

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

MARIJUANA MISINFORMATION

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 11, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House a recent editorial by John P. Walters, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Writing in the San Francisco Chronicle on September 1, 2002, Director Walters commented on the widespread campaign of misinformation being waged on the issue of medical marijuana by those who favor drug legalization. Far from being a harmless drug with potential medicinal use, John Walters argues that the marijuana available to teenagers today is far stronger than that consumed by the Woodstock generation.

But rather than presenting a united front against the dangers of this drug, the debate over medicinal use is only sowing confusion among parents and adolescents alike. Meanwhile, emergency room admissions and treatment enrollments involving teenagers for marijuana use is rising sharply. In recent years, drug overdoses have overtaken homicides as the leading causes of death among teenagers.

Regrettably, many in the media have bought into the “compassionate” argument that severely ill people need the option of smoking marijuana to alleviate their symptoms. While running counter to common sense, this argument has been strong enough to support ballot initiatives in several States.

Adolescent use of marijuana is a serious problem with widespread ramifications. There needs to be more voices like Director Walters entering the debate to counteract the misguided, harmful, and misleading arguments being fostered and presented by groups preying on people’s compassion as a way to open the door for wholesale drug legalization.

For review by my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I request that Director Walter’s editorial be inserted in full at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, Sept. 1, 2002]

MARIJUANA TODAY—SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

(By John P. Walters)

The public debate over marijuana has been plagued by difficulties, not the least of which is a lack of accurate information. Any policy debate that draws activists promoting their cause is likely to suffer from confusion. But the debate over marijuana has been further muddled by careless or gullible media reports. Too often, journalists are fed misleading advocacy information that they swallow whole.

For instance, one columnist recently charged that worry about the increased potency of today’s marijuana is wildly overstated. In fact, he calls such claims “whoppers,” because the active ingredient THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) “has only doubled to 4.2 percent from about 2 percent from 1980 to 1997.”

No wonder the public has trouble getting a clear picture. His source for this information is the Marijuana Policy Project, a group of marijuana legalizers relying on a study that covers just those years. Unfortunately, the columnist did not check his facts with the Drug Enforcement Administration, which monitors scientific studies of marijuana.

What does the DEA analysis show? In 1974, the average THC content of marijuana was less than 1 percent. But by 1999, potency averaged 7 percent. Further, unlike the old “ditchweed” and bulk marijuana of the past, there are now far more powerful products to entice youth. The THC of today’s sinsemilla averages 14 percent and ranges as high as 30 percent.

Even stronger stuff is on the way. The point is that the potency of available marijuana has not merely “doubled,” but increased as much as 30 times.

Some advocates argued that this increased potency is actually good news, because kids will simply use less. But the data don’t support that interpretation. The number of tons of marijuana sold in America is increasing, not decreasing. The number of people seeking medical treatment for marijuana abuse is increasing rapidly, not decreasing. In fact, the number of adolescent marijuana admissions increased 260 percent between 1992 and 1999.

The stakes in this debate are high, especially for young people. So widespread is marijuana in today’s schools that nearly half of all high school seniors report having tried it by graduation, while a smaller but still alarming number report using it every month—even everyday. This is a drug that, after all, produces withdrawal symptoms, is associated with learning and memory disturbances and produces behavioral problems for those who become dependent.

It’s time to face facts: Today’s marijuana is a more dangerous drug than the pot of the Woodstock era. It creates tolerance (you need increasing doses to achieve the same effect), and at high doses it induces paranoia or even violence.

The haze of misinformation grows even thicker when it comes to the issue of “medical” marijuana. On the face of it, the idea that desperately sick people could be helped by smoking an intoxicating weed seems unlikely, even medieval. It is, in fact, absurd.

Smoking marijuana, even if it weren’t psychotropic, hardly seems healthy. The threat of lung damage, not to mention exposure to carcinogens and more toxins than those found in tobacco smoke, increases with every “hit.” But no less than the New York Times editorialized recently in support of medical marijuana. Amazingly, the paper termed it “life-saving” and claimed it represented “mainstream medical opinion.”

Who have they been listening to? Perhaps the source was the same Marijuana Policy Project, which paid for a full-page ad in the Times on March 6, 2000. The MPP claimed scientific support for medical marijuana from the prestigious National Academy of Sciences, whose Institute of Medicine, MPP claimed, “urged the federal government to provide seriously ill people immediate access to medical marijuana on a case-by-case basis.”

But nowhere in the IOM report can you find this “urging.” Quite the contrary: the IOM throws cold water on smoked-marijuana enthusiasts, stating clearly, “Marijuana is not a modern medicine.”

