

TRIBUTE TO DAN B. WALDEN

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 9, 2002

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special citizen in my district. Dan B. Walden has provided continuous efforts on behalf of children and education throughout his community and throughout the state of California. Dan Walden graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a bachelor's degree in economics. For the past 33 years he has worked at Bank of America in industrial engineering, management, planning and project management. He has recently retired. Dan Walden has served as a school board member in Walnut Creek since 1988, serving as president in both 1994 and 1995. Along with this he was extremely active in the Contra Costa County School Boards, as its president in 1991 and 1996. Not only has he served his community, but the entire State of California as well. Dan Walden was a member of the California School Boards Association's Delegate Assembly since 1991. He has also served on numerous association committees. He served as chair of the CSBA Legislative Committee and Schools and Media Crisis Communications Task Force. Dan Walden has also served as chair of the Annual Education Conference Planning Committee in 1997. His desire to help did not stay in California as he has participated on the National School Boards Association's Policies and Resolutions Committee and the NSBA Pacific Region Bylaws and Regional Nominating Committees. Apart from the School Boards Associations he has also been active in community initiatives including the Contra Costa County Partners in Education, Project R.E.A.D. and the Walnut Creek Library Foundation, which he served as its first president. Dan Walden is now the outgoing President of the California School Boards Association for the 2002 year. I am very grateful for all of the hard work that Dan Walden has done in our community, the State of California and our country.

THE MILITARY PHYSICIAN EQUITY ACT

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 9, 2002

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for the Military Physician Equity Act. This legislation will level the playing field for Uniformed Services (Title 37) physicians so that they have the option of receiving the same annuities as civil service physicians (NIH, HHS etc.) and Veterans Affairs (VA) physicians.

Currently, civil service physicians (Title 5) and VA physicians (Title 38) are allowed to have their recruitment/retention bonuses counted as part of their "high-three" for purposes of determining their retirement annuity. The "high-three" is the system whereby one's highest three consecutive salaries are used to determine an annuity. By allowing for recruitment/retention bonuses to be counted as one's salary, a retiree receives a bigger retire-

ment check each month from his former employer. We do not feel it is just that Title 5 and Title 38 physicians should have received this benefit while military physicians do not. Our bill does not create any unique benefit; it only allows Title 37 military physicians to receive the same benefit that other Federal physicians receive.

In addition to the fairness issue, it is also a matter of good policy. The government cannot pay physicians on the same scale as physicians employed in hospitals, HMOs, and universities. Consequently, enhancing the benefits of our military physicians is an essential way to retain our best doctors. Passage of this bill would help offset the loss of income for Federal physicians if they choose to remain a public servant. This important legislation helps ensure that the government can recruit and retain highly trained and well-qualified physicians and I urge my colleagues to support it.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
PLACER HERALD'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY**HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 9, 2002

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to recognize the 150th Anniversary of my hometown newspaper, the Placer Herald, which traces its roots to the first printing press used in California.

On September 11, 1852, the first edition of the Placer Herald was published for 25 cents per copy in Auburn, California, not far from where gold had been discovered a few years earlier. Established by Tabb Mitchell, Richard Rust, and John McElroy to serve the mining community in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the newspaper was housed in a plain, board-sided storefront office. As an interesting historical note, the paper was printed on California's very first printing press—the one that Sam Brannan had brought to publish The California Star.

In 1892, a new, two-story brick building measuring 30 feet by 75 feet was erected on the site of the Placer Herald's original headquarters. After changing hands many times over the subsequent years, new owners moved the paper in 1963 to Rocklin, California, where it continues to be published.

I wish to commend the modern Placer Herald for its ongoing service to the people of Rocklin and neighboring communities. For 150 years, it has maintained its heritage of reporting local news to a segment of California's Gold Country. The newspaper serves a valuable purpose by both reflecting and shaping the community it serves. As we celebrate the Placer Herald's sesquicentennial, let me add my wishes that the newspaper will flourish for another century and a half!

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS
MUST STOP BLOCKING SENSIBLE
WILDFIRE PREVENTION EFFORTS**HON. DOUG BEREUTER**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 9, 2002

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from the August 3, 2002, Norfolk Daily News. The editorial emphasizes the need for proper forest management in order to prevent disastrous wildfires. Unfortunately, as the editorial indicates, all too often sensible management plans designed to reduce wildfire threats have been delayed or defeated by environmental activists.

