

Dempsey was also a devoted family man. He is survived by his lovely wife, Linda, and his daughter Nikki.

Mr. Speaker, Mammoth Lakes has experienced many great changes over the decades that Tom Dempsey lived there. In fact, he seemed to be at the heart of them all. He truly was one of Mammoth Lakes' founding fathers. I join with his family, friends, and community in noting that he will be sorely missed.

May you rest in peace, Tom.

GENETIC NONDISCRIMINATION IN  
HEALTH INSURANCE AND EM-  
PLOYMENT ACT

**HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to announce the reintroduction of the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act.

Yesterday, scientific and scholarly articles were published that explored the implications of the mapping of the human genome. Their conclusions were nothing short of awe-inspiring. The human genome map is going to allow us to explore and better understand not only human health and disease, but the very development of our species. It has tremendous promise to allow us to conquer some of the most feared diseases known to humanity and perhaps to manipulate our very destiny. It is a story of our present, past, and future.

The Romans had a famous saying: *Scientia est potentia*. Knowledge is power. From *scientia* we derive the English word *science*. Like any kind of power, however, the scientific knowledge we are gaining about our genetic composition can be used for both positive and negative ends. If used wisely, it could be a tool for health and healing that shapes the very future of our race. If used foolishly, however, it could become a weapon to undermine individuals' futures, create further divisions among groups of people, and tear at the very fabric of our nation.

Over five years ago, I introduced the first legislation in Congress to ban genetic discrimination in health insurance. Since that time, science has rocketed ahead at a speed no one predicted, even within the genetics community. Social policy, however, has not kept pace. Congress addressed the use of genetic information in passing through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, but this law covered only some cases of health insurance discrimination. A comprehensive law is needed to protect Americans against the misuse of their genetic information.

For that reason, I am introducing the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act of 2001. I am pleased to be joined by my distinguished colleague, Representative CONSTANCE MORELLA, who represents the National Institutes of Health and has a long record of achievement and advocacy in the health care arena, and 150 bipartisan cosponsors. In the Senate, identical legislation is being introduced by Minority Leader TOM DASCHLE and Senators EDWARD KENNEDY, CHRISTOPHER DODD, and TOM HARKIN, as well as a long list of other distinguished Senators.

The events of the past few days have illustrated the urgent need for this legislation all too well. In addition to the events concerning the mapping of the human genome, we have learned that Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway performed genetic tests on employees without their knowledge or consent. The tests were conducted with the goal of identifying a predisposition for carpal tunnel syndrome and thereby undermining those employees' claims of job-related injuries. Unfortunately, this was not the first case of such genetic testing and potential discrimination. From the 1960s until 1993, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory secretly tested black employees for sickle cell anemia, until workers filed a lawsuit that resulted in a 1998 decision by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that this practice was unconstitutional. During the late 1990s, a study conducted by Northwestern National Life Insurance found that, by the year 2000, 15 percent of employers planned to check the genetic status of prospective employees and dependents before making employment offers. Last year, the American Management Association's survey of medical testing in the workplace found that 3% of responding employers admitted they tested employees for breast and/or colon cancer, 1% tested for sickle cell anemia, and a handful tested for Huntington's Disease. Moreover, 18% collected family medical histories, and about 5% stated that they use this information in making decisions about hiring, firing, and reassignment.

This legislation would prevent employers from using predictive genetic information to make employment decisions. It would further prevent employers from requesting or requiring that workers disclose genetic information or take a genetic test. Finally, employers are barred from disclosing genetic information without prior written informed consent.

The Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act would also address discrimination in health coverage based on genetic information. Too many Americans are deciding not to take a genetic test because they are afraid the information could be used by their insurer to deny them coverage or raise their rates to unaffordable levels. Vital medical decisions like these should be made based on solid science and personal reflection, not the fear of insurance discrimination. This legislation would prohibit insurers from requesting or requiring that an individual disclose genetic information. It would prevent health insurance companies from using this information to deny, cancel, refuse to renew, or change the terms or conditions of coverage. Finally, it would protect the privacy of genetic information by forbidding insurers from disclosing it to outside parties without prior written informed consent.

Simply having a given gene almost never means that a person will definitely develop a condition. Furthermore, every human being has between 5 and 50 genetic mutations that predispose him or her to disease. No one should lose their insurance coverage or their job based on the fact that she might develop cancer or some other disorder in 10, 20, or 30 years.

Genetic science has the potential to transform human health and open entirely new frontiers. We must safeguard the future of this research by ensuring that genetic information cannot be abused. Americans will not continue to support genetic science if they believe the knowledge gained will be used against them.