Does the IOM regard marijuana as a helpful “medicine” for the afflicted? Not at all. “In no way,” the researchers continued, “do we wish to suggest that patients should, under any circumstances, medicate themselves with marijuana.” In fact, they state that any experimental subjects must be notified that they are using “a harmful drug delivery system,” adding that short-term experiments might be conducted only after the “documented failure of all approved medicines” and only under strict medical supervision.

But while the IOM wishes to study the ingredients in marijuana, the purpose of these clinical trials (now being conducted through the University of California at San Diego) is not to investigate the potential medical benefit of smoking the stuff. As the researchers put it, their purpose “would not be to develop marijuana as a licensed drug.”

These facts place us far away from efforts to justify the distribution of marijuana cigarettes through cannabis buyers clubs. Real and lasting damage can follow “experimentation” with marijuana, as reflected in the fact that marijuana abuse is today the major reason for young people to seek drug treatment.

Yet, listening to some in the media you are still likely to hear that marijuana “isn’t such a big deal,” and that even the National Academy of Sciences endorses it “for medicinal purposes.” Now you know better.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO AMANDA DAVIO AND ST. MARTHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 11, 2002

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Amanda Davio and her classmates at St. Martha Catholic School in Okemos, Michigan, for their special efforts to thank the thousands of volunteers and emergency workers who responded to the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon here in Washington, D.C.

Last year, soon after those tragic attacks, I asked children throughout Michigan’s 8th Congressional District to write letters and cards to the military men and women who were preparing for the war against terrorism. St. Martha students responded to that request along with hundreds of other students. Several of the schools, like St. Martha and Amanda Davio’s kindergarten class, also sent along letters and cards for the workers at the attack sites.

These were forwarded to the Red Cross and eventually Amanda’s card made it into the hands of New York City Police Officer Steve Tarricone. Officer Tarricone contacted the school, eventually traveled there to meet the students, especially Amanda, whose greeting has inspired him at a time when his spirits were very low.

Since then, the Davio family has visited New York and the two families have become

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

good friends, developing a special bond born out of the shared experience of dealing with the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

The remarkable story of this new friendship is best told in the words of Amanda's father, Christopher Davio who wrote:

With the approach of the anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, I'd like to relate an uplifting side to the story and how, out of such horrific happenings; blessings and new relationships can grow.

Shortly after 09/11/01, U.S. Representative MIKE ROGERS sent out a request to the school children of his district to write cards and letters to the rescue workers at Ground Zero, the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania. My daughters' school, St. Martha Catholic School in Okemos, like I'm sure many other schools in the area, answered the call and each class composed cards, which were delivered to Mr. ROGERS for forwarding to the workers.

The cards followed a circuitous route and my daughter Amanda Davio's (age 5 and in Kindergarten at the time) card ended up posted in a Red Cross tent at the Staten Island Landfill, along with hundreds of other cards and notes. There in early March of this year, the construction paper card caught the eye of an NYPD officer, Steven Tarricone. The card, with a 5 year olds rendition of the American Flag and the words "Thank You" on the cover had a simple but profound message inside, "You Make Me Feel Proud." Officer Tarricone saw that the card, signed Amanda Davio, was stamped with the school's name and address on the back and wishing to express his gratitude for the support and comfort that the card and all the other cards and notes had given him, placed it in his pocket and took it home.

Steve showed the card to his wife and his partner. He had to put in long days and was drawing extra shifts while the city still struggled with the aftermath of the devastating attack. After a few weeks, he put together a package and sent it to the St. Martha School. Inside the package was a thank you card in which he wrote a little about himself and his job. He described the day he found Amanda's card, he was assigned to the Staten Island Landfill and as he said, "My job for the day was to sift through the debris to try to find anything that would bring closure to the family members of victims of the World Trade Center." He thanked Amanda, her classmates and the staff at St. Martha School for their support and for taking the time out of their day to thank all the rescue workers. Steve included in the package five pictures he took on the days immediately following the disaster and took the time to describe on the back of each picture what was shown. He also sent along an NYPD cap, arm patch and ID cards with the request that they be given to Amanda.

Mrs. Helen Hillman, Principal of St. Martha, related to me how moved she was as she opened the package and after discussing the contents with other staff members, Amanda's teacher, Kara Lampke, suggested she present the items to Amanda at the upcoming spring program that the school children were to perform the next week. When next she saw me at the school, Mrs. Hillman told me to be sure and have my camera ready at the end of the program as Amanda was going to be presented with something. Being the proud parent that we are, my wife and I videoed and photographed throughout the show and when the time came for Mrs. Hillman to present the items and relate the story, sat there stunned by the thoughtfulness of Steve's reply. For him to express his gratitude in such a way and to know that someone took the time to show all the chil-

dren how important their support was to the workers and victims of September 11 was one of the most significant events in my life.