[From the Norfolk (NE) Daily News, Aug. 3, 2002]

ACTIVISTS HAVE TO SHARE BLAME

The extreme environmental groups accused of contributing to the wildfires in the West this year are scrambling like mad to say it wasn't their fault. But as a recent report shows, they in fact have a lot to answer for:

The report comes from the U.S. Forest Service, and as press accounts note, it shows that administrative appeals delayed almost half of 326 projects last year that were aimed at lowering the wildfire threat through the hacking away of underbrush and small trees. Those making the appeals, of course, were more often than not environmental groups.

In response, the environmental groups maintain that what they're actually doing is trying to save the forests from the awful, dreadful timber industry, as if anytime the timber industry profits, life on this planet has somehow worsened. It's true that removing the biggest and oldest trees does not serve fire-prevention purposes, but that's not what the projects aimed to do. And meanwhile, it's also true that the preferred solution of environmental activists—controlled burns—is often no solution at all.

The problem with controlled burns, in addition to being extraordinarily expensive, is that the unwise suppression of natural fires over many decades has led to a buildup of what wildfires like to feed on, namely all that underbrush and all those small trees.

The consequence is that the burns cannot be controlled, as was amply illustrated two years ago when one such attempt destroyed 200 homes in Los Alamos, N.M. That burn was also mismanaged, but there are fewer and fewer stretches of forest where even the best management can be assured of keeping such burns from getting out of hand.

Thinning the forests mechanically is not only safe and effective and good for the future grandeur of the forests, but not nearly so expensive, because the timber industry helps foot the bill.

Delays in the process have to stop if we are not to see many repeat performances for this year's destruction.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN B. BEAUDOIN

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 9, 2002

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to your attention an outstanding individual, John B. Beaudoin. Mr. Beaudoin has been chosen as the 2002 recipient of the

Frank W. Kennedy Memorial Award. During the 1960s, Frank Kennedy served with distinction as the president of the Board of Directors of the Lansingburgh Boys & Girls Club. This award, named in his honor, is given to a member of the community that embodies the characteristics of Frank Kennedy—integrity, generosity, and loyalty to the community.

The 2002 recipient of this award, Mr. Beaudoin, is a graduate of Syracuse University with a masters in social work and, for the last 34 years, has been working for the Rensselaer County Commissioner of Social Services. With his unparalleled concern for youth and the elderly, John Beaudoin has used his role in the Department of Social Services to improve conditions within his community. He has developed various services such as homeless shelters, day care initiatives, and dealt with child protective issues, to name just a few of his accomplishments.

John Beaudoin has distinguished himself within the Department of Social Services, as well as the many affiliated organizations he has worked with. John has developed numerous programs to serve every facet of the community and is certainly deserving of this award.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to join with the Lansingburgh Boys & Girls Club in honoring John Beaudoin. I am sure that John's admirable efforts on behalf of the local community will continue well into the future.

CONTINUING CRISIS IN FOSTER CARE

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 9, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis affecting the 500,000 children in foster care in this country. Day after day, there are reported cases of sexual abuse, neglect, and even death of foster children, all while under the care of the state child welfare agencies. Social workers remove children from their homes because of abuse and/or neglect. Yet neither safety nor stability is ensured by child protective services interventions.

In the following article, The Washington Post reports that a 7-year-old boy, a ward of the District's Child and Family Services Agency, was warehoused in a group home for older foster children, where 12-year-old boys later admitted to sodomizing him. Additionally, officials confirmed that other boys were sexually abused at that facility and at a separate group home for mentally retarded foster children.

But severe problems in the foster care system exist in many states and jurisdictions beyond Washington D.C. Articles and reports that I will provide in subsequent extensions document how children in foster homes, children's shelters, and group homes are sometimes subject to even greater abuse as a result of those placements.

A strong federal law passed in 1980 establishes tough accountability standards to protect children in foster care. It is evident that there has not been sufficient oversight at the state or federal level, and that billions of dollars are being spent, often in violation of federal law, to perpetuate a system that fails to

provide children and their families with necessary services and safeguards.

The circumstances described in these reports underscore the need for lawmakers, practitioners, and advocates to work together without delay to reform the child welfare system and to review the enforcement and implementation of our foster care laws without further delay.

The article follows:

[From the Washington Post, Aug. 1, 2002]

D.C. SPEEDS GROUP HOME CHANGE; MOVE FOLLOWS NEW REPORT OF ASSAULTS ON BOYS

The director of the District's child welfare agency yesterday ordered her staff to speed up the removal of children under 12 from foster group homes, as officials learned of another unreported case of alleged sexual abuse involving youths at one of the privately run facilities.

