

on prescription drugs was to limit patients' access to newer medicines so that they had to rely more on hospitals and surgery.

All provinces require that chemically identical and cheaper generic drugs be substituted for more expensive brand-name drugs when they are available. However, British Columbia has gone farther with a "reference price system." Under this system, the government can require that a patient receiving a drug subsidy be treated with whichever costs the least: (a) a generic substitute, (b) a drug with similar but not identical active ingredients or (c) a completely different compound deemed to have the same therapeutic effect. Patients are often forced to switch medicines, sometimes in mid-treatment, when the reference price system mandates a change. Twenty-seven percent of physicians in British Columbia report that they have had to admit patients to the emergency room or hospital as a result of the mandated switching of medicines. Sixty-eight percent report confusion or uncertainty by cardiovascular or hypertension patients, and 60 percent have seen patients' conditions worsen or their symptoms accelerate due to mandated switching.

Through limiting the availability of prescription drugs and controlling the prices of those that are available, Canada has succeeded only in preventing Canadians from obtaining drugs that might have reduced hospital stays and expensive medical procedures. The end result of this is that Canadians are getting a lower standard of health care at a higher cost than patients and taxpayers have a right to expect.

One lesson that Americans should learn from the Canadian experience is that when government pays for drugs, government controls the supply. As soon as government has to pay the bill, efforts are made to restrict the availability of newer and more effective drugs. The inevitable result is that other health expenditures like surgery and emergency visits increase, and patients suffer.

AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 3, 2000

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, expanding the number of H-1B visas for foreign workers is critical to the well being of Oregon's high-tech community. Given the strong economy, record low unemployment, and declining graduation rates in high-tech education fields, that industry is facing a critical shortage of highly educated workers. In Oregon, for example, we have openings for 800 software engineers and are currently unable to fill them.

Our education system is not producing the needed skilled workers for the high-tech industry. The H-1B visa program helps fill the void, but that's not all it does. The legislation we adopted last night helps develop our own workforce.

The bill keeps the current \$500 application fee that employers pay for new H-1B visa holders, which produces \$75 million in revenue each year. Less than two percent of the fees is for administrative expenses and the rest is used to enhance our educational system. This funding provides math, science, engineering, and technology post-secondary

scholarships for low-income and disadvantaged students. It is also used to improve K-12 math and science education and for job training.

While this funding helps, I have joined many of my colleagues in pressing for more. I am a cosponsor of the Dreier-Lofgren bill that raises the cap on H-1B visas and doubles the application fee to \$1000. I am hopeful we can adopt that increase before we adjourn and thereby do even more to meet our nation's educational needs.

Many companies in my state are working independently of the government to help as well. Intel makes its micro-chips in Oregon. In 1998, it contributed \$63 million to higher education and \$29 million to K-12 education. In an effort to encourage high school students to enter science and engineering career field tracks, companies like Electro Scientific Industries have partnered with local school districts and opened their doors to students, teachers and parents to talk to young engineers about career decisions and options.

Together, we can reverse the shortage by improving our educational system. In the short term, increasing visa numbers is not a bad thing. Each new wave of immigrants adds to the diversity and character of our communities. This diversity has given us the strength to grow in times of prosperity and survive in times of trouble. H-1B visa holders add to our strong economy.

RECOGNITION OF THE "LIGHT THE NIGHT" WALK

HON. DEBORAH PRYCE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues will be interested in the following comments made by Mr. Ken Barun, President and CEO of Ronald McDonald House Charities on the "Light the Night" walk held on September 21, 2000, that raised funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. I submit Mr. Barun's remarks for the RECORD:

You, the "Light the Night" walkers—teams and individuals—are the ones truly making a difference tonight. Through your participation in events such as this, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society continues to raise funds and combat cancers that have touched so many of us—our families, our friends—those whom we know or had the pleasure of once knowing.

I think it's fate that the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Ronald McDonald House Charities have come together for this wonderful fundraiser. Both organizations care deeply about children and their families; both provide comfort and care when needed; and both want to see an end to this terrible disease called cancer.

To give you a brief background about Ronald McDonald House Charities, our mission is to improve the health and wellness of children around the world. It is a mission that began with the care and compassion of dedicated people who, like McDonald's Corporation founder, Ray Kroc, dared to dream.

