some lives will be saved and some teenagers will be spared the potential tragedies which accompany the use of illegal drugs and alcohol. We want a drug-free school and want to give good kids another reason to say NO!

Thank you for your interest and allowing me to share this testimony.

Cordially,

DAVID WIDENHOFER,
Executive Director.

TREATMENT

We are compelled to provide treatment alternatives when a student is discovered to have used, be in possession of, or be a seller or provider of drugs or alcohol. The identi-

fication of those who are involved with drugs or alcohol calls for clear assessment and follow-up.

First Positive Test—A parent conference, an assessment by a state-approved drug and alcohol agency, an educational and/or counseling plan, a 12-month probationary period, follow-up testing, and applicable activity penalties are indicated.

Second Positive Test—The student is expelled. A parent conference is held to discuss assistance measures and a plan for re-entry if desired.

Student Under the Influence—The student is immediately suspended for a period of 5 school days. A parent conference, an assessment by a state-approved drug and alcohol agency, an educational and/or counseling plan, a 12-month probationary period, follow-up testing, and appropriate activity penalties are indicated.

Student Possession/Distribution or Second Under Influence—The student is expelled. A parent conference is held to discuss assistance measures and a plan for re-entry if desired.

CHRIST-CENTERED EDUCATION

We believe that:

All students are chosen and redeemed children of God. As parents and teachers, we have a responsibility to them. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6.

All our hope is in the Lord. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11.

As Christians we know that we have a responsibility to take care of the life God has given us. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your body." I Corinthians 6:19-20.

We also realize that in a sinful world, we must be prepared to face temptations every day of our lives. We can do this confidently as His faithful people. "God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." I Corinthians 10:13.

Lutheran schools impact the lives of young people by providing Christian values through all school activities and programs and by proclaiming God's love.

THE PROBLEM

Data provided from several research studies of high school students, including CLHS students, present a picture of the use of drugs and alcohol by our students that resembles that of other states and high schools. Our own experience with young people verifies the existence of a problem that compels a response. We are called "to minister to students as chosen and redeemed children of God." We can no longer avoid confronting head-on this reality of American culture.

Teenagers are making poor choices to use drugs and alcohol in every high school in America. As a Christ-centered high school, we must respond to this tragic reality. Our plan is founded on our sincere concern for nurturing Christian faith and healthy lifestyles in our students. We intentionally want to reduce the use of drugs and alcohol and discourage students from making poor choices. We act because we care.

Our goal is to maintain a safe, positive and zero-tolerance school environment, conducive to learning and spiritual growth for all students. We have set forth preventive measures to check the student use of alcohol and

drugs, especially on the CLHS campus and at CLHS activities. The plan includes education for staff, students and parents so that they understand the realities of the problem and are better able to identify and help students using drugs and alcohol. Our ministry to students calls for providing assistance and treatment options for students who become involved in the use of drugs and alcohol.

PREVENTION

We need consistent, fair, firm, enforceable and clear policies regarding the school's position on the illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Clear deterrents are needed so that students and adults know that we are serious about this issue and want to reduce student drug and alcohol use.

Zero Tolerance Policy—All use, possession or distribution of drugs or alcohol will have consequences. We will not tolerate those who introduce illicit drugs or alcohol into our school setting.

Tip Line—Evening calls to Student Services (471-1996) will be recorded on an answer-

ing machine to allow anonymous reporting of information about illegal activity.

Surveillance Cameras—These have been installed to observe activity in the parking lot and other high traffic areas of the school grounds.

Locker and Parking Lot Searches—Random searches involving the use of police drug dogs will occur as needed.

Random Drug Testing of Students—This is the key component that addresses the issue of usage. Urinalysis is the method used and great care is taken to ensure confidentiality of results.

Reasonable Suspicion—When reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use exists, a breath scan and/or urinalysis will be required.

EDUCATION

It has become clear that many students, teachers and parents do not fully understand the laws dealing drugs and alcohol, the consequences of being caught, the signs of student use of alcohol and drugs (at home and

at school), and the very real seriousness of this issue in the lives of youth and adults. We want to emphasize the seriousness of the issues being addressed, the identification of students using or under the influence, the identification of those possessing or selling drugs or alcohol at school, and the legal consequences of alcohol and drug use by adolescents and adults.

Curriculum—Drug and alcohol education is a part of the curriculum each year in high school.

Student Assemblies—At least once each year an assembly using outside resources is presented to the student body.

Staff In-Service—Education and skill-building are a regular part of the staff in-service program.

Parent Support Group—This group works with the school administration to ensure that education efforts continue for both students and parents.

Parents In-Service—At least one parent in-service activity is planned per semester.