

to others will stand as a monument to a truly fine person. His life and love gave joy to all who knew him.

While I understand that words cannot express our grief at this most trying of times, I offer this token of profound sympathy to the family and friends of John E. Platt.

VERIZON LITERACY CHAMPION

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the efforts of Verizon, its employees and its spokespersons who are working to tackle the problem of illiteracy. Last week, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Education Reform held a hearing on "Literacy Partnerships that Work." The hearing featured actor James Earl Jones and Verizon President and Chief Executive Officer Ivan Seidenberg, testifying on Verizon's efforts to improve literacy in America.

Describing his lifelong love of reading, Verizon spokesman and actor James Earl Jones remarked on how, "All of us—lawmakers, reading teachers and tutors, corporate philanthropists, educators, and literacy volunteers—all of us have an important and necessary role addressing this issue."

Testifying about his company's involvement in literacy efforts, Ivan Seidenberg, the President and CEO of Verizon, described how his company's mission is "highly focused." "We work to raise public awareness, create partnerships, and generate financial support for local and national literacy organizations so they can do their jobs more effectively. To use a communications metaphor, we believe that—through our scale, scope, and technology—we can increase the 'bandwidth' of the system and enable more learning to be delivered to more people, more effectively."

For Verizon there is a strategic link between literacy and the future business success of the Nation's largest communications company with upwards of 240,000 employees in technically demanding jobs.

However, it's more than just for their future employees. "Verizon's communications networks comprise a unique platform for sharing resources and forming partnerships," Seidenberg said. "Verizon's enormously committed employees and retirees have a long heritage of volunteerism and community involvement. And more than a decade's worth of commitment to the issue of literacy has given the company both the knowledge and the relationships with the literacy community to be effective."

Also attending the Hearing as Verizon Literacy Champions were CBS Sportscaster Dick Enberg, Mike Kohn, 2002 Olympic Bronze Medal Bobsled Athlete, Chris Thorpe 2002 Olympic Bronze Medal Luge Athlete and Lee Ann Parsley, a resident from the great State of Ohio, the 2002 Olympic Silver Medal winner in the Women's Skeleton competition. All of these distinguished celebrities attended to demonstrate their great commitment, as well as Verizon's commitment, to providing positive role models in the fight for literacy.

Mr. Jones, in his compelling personal testimony, said that: "In my family, we say the

love of reading and book learning is in our bone memory." Jones' great-great grandparents Brice and Parthenia Connolly, "passed on their love of reading to my great-grandfather, Wyatt, who owned a modest library, and encouraged his family to read his books and to revere them."

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the legacies we hope to leave with H.R. 1, "The Leave No Child Behind Act," to build reading and book learning into the "bone memory" of all Americans. In these days when there is so much talk about Corporate Accountability, it is a pleasure to recognize Verizon for the positive work they are doing to help the citizens of our Country.

SANDY MINTZ' TESTIMONY ON AUTISM AND CHILD VACCINATIONS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I call the attention of my colleagues to an excellent statement recently made before a hearing of the Committee on Government Reform dealing with the issue of child vaccinations. The statement was made by Ms. Sandy Mintz of Anchorage, Alaska. For over a decade, Ms. Mintz has been a prominent and forceful advocate for an informed vaccination process and for permitting parents everywhere to have the right, as they do in my home state of California, to decide whether or not vaccination is the best option for their child.

Although Ms. Mintz' statement will be published in the hearing record, it will be some time before it is available to my colleagues, and her testimony is of such interest that I ask that it be put in the RECORD so that it will be more broadly and more quickly available for those who have an interest in the health and well-being of our children.

Mr. Speaker, in her testimony, Ms. Mintz posed a vital, if uncomfortable, question: in some cases, could vaccinating our children actually be doing them more harm than good? Specifically, she was asking whether the National Institutes of Health had investigated the link between child vaccinations and autism. She has found evidence that there may, in fact, be a causal link between childhood vaccinations and autism. The witness from the NIH was not aware of any study exploring any link between those two phenomena. Given the vital relevance of this matter to the health of our nation's children, it would be prudent for the NIH to conduct such a study.

At the crux of this debate lie two competing values, which must always be kept in balance: on the one hand, the right of parents to determine what is best for their children, and on the other the need of society at large to protect itself from a common threat, in this instance the threat of deadly communicable diseases. But it is more than an example of the classic tension between the rights of the individual and those of society, because the issue at hand is one we all care so deeply about—the issue of our children's safety. We would all like to inoculate our children against every disease possible, and mandatory childhood inoculations may indeed be the soundest policy choice for our state governments.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the question raised in Ms. Mintz' testimony needs to be dealt with, because our government should not administer a cure that is worse than the disease. We must first investigate whether vaccinations cause autism in children before we can continue to require them of our children. In the meantime, I believe it would be prudent to allow parents to choose not to vaccinate their children, as is permitted in my home state of California. Again, I thank Ms. Mintz for her bold and illuminating testimony before the Committee on Government Reform.