The agency acknowledged yesterday that it did not remove an 11-year-old mentally retarded boy from one of the homes until nearly three months after he reported being sexually abused by a 15-year-old resident.

A city social worker learned of the April 9 incident shortly after it occurred but did not report it until July 2, city officials said. Police then interviewed the 11-year-old and his 12-year-old roommate, who also reported being sexually assaulted, and removed them from the home. The alleged perpetrator is still at the facility.

The case is the latest in a string of such incidents that were not promptly reported to authorities. Last week, city officials said that a 7-year-old boy was sodomized by two 12-year-olds at another group home in April and that the home's staff did not report the abuse until two days later. This week, officials said that home also failed to tell government monitors about a 1999 abuse incident.

The D.C. Child and Family Services Agency announced yesterday that it has strengthened its procedures on the reporting of abuse and that it will refer for prosecution any caregiver or employee who fails to make such a report.

More than 400 District foster children are in congregate care, as group homes and other institutions are called, and the agency's policy is to limit the facilities' use to older children and those with special medical needs.

Yesterday, Olivia A. Golden, the agency's director, ordered an inventory to determine how many group home residents are younger than 12. She ordered her staff to review those cases and prioritize the children for placement with foster families or relatives or for reunification with birth parents. A key hurdle to that effort, however, is a shortage of foster families, especially families who are trained to offer therapeutic services for children with intensive needs.

Golden's order comes one year after the agency emerged from six years of federal court control, the legacy of a 1989 lawsuit filed over poor conditions in the child welfare system. The agency is trying to improve its regulation of private foster care institutions, which have never been licensed because the city failed for 15 years to implement a 1986 licensure law.

"We knew we were coming into a situation where congregate care was substantially overused, and we knew that group home providers did not have enough resources and staff," said Golden, who took over the agency in June 2001.

Golden said she was "surprised and saddened" by the severity of unreported abuse. "The fact that we're still having tragedies is what we have to change," she said.

Marcia Robinson Lowry, the New York-based lead counsel in the class-action suit against the District, said yesterday that she has asked the agency's court-appointed monitor to investigate the recent incidents.

"We had been focusing on children 6 and under, but it is clear that the problem is well beyond that and that children under 12 should not be in group home facilities," Lowry said.

In the latest abuse case, a police report obtained by The Washington Post indicates that during an April 9 bed check at the group home, in the 800 block of Floral Place NW, staff members observed the 15-year-old running out of the two younger boys' bedroom with his pajama pants open.

The 11-year-old told the staff that the older boy had touched him on the buttocks, according to the police report.

The report states that when a detective went to investigate on July 2, the boy said he had been forced to perform oral sex on the 15-year-old. The boy's roommate corroborated the account and said his penis was grabbed by the teenager on the same night.

The 11-year-old "stated that this has occurred several times and each time he has reported it to the staff of the group home," the police report said.

Moderate mental retardation has been diagnosed in all three boys. The 11-year-old is living temporarily with his family while awaiting an alternative placement, and the 12-year-old has been placed with a foster family.

The group home is run by a nonprofit contractor, Community Multi Services Inc. It operates five homes that serve up to 18 mentally retarded foster children, as well as seven care facilities and 15 apartments for adults with developmental disabilities. It is paid nearly \$3,500 a month for each foster child.

Constance A. Reese, the contractor's program director, said her staff interviewed the three boys and had them seen by a doctor but determined that "nothing took place with these children." She said the staff notified the three boys' social workers and sent an incident report to a government monitor.

Mindy L. Good, a spokeswoman for the child welfare agency, said that the 15-year-old boy's social worker learned of the incident April 10 but "completely failed to report this until July." The social worker, Emmanuel K. Baah, called the agency's abuse and neglect hotline in July after his supervisor ordered him to do so, Good said. The hotline staff then contacted the police.

Good said Baah violated agency policy on the reporting of abuse by not immediately calling the hotline or informing his supervisor. She said that the actions of the group home, the monitor and the social workers for the two younger boys also are being reviewed.

Baah, who has worked for the city since 1992, said he received a dismissal letter from the agency yesterday. He said the group home told him about the incident April 18, right before he went on a six week vacation. He said he did not call the hotline because group home employees were reviewing the alleged abuse and "because they were not sure whether it was substantiated or not."

For years, city law has required health care providers, law enforcement officers, educators and social service and day-care workers to immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect to the police or the child welfare agency.

Group home regulations that took effect in September require any staff member who knows of possible abuse or neglect to call the hotline immediately and submit a written report within 24 hours to the child's social worker and the child welfare agency.