We can protect the future of genetic research and secure the rights of all Americans by passing the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that Congress passes this responsible, comprehensive genetic nondiscrimination and privacy law.

ON PRIME MINISTER CHRÉTIEN'S  
SPEECH TO THE OAS

**HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues the address delivered recently by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien before a special session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States. The speech outlined his vision for the upcoming Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, specifically how the nations of the hemisphere can "move ahead on an agenda of human progress and shared prosperity" to create "La Gran Familia of the Americas." These ideas are likely to serve as the guideposts for the bilateral and multilateral relationships evolving throughout the Americas, and I urge all of my colleagues to take the time to read the following speech.

ADDRESS TO A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES—FEBRUARY 5, 2001

The first address by a Canadian Prime Minister to the Organization of American States is an important milestone in the embrace by Canada of our hemispheric identity.

A path marked by our decision to join the OAS in 1990. By our presence at the first two Summits of the Americas in Miami and Santiago. By my leading two trade missions to Latin America in 1995 and 1998. By our hosting the OAS General Assembly in Windsor last June. By the meetings of hemispheric ministers of finance, environment and labour that will take place in Canada in the coming months. And by the inaugural meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas in Ottawa in just a few weeks.

In a couple of months, we will take the most important step on our journey, as we welcome the democratically elected leaders of the Americas to Quebec City for the Third Summit of the Americas.

The steps we have taken on our journey have run in parallel with the growing sense that there is more to the Americas than geography. A sense that we are more than just neighbours and friends. We are "Una Gran Familia." Each a proud individual nation to be sure. Secure in our unique identity and sovereignty. But at a higher level, a family. Who share aspirations and values. Who have embraced democracy, free markets and social justice. Who have taken enhancing the quality of life of all of our people as our common cause.

Recently I have spoken to many of your leaders about how we can move ahead on an agenda of human progress and shared prosperity. I will talk to President Bush about it later today. For those listening in Washington and beyond, I would like to outline how Canada sees our agenda unfolding for the Quebec City summit.

Let me begin by acknowledging the serious problems and challenges that stand between us and our goal. But I have unshakeable confidence in our collective resolve to meet

them head on. That is, after all, what brought us together in Miami and Santiago, and will sustain us as we move ahead.

The gap between our rich and poor remains too large. And in the new economy, we face the added challenge of preventing a digital divide. Our emerging democracies lack strong institutions. Our social policies have room for improvement.

Many look upon the powerful forces of economic globalization and technological change as the source of these profound problems. But Canada looks upon them as the key to solving them. To creating untold opportunities and shared prosperity from Tierra Del Fuego to Baffin Island.

We should neither fear the challenge of globalization, nor become blinded by its allure. Rather, we must develop the tools so that all of La Gran Familia can reap its full potential. We must, in short, adopt an agenda that puts people first. That recognizes that our citizens can reach their full potential only when their safety is guaranteed, their rights are respected and their access to economic and social opportunities is assured.

In Quebec City, we will do just that. We have taken as our themes three complementary areas: strengthening democracy, creating prosperity and realizing human potential. And we want to harness the information highway to support this agenda. To foster "connectivity" throughout La Gran Familia.

Democracy and the effective rule of law are the guardians of human security. But such security is unlikely to be sustained in conditions of poverty and unequal opportunity. Realizing human potential through effective social policies is the guarantee that will allow democracy and prosperity to flourish.

Democracy has clearly been on the rise in the Americas over the past decade. But its progress has been neither constant nor equal. And in many countries it remains fragile. Canada wishes to see a clear and forceful commitment to strengthening democracy and fostering social inclusion in Quebec City. Which extends to our democratic institutions, our electoral machinery, and the impartiality of justice. To protecting human rights and freedom of expression. To fighting drug trafficking and corruption.

It will mean empowering local governments and safeguarding the rights of minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants and the disabled. And making the strongest possible pledge to promoting the legal, economic and social equality of women and men.

In Santiago, we formally launched negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas. And we challenged ourselves to achieve it by 2005.

The goal of achieving an FTAA by 2005 is one to which Canada is deeply committed—by temperament and history. We understand the connection between freer trade, prosperity and social progress. And we see an FTAA—with increased transparency and clearer rules—as the best way of forging that same connection throughout the hemisphere. For big nations and for small.

By the same token, we understand that it cannot be about trade alone. It is not just a contract among corporations and governments. First and foremost, it is an agreement among—and about—people. It must be holistic in nature. It must include improving the efficiency of financial markets, protecting labour rights and the environment, and having better development cooperation. It must include engaging the private sector, international financial institutions and civil society in a dialogue directed at encouraging greater corporate social responsibility.