THE AUTISM EPIDEMIC—IS THE NIH AND CDC RESPONSE ADEQUATE?

Mr. SHAYS. Dr. Foote and Dr. Boyle, let me just say it is our intention to let you get out pretty soon. You haven't had a break or anything. Do you have 20 more minutes in you? Are you OK?

I am going to do something that may seem a little unusual, and I may have to just cut it off if it is not a good idea. But, Dr. Foote and Dr. Boyle, if you can trust me in terms of my ability to control a meeting, it is not lost on me that we have a lot of people in the audience who have a keen direct interest. There may be a question or two that none of us on the panel here have asked that we should have. I am going to ask if there is someone in the audience who may have a question that says we should have addressed this. I will allow you to stand up and tell the committee, and then we may choose, our committee may choose to ask that question.

My motivation is that it would be a shame to have people leave without you having the opportunity to respond and maybe clear something up. Both of you have such a nice, friendly smile. I figured I could get away with it. So we are going to try it out, but I have the counsel—excuse me, the minority counsel would like to ask you a few questions, the majority professional staff would just like to ask a few more, and then I am going to just throw it out to the audience, pick two or three of you and ask you to stand and tell me if there is a question you think we should have asked, loud enough so I can repeat it to our witnesses. . . .

Mr. SHAYS. Now let me state what I would like to do. I would like let our witnesses leave soon. I would like to just say that this is a hearing of the House of Representatives, of Congress, so the decorum needs to be done well.

I am going to first ask how many people would like to ask the question. I am going to invite five people to take each of those five seats. I am going to invite you, Ma'am, in the front row to come up to that seat up there, yes. I am going to invite you in the very back to come up, the very back there. I am going to invite you, sir, to come up. I am going to invite you, Ma'am, in the middle, and I am going to invite you in the very back there.

I am going to have you each take a seat. What I am going to invite each of you to do, the committee is going to invite each of you, you are just going to go down and you are going to identify your name, as you ask the question, where you live. If you have a loved one who is impacted, we are happy to have you share the name of your child, but this is primarily for an opportunity to ask a question. We will just see how it goes.

OK?

You all are nice—thank you—to let us do this.

Just turn the mic on, start at the very end, and ask your question.

Ms. MINTZ. Hi. My name is Sandy Mintz. I am from Anchorage, AK. I am lucky enough not to have a child who has been injured by a vaccine.

My question is, is NIH ever planning on doing a study using the only proper control group, that is, never vaccinated children?

Dr. FOOTE. I am not aware of—but note carefully what I said, that I am not aware of—proposed study to use a suitably constructed group of never vaccinated children. Now CDC would be more likely perhaps to be aware of such an opportunity.

Dr. BOYLE. The study that I mentioned earlier that we are doing in collaboration with Denmark compares children who received the MMR vaccine versus children who did not receive MMR.

Ms. MINTZ. But I am saying never vaccinated with any vaccine. That assumes that vaccines don't cause autism, which is what needs to be studied, not assumed.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me just say that if you would turn off your mic, I am happy to have you do the followup, if you would respond to it.

Ms. MINTZ. I'm sorry.

Mr. SHAYS. No, you don't need to apologize. And we will go to the next. Do you have any other comment based on that? The point that is being made, any vaccination. Could we just suggest that you take this under advisement?

Ms. WHARTON. The difficulty with doing such a study in the United States, of course, is that a very small portion of children have never received any vaccines, and these children probably differ in other ways from vaccinated children. So performing such a study would, in fact, be quite difficult.

The Denmark study was a study that, in fact, could not have been done in the United States, although, of course, these children did potentially receive some other vaccines, but simply hadn't received MMR.

Mr. SHAYS. I will invite anyone who is here to speak to staff or me afterwards if they want to augment a comment.

HONORING DAWN SHANNON

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dawn Shannon, who has been selected by FOR Special Friends, Inc. as the recipient of the 13th Annual Sheriff's Community Service Award.

From 1972 to 2002, Mrs. Shannon was a vital part of the Shrewsbury Parks and Recreation Department in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. During her 30-year career, she helped to make the Department one of the best in the State, providing recreational activities for students, adults, and those with special needs.