A few days later, Officer Tarricone called the school to see if they had received the package and talked to Mrs. Hillman at length about what the cards had meant to him and other workers at the sites. He said he was amazed at the outpouring of support shown by the entire county and was moved by the fact that Amanda's card had come from a kindergarten from halfway across the county.

My wife and I began to put together a few things to send back to Officer Tarricone and his family and after videoing greetings from Amanda and her sister Angela (8) and Alissa (14), included the tape of the presentation and the school program along with other cards, photos and expressions of thanks.

When Steve got that package, he called to share his excitement with us and told "in the past 24 hours, I've watched the tape at least 25 times." He had shown it to his mother and sister and they were all so happy about our reaction to his reply.

We kept in contact over the next few weeks and Steve told us that he had gone to the Policemen's Benevolent Association for permission to have Amanda named an Honorary NYPD Officer. After receiving permission, he had a plaque made and sent it along with more photos, commemorative pins and the arm patches from each of the units of the NYPD to Amanda.

In the meantime, Mrs. Hillman called our local papers and news outlets and a story was run on the front page of the Community News as well as a news segment on WLAD which was aired as a local connection to the official closing of the clean up effort at Ground Zero.

Since then, Mrs. Hillman has traveled to New York on a trip that she had planned long before all this developed. Steve met her at the airport with a red rose and welcomed her and her a red rose and welcomed her and her family. He arranged a visit to police headquarters and Ground Zero for all of them.

We took our family to New York at the end of August to meet Steve and his family (wife Michelle and daughter Ashley). Upon our arrival at a nearby hotel Wednesday, August 28, we called Steve and he immediately came to meet us. Greeting him for the first time was like seeing a close family member after a long absence. Amanda ran into his arms and the smiles lit up the whole lobby of the hotel. Steve took us to his house and we met Michelle and Ashley. Steve had a shirt made for Amanda in the style of his uniform, complete with her name and honorary badge number as well as NYPD arm patches and badge insignia.

We saw Steve again the next day at his house and met with a reporter and photographer from the Long Island Catholic, a diocese newspaper who had heard of the story from one of their staffers with family here in Okemos. After visiting with the representatives from the paper, we did a little touring locally then went to dinner with Steve and his family.

On Friday, Steve and Michelle met us at our hotel and took us into Manhattan. He had arranged a tour similar to the one given to Mrs. Hillman on her trip earlier in the month. We got to lower Manhattan about an hour before our appointment at One Police Plaza and while driving near Ground Zero, saw a fire station at the corner of Water and Wall Streets. Steve asked us to wait in the car while he went in and talked to the firemen on duty. The firemen, after hearing the story from Steve, welcomed us into the station, gave us a tour of the fire trucks and equipment and posed for pictures with the

girls in fire suits and helmets. We paid our respects to the fallen members of the station at a memorial on the sidewalk in front of the firehouse, thanked the two firemen for the tour and their welcome, and went on to our appointment at Police Headquarters.

Pulling up to One Police Plaza was like entering a military post. Concrete barriers are placed so that only one vehicle can enter or leave the lot at a time and a large sanitation truck blocks the opening, pulling away to allow access after getting clearance from the guard post, then moving back to block the entrance. Security was tight! Upon entering the building, we passed through metal detectors and were photographed and given passes to wear on our outermost clothing.

We were all escorted to the Division of Community Affairs where we met Detective John Rowen and his daughter Ashleen. Detective Rowen took us to a conference room where we also met Detective Eugene Canapi. Gene had heard the story and came in on his day off to show us a presentation that the department had put together as a historical documentary on the events of September 11, 2001. Both men expressed their welcomes to us and told us how much the cards and letters from across the nation had meant to them. John said that of all the cards he had seen, it never occurred to him to answer back and he was glad that Steve had shown such thoughtfulness to reply to Amanda.

After the presentation, reporters from the New York Post and Newsday interviewed us and took photos of Steve and Amanda in their "uniforms!" We met Deputy Commissioner Patrick (Division of Community Affairs) and were greeted and treated like VIP's by everyone.