Ray once dreamed of having a thousand McDonald's restaurants in the U.S. We now have more than 25,000 restaurants in 119 countries. Similarly, the people who started Ronald McDonald House Charities, had the dream of having just one Ronald McDonald

House—the one that opened in Philadelphia in 1974. We now have more than 200 Houses around the world in 18 countries.

As the network of Ronald McDonald Houses grows, so does our role as a Charity. To date, through our global organization and more than 160 local Chapters in 32 countries, we've awarded more than 225 million dollars in grants. In addition, we receive the donation of time from an army of well over 25,000 volunteers worldwide.

Volunteers like you. People who effect positive change. Which brings me back to why we are all here. Leukemia is the number one disease that kills our children. Think about that—the number one disease. However, there is hope: Because of efforts like yours tonight, and the efforts of others like you, there's been enough funding to sustain ongoing research, research that has tripled the leukemia survival rate in the last 39 years. That is an astonishing accomplishment. And you, members and volunteers of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, should be proud to be a part of that.

I'd like to thank the McDonald's region in Washington and Baltimore and all its McDonald's franchisees for supporting and participating in tonight's "Light the Night" Walk with us. I'd also like to thank the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society for all your terrific work in organizing this event. And finally, to those of you who have come out here tonight, donned your walking shoes and have collected thousands and thousands of dollars, a very special, heartfelt thank you.

I feel truly honored to be in your company.

RECOGNITION OF LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK: SEPTEMBER 18-22, 2000

HON. ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Mr. EHRLICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge a group of citizens in my district working hard to address an issue affecting every citizen of our state: Lawsuit Abuse.

Throughout my district, and all over the greater Baltimore area, local citizens are volunteering their time and energy to inform the public about the costs and problems stemming from the excessive numbers and types of lawsuits filed in today's litigious society. The men and women of the Baltimore Regional Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse, otherwise known as BRCALA, have a simple goal—to create a greater public awareness of abuses of our civil justice system. This type of citizen activism has had a positive impact on perceptions and attitudes toward abuses of our legal system, a problem most folks do not stop to consider during their daily routine.

While the overall mission of Baltimore Regional Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse is to curb lawsuit abuse, the organization's efforts focus on education. Every time these dedicated Marylanders speak out against lawsuit abuse, ordinary citizens are educated on the statewide and nationwide consequences our legal system has on our daily lives. The costs of lawsuit abuse include higher prices for consumer products, higher medical expenses, higher taxes, higher insurance rates, and lost business expansion and product development.

As a former member of the Maryland General Assembly, I worked hard to reform our legal system at the state level. During my tenure in Congress, I have supported efforts with

respect to product liability reform, securities litigation reform, and reform of the federal Superfund program. More importantly, I sponsored legislation that has helped reduce frivolous class action lawsuits brought against mortgage brokers.

This year, I voted to support H.R. 1875, the Interstate Class Action Jurisdiction Act. This legislation recognizes that many class action lawsuits do little to help consumers, but allow personal injury lawyers to collect millions of dollars in legal fees. H.R. 1875 is an important step in helping reform a legal system that has been abused time and time again.

Legal reform is a complex issue. The legal system must function to provide justice to every American. This does not mean, however, that the status quo is perfect. When lawsuits and the courts are used in excess or to the detriment of innocent parties, the system must be reviewed and reformed.

Let me acknowledge the BRCALA board of directors for giving of their valuable time and energy: the Honorable Phillip Bissett, BRCALA chairman; Joseph Brown, Jr.; Dr. William Howard; Gary O. Prince; the Honorable Joseph Sachs; and the Honorable Michael Wagner—directors and supporters dedicated to BRCALA; and Nancy Hill, BRCALA executive director.

Mr. Speaker, the Baltimore Regional Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse has declared September 18 through September 22, 2000, as "Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week" in Maryland.

I want to commend every person involved in this worthwhile effort for their dedication and commitment.

A TRIBUTE TO HON. ROBERT W. BLANCHETTE

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of the true leaders in the renaissance of America's rail transportation system. Robert Blanchette, who died last week, was literally present at the creation when our private-sector railroads suffered financial collapse in the 1970s, and then returned to financial stability after 1980.

After graduation from Yale Law School and service as an Air Force legal officer, Mr. Blanchette began his legal career in railroading as the general counsel of the New Haven Railroad in the late 1960s. While serving in that post, he also became executive director of the America's Sound Transportation Review program, one of the first modern efforts to analyze the ills of the transport system and recommend needed changes.