Through her dedication, and the devotion of the late Paula Rourke, many residents with special needs joined basketball teams, learned to throw a softball, and were able to learn the joy of being a member of a team—many for the first time. She organized Christmas parties, dances, sleepovers, and Valentine socials. Busloads would leave the Shrewsbury Town Hall for Boston's duck tours in the summer and skiing at Ward Hill in the winter.

The program also supported Special Olympics and helped provide uniforms and celebration banquets. An advocate for "Stepping Stones Community Theatre" and a member of the Board of FOR Special Friends, Inc., Dawn's energy never seems to fade when working for the special needs community.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the entire U.S. House of Representatives joins me in

congratulating Dawn Shannon for her stellar work for the residents of the Town of Shrewsbury and wishes her the best of luck and happiness in all her future endeavors.

WORLD HUNGER

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today is World Food Day. As Americans, we all enjoy one of the highest living standards in the world, and we derive much of our strength as a Nation based upon this fact. Yet in many areas of the world, poverty, and the resultant hunger, remains a serious problem that deserves our attention.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "the Progress in reducing world hunger has virtually come to a halt . . . and unless trends are sharply reversed, the world will be very far from reaching the World Food Summit 1996 goal, to reduce the number of hungry by half by 2015."

It is imperative that we act to counter this trend. It is wrong for a child anywhere in the world to suffer the crippling effects of, or, as happens to close to 6 million children each year, who die from hunger. It is appalling that close to 800 million people are malnourished, and indeed many are on the verge of starvation. It is wrong for us to sit idly by and accept this as fact.

We must also recognize that it is in our self interest to fight hunger. The plague of AIDS and other threats to health is not confined to international borders; it would be foolish and naive of us to think that we are immune to the effects of hunger. Furthermore, much of the political instability is rooted in poverty and hunger is rarely confined to any single nation.

Every year national, regional and international World Food Day events are organized around the world. These activities, including those of the World Hunger Year, brings long overdue attention to the problems surrounding the international fight against hunger, and the practical solutions available to our winning the fight against hunger. This is a fight that can be won if we all work together.

MEDICARE COVERAGE OF DIABETES SCREENING

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, diabetes is a serious, debilitating, chronic illness that afflicts more than 17 million Americans, including seven million Medicare beneficiaries. This sometimes silent disease causes many serious complications, including heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure and lower limb amputation. Unfortunately, more than one-third of people with diabetes won't realize they have it until they develop one of these deadly complications.

Diabetes imposes an enormous financial burden on our health care system. More than 25 percent of the Medicare budget is currently

devoted to providing medical care to seniors living with diabetes. Congress recognized the need to address this problem when it required Medicare coverage of blood-glucose monitors and diabetes education services in the Balanced Budget Act. While this was a positive development in our fight against diabetes, it has done little to help us diagnose and treat the 2.3 million seniors who do not know they have the disease.

While diabetes is sometimes a silent disease, the risk factors are often obvious. Diabetes is prevalent among individuals who are overweight, aging, and lead a sedentary lifestyle. Other health conditions, such as gestational diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension often lead to diabetes. It is also more common in certain racial and ethnic groups, including Hispanics, African Americans, and certain Native Americans. Additionally, 20 percent of Medicare beneficiaries have pre-diabetes, which if left untreated, will develop into diabetes.

Currently, Medicare does not cover diabetes screening, even if a patient has some of these risk factors. We must amend the Medicare program to ensure that individuals get treatment before it's too late. By testing high-risk individuals, we will be able to diagnose and treat individuals earlier on, and subsequently prevent many complications. Studies have shown that people with pre-diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes by up to 58% through lifestyle interventions, including modest weight loss and increased physical activity.

That is why I am introducing this legislation, which would require Medicare to cover diabetes screening under Part B. Diagnosing diabetes and pre-diabetes through testing, would improve the lives of our nation's seniors and prevent an increase over the already huge amount of the Medicare budget devoted to seniors with diabetes. In addition to improving the health and quality of life for millions of Americans, extending coverage to cover simple testing would save Medicare money in the long run by lowering the incidence of complications.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

HONORING THE HEROISM OF MIKE McGEHEE OF RED BUD, ILLINOIS

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 16, 2002

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the heroism of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Freshman Mike McGehee of Red Bud, Illinois for saving the lives of his fellow students during a tragic fire in their Cougar Village apartment on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

Early Saturday morning, October 12, 2002, Campus police received a call that a fire was underway at the Cougar Village Student apartment complex. The fire started at about 4:40 a.m. in the kitchen of Apartment 1B on the lower floor in the complex. Mike McGehee and his roommates were upstairs in Apartment 2C. Mike, normally a sound sleeper according to his parents Len and Ruth McGehee, woke up