Detective Rowen and his daughter took us all down to the waterfront near Battery Park where we boarded a Police Harbor Patrol boat and were given a tour of the area from the water. We rode under the Brooklyn Bridge, out to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. I'm not usually an emotionally demonstrative person but I had tears in my eyes when I saw the Statue. It was my first visit to New York City and had never seen it before. I remember thinking back to 9/11/01 and hearing the threats made to her after the horrible attacks. I was sure at that time that I'd never see it in person and was truly overcome at seeing her from the boat. I imagine that is how my ancestors felt coming over from Italy at the turn of the last century.

While on the Harbor Patrol boat, I talked with one of the officers that made up the crew of three. He had no idea who we were and when I told him the story he told me how glad he was that Steve had replied in the way that he had. He described the events of that day and how they ferried survivors and rescue workers to the site and told me how much they all appreciated the support shown by the rest of the country after the attack. He said that the Red Cross had given him a box of cookies sent by some school children from New Jersey and that he still kept the note that they had enclosed in his wallet, nearly a year afterwards.

After the harbor tour, we returned to One Police Plaza and were told that Police Commissioner Ray Kelly would like to meet Amanda. We were absolutely floored! Steve was really nervous as we waited to be escorted into the Commissioner's office, as he had never met him before either. Detective Rowen remarked that he doubted that many officers with Steve's experience (he's been on the force for seven years) had been invited to meet the Commissioner in his office. Commissioner Kelly greeted us warmly and posed for pictures with Amanda and Steve and a group photo with all of us. He gave us a brief

tour of his office and explained that his desk was Teddy Roosevelt's from his tour as Commissioner in the late 1800's.

After leaving the Commissioner's office, Detective Rowen took us to see Ground Zero. After seeing it so often in news coverage, it was an uncanny feeling to actually be at the site. I said a quiet prayer for the victims and listened while Detective Rowen related his memories from the day of the attack. He was at the command center when the first plane hit and was helping victims at the foot of the buildings when the first tower fell. There is a brief shot of him running up the street in one of the CNN videos as the cloud of debris follows behind. He said it was like a wall of water, he ducked into a side street and the wave of dirt followed him around the corner. A nearby visitor asked what is was like to be surrounded by the smoke and he said it wasn't smoke, it was more like dirt and fine particles of concrete dust that followed him and eventually covered him like so many of the photos we all saw from the news that day.

The site now looks more like a construction site and an individual happening along on it today would probably wonder what was going to be built there. The sides of the hole go straight down for probably five or six stories and you can see each level of the sub-structure of the underground areas across the way. We could see where the subway tunnel was going north from the site. For someone who had never seen the World Trade Center, it was hard to imagine just how tall it was. Standing at Ground Zero now, you are surrounded by skyscrapers, the tallest of which is 54 stories. I tried to explain to my daughters that if they took that building and placed another one just like it on top that would have been about the same height as the 110 stories of the Twin Towers. Many of the buildings still show damage from the attack and collapse of WTC. Still the clean up has been a heroic effort in and of itself.

My family thanked Detective Rowen as we left and my middle daughter, Angela (8) exchanged e-mail addresses with Ashleen planning to stay in contact. As we drove back to Long Island we all were just amazed at the events of the day. Reflecting on the tragedy of last year and remembering the expressions of welcome and gratitude from each and every person we met.

When we had first discussed going to New York City to meet Steve and his family, he had told us that when we got there he was going to throw a big party. As the plans for the trip grew, we found out that his daughter Ashley's second birthday (September 1) would be celebrated on Saturday, August 31 and that he was having his whole family over. We picked that weekend to go so that we could meet all of them and make sure that they knew just how special we thought that Steve and Michelle were. Saturday dawned with a story in the New York Post about Amanda and Steve and how a small thank you card and its magnificent reply reached halfway across the country to bring them together. As we arrived at Steve and Michelle's, we were welcomed by all of their family and friends as a new part of the family. Steve's mother Linda had gifts for each of our girls, as did his Aunt Val & Uncle Len. We got to meet his partner and other friends from the force. About halfway through the party, we all heard the sound of bagpipes tuning up. Steve had told me that there was another surprise coming and as he called us all to the patio, he announced his Lieutenant and other members of the Emerald Society, NYPD's pipe and drum corps. They gave a short concert for all of us in honor of Ashley's birthday and Amanda's visit. Once again the emotions overflowed to hear the patriotic medleys and other songs from the

bagpipes and drum. It was a great way to cap off another extraordinary day.