Bob's next major post was counsel to the bankruptcy trustee of the Penn Central Railroad, which entered bankruptcy in 1970 and collapsed in 1973. At the time, Penn Central was the largest corporate bankruptcy in U.S. history. Based on his outstanding performance as counsel, Bob was later installed first as bankruptcy trustee, then chairman of the board, and chief executive officer.

As one who arrived in Congress in the midst of what became known as "the wreck of the Penn Central," I can personally attest to the

gargantuan effort required to deal with massive creditor claims against the Penn Central estate, while at the same time helping to fashion Conrail as the federally created successor to the various bankrupt Northeastern freight railroads. Bob handled these daunting tasks with characteristic acumen and aplomb. Eventually, thanks to the groundwork laid during Bob's tenure with the Penn Central, Conrail became a thriving railroad that was fully privatized in 1987 and was recently purchased by Norfolk Southern and CSX.

When Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, Bob was named Federal Railroad Administrator. This was an era of massive and long overdue change, when the entire freight railroad industry was being transformed and rehabilitated through the deregulation of the Staggers Rail Act. Bob was at the center of efforts to modernize all federal policies affecting the rail transport system.

In 1983, Bob returned to private law practice, representing the French high-speed rail enterprise, TGV. Later, from 1990 to 1997, he served as general counsel to the Association of American Railroads.

Those who worked in or with the railroad industry can attest to Bob's razor-sharp mind and analytical skills. He was able easily to grasp the most complex issues, and equally important, to fashion sensible proposals for addressing those issues. Without exception, Bob was the consummate gentleman, and a constant source of dry wit and good humor. He never shrank from discussing and dissecting the rail transport policy issues of the day, on or off Capitol Hill.

Throughout his professional career, Bob remained intensely proud of his French heritage, and an unapologetic Francophile, always ready to discuss French culture, cuisine, and of course, wine. He was truly un homme extraordinaire, and will be sorely missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

MR. TRACY JOHNSON HONORED WITH NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION AWARD

HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Tracy Johnson of Freeport, Illinois, a town in the congressional district I am privileged to represent. Tracy is a modern-day hero who works tirelessly to prevent crime in northern Illinois.

On September 29, 2000, Tracy joined seven other citizen crime fighters from around the country to receive the SBC Communications Award of Excellence in Crime Prevention. Nationally recognized comedian Joe Piscopo presented the award during the "2000 National Conference on Preventing Crime" in Washington, DC. This year's eight winners, selected from nominations across the country, have all made major impacts in their communities with their innovative crime prevention strategies.

Tracy received this special honor because he helped spearhead the Coalition for a Safe Community, a comprehensive partnership of organizations and people planning and acting to prevent crime throughout Freeport; started an education and action crime prevention pro-

gram for youth; and developed a job training and placement center for young mothers, among other activities.

I wish to thank Tracy and the numerous individuals with whom he works for their tireless efforts to make our communities safer.

NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, as the Republic of China's 89th National Day approaches, I wish to congratulate President Chen Shui-bian and the people of Taiwan for their continuing economic success and political reforms.

On this festive occasion, it is my hope that Taiwan and the Chinese mainland will soon begin a serious dialogue on reunification issues. The time is approaching for both sides to work out their differences and find a way to co-exist without antagonism. I am certain the people on Taiwan look forward to the day when they will be able to celebrate October 10th without the fear of a bellicose neighbor threatening not only their political freedom, but also their very lives.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Ambassador C.J. Chen, who recently returned to Washington after several years in Taipei. A distinguished diplomat, Ambassador Chen is now Taiwan's chief representative in the United States. Ambassador Chen is an industrious and experienced diplomat who has worked diligently for many years to strengthen ties between the United States and the people of Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan has become a beacon of democracy in an area of the world which has known authoritarianism for centuries. The upcoming celebration of National Day in the Republic of China is a timely reminder of the importance of our friendship and support for Taiwan.

AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 3, 2000

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, in 1998, Congress passed legislation to raise the H-1B caps to 115,000 visas per year. That legislation included important provisions to ensure that American workers would not be displaced by those holding H-1B visas. This included requirements for employers to file applications with the Department of Labor showing that they will pay the H-1B worker the "required wage rate" and that a strike or lockout was not occurring at the job site.

Unfortunately, that legislation was not enough and already the 115,000 H-1B visa limit for Fiscal Year 2000 has been reached. Tuesday, the Senate passed S. 2045 to increase the H-1B cap to 195,000 through 2003