These are the sorts of challenges we will be addressing in Quebec.

Canada also believes that progress in strengthening democratic institutions and increasing prosperity in the new economy must go hand in hand with actions to enhance social and economic inclusion. That will increase access to education and skills development. Promote life-long learning. And broaden access to quality health care and effective disease-prevention programs.

And we must achieve this in a way that respects the value of the diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious strands that, woven together, make up the fabric of La Gran Familia.

Canada is also very much focused on bridging the digital divide in the Americas. As the information revolution continues, governments have a pivotal role to play in determining how these new technologies evolve. And in ensuring that their ability to bridge vast distances, expand access to knowledge and increase economic productivity is shared equitably.

In Canada we have taken great strides in this area by forming creative partnerships that have allowed us to connect all of our public schools and communities at relatively low cost.

In many ways, our meeting in Quebec City will be about coming to terms with an increasingly engaged civil society and its concerns over the powerful forces that are shaping our modern world.

Canada believes that openness and transparency are vital to building public acceptance and legitimacy for our undertakings. In preparing for the Summit, Canada has engaged civil society organizations at the national level. We have also promoted regional consultations with committed and serious organizations, including meetings here at the OAS, and establishing web-sites for the sharing of information.

Canada worked hard to make the OAS General Assembly in Windsor a more open event, allowing our citizens to see an historic discussion on the nature of democracy and its status among our membership. We must commit ourselves to working with patience, persistence and reason to build a hemispheric future full of promise. A future that takes account of the concerns expressed by our peoples and the impact that the new forces at work in the global economy are having on our citizens. As host of the first Summit of the Americas in the new millennium, Canada will do its utmost to promote openness and transparency, while ensuring productive discourse among governments.

I wish to conclude today on a note of strong support for the OAS. We can all be proud of its accomplishments. The leadership of Secretary General Gárriga has been inspired and responsive to the wishes of our membership.

The past year has illustrated the relevance of the OAS. From helping to shore up democracy to resolving complicated border disputes. From ensuring electoral fairness to promoting technical cooperation.

More than any other single institution, the OAS will be charged with acting upon the mandates we endorse at Quebec City. To do this it will require a tangible expression of our political will and a commitment to its fiscal health. Our foreign ministers should actively address this issue at this year's OAS General Assembly in Costa Rica.

My friends, working with you to make our vision of La Gran Familia of the Americas a reality is a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy. For many years, the Maple Leaf flag did not hang in this historic room. Cana-

dians felt that our national journey was taking a different path than that of the Americas. Those days are gone . . . forever.

Let us now journey together into the new millennium. With shared conviction, strength and purpose.

Obrigado.

Muchas gracias y hasta pronto en Quebec.

#### HONORING JOHN BURNS

#### HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2001*

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the achievements of John Burns, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Santa Clara County. I would like to recognize Mr. Burns' extraordinary and tireless service to the people of Santa Clara County and thank him for his 32 years as the Housing Authority's Executive Director.

John Burns started as the Santa Clara County Housing Authority's first employee in 1968; the Agency now employs a staff of 275. The Housing Authority currently assists over 13,000 families, seniors and disabled in the Section 8 Program and over 2,000 seniors and disabled in the Property Management Program. In addition, the Agency manages 50 duplexes at the Arturo Ochoa Migrant Housing Center in Gilroy, California, which houses 100 families during the harvest season. In the winter months, the center is used for housing homeless families.

Under John Burns' dedicated leadership, the Housing Authority diversified its many services to the community to include leasing of housing on the open market, new housing construction, and the management of housing for low income families, disabled and the elderly. The Housing Authority also ensures, through sales of bonds, that new construction in the area includes affordable rental units. The successful effort to pass Measure A in the November 1999 election allowed the Housing Authority greater opportunities to provide affordable housing in areas where it is needed and where the agency had previously not been able to build.

Among Housing Authorities, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority has one of the highest profiles in the country and is considered a leader when it comes to creating innovative, affordable housing.

A leader in the field as well as in the community, Mr. Burns has served on the Board of Directors for the National Leased Housing Association as well as the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition. He is a member and former President of the Northern California Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies, and a member and former President of the Executive Directors Association of Northern California and Nevada.

John Burns was once quoted in a news article that "I would rather achieve public visibility through results of our programs . . . not public relations." This "low profile leader" is one of the most respected Housing Authority Directors in the County, a visionary public servant, and a valued friend.