Our last full day in New York was spent touring the city like normal visitors. We left Steven and his family to give them a chance to spend Ashley's birthday alone while we went to the observation deck of the Empire State Building, drove down Broadway and explored Manhattan by ourselves. For visitors coming to New York for the first time, you're struck by the size of all the buildings, the number of people and you quickly come to see that there is no place like it in the country. I've had the privilege of visiting 46 of the 48 contiguous United States as well as Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Truly New York City has no equal.

After having dinner with Steve, Michelle, Ashley, and Steve's sister Lisa's family, we headed back to our hotel and the next morning left for home. Our trip to New York City was way more memorable than we could ever have imagined. It gave my children an experience that they will never forget. Steve and his family are in the process of planning a trip here for a visit to St. Martha School in early November. We are all looking forward to seeing them again. The police officers and firefighters of New York showed the rest of the nation that heroes arise from adversity. My family has been fortunate to meet one of those heroes and to get to know him as a good friend. People like Steve Tarricone are around us every day, and sometimes the small gestures, like a thank you card sent by a kindergartener can bring them into our lives. The next time your child comes home from school and says that they sent cards to someone, be it at a local nursing home, or to the President of the United States, I hope that you will recognize the importance of those messages to all who see them.

Mr. Speaker, Christopher Davio is right. Small gifts of kindness can have immeasurable benefits. Today, we wish to extend our appreciation to Amanda Davio and her family, Officer Steve Tarricone and his family and colleagues, and all the students from the 8th District who helped our nation begin its recovery. I now ask that our colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives join us in recognizing this remarkable American story.

TRIBUTE TO THE HEROES OF THE 14TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 11, 2002

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary women and men of the distinguished 14th Congressional District for their heroic responses to the tragic events of a year ago.

On the first anniversary of the attacks on our nation, we reaffirm our commitment to the ideals that have made the United States of America the greatest nation on earth. We have grieved for our lost loved ones, and now we continue the work of a freedom-loving nation. We take pride in and are in awe of what the American people have done in response to the attack on our nation. They have been brave, and generous and the entire world has witnessed the strength and the decency of our people. Americans respond with open, brave and generous hands and hearts to those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker, the 14th Congressional District lost two extraordinary people, Naomi Solomon and Andrew Garcia, who enriched the lives of everyone they knew and loved.

I ask my colleagues to join me in once again offering our deepest sympathy and that of our entire national to the Solomon and Garcia families.

This nation had many heroes on September 11, 2001. We all know of the supreme sacrifice made by so many firefighters, police officers and others in their response to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. We know of the heroism of those on the hijacked planes who prevented even more calamitous attacks on our nation's Capitol. We've learned about of the heroism of people all over our country who pitched in to give service to others.

Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of honor and pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to all who have emerged from the tragedies of that fateful day to embody what it means to be true American Heroes by giving so much of their time, talents and resources to heal the wounds of September 11, 2001. There are too many individuals, organizations and companies to name each separately, but I'd like to honor in our Nation's Record a few examples of some of the many people of the 14th Congressional District who rose to the occasion in extraordinarily generous ways:

The Town of Woodside Firefighters—held a "Fill the Boot" fundraiser on Sept 30th for the New York Fire 9-11 Relief Fund.

YWCA and the Mountain View City Human Relations Commission—held a "Building Community, Understanding and Respect" forum and dialogue in response to Sept. 11th.

The Menlo Park Community Chorus and the Foothill Orchestra—organized a program of patriotic and inspirational music on Dec 15th which benefited the "victims and heroes" of Sept. 11th.

Banks, Financial Institutions and Credit Unions including San Mateo Credit Union and Stanford Credit Union—maintained and kept open their financial networks for their customers despite the resulting chaos of the attacks; and organized fundraising campaigns among their employees and customers to benefit the families affected by Sept. 11th.

Gallery Europa in Palo Alto owners Louise Erickson and David Himmelberger organized a special exhibit in which the sale proceeds were donated to families of victims of Sept. 11th.

Hyland Hogan and Lane Lees of the Half Moon Bay Fire District—following September 11th, they boarded a plane and were adopted by NYFD Ladder Company 3 where they helped the company after it lost 12 of its members and assisted the families of lost firefighters. In May, the district presented the New York Company with a memorial hand-made case holding an ax recovered by one of the firefighters and pictures of the 12 who perished.

All the teachers and school administrators (like Jill Ballard and Sherry Fulton who teach American Literature and Studies at Half Moon Bay High School)—who changed their curricula and schedules to help students understand and cope with the events of September 11th.

Law enforcement agencies and organizations like the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office and the San Mateo County Deputy Sheriff's Association—set up funds to help the families of police officers killed in the Sept 11th attacks.