

IN MEMORY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS LEADER JUSTIN DART, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KERNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a fallen leadership in the disability and human rights community. Justin Dart, Jr., recognized by many as the father of the Americans with Disabilities Act, died this past Saturday, June 22. Mr. Dart was known by many Members of Congress and by millions of Americans for his inspirational leadership and determined efforts to open the doors of opportunity wider for all Americans.

The grandson of the founder of the Walgreen drugstore chain and the son of a wealthy businessman, Justin was born in Chicago into a life of privilege. At age 18, however, his world view as well as the world's view of him was to change. Mr. Dart contracted polio and became a wheelchair user.

His concern for the civil rights of all people first became apparent when he founded an organization to end racial segregation as a student at the University of Houston. Justin also experienced the misunderstanding people have regarding the capabilities of people with disabilities when he was denied a teaching certificate upon completing college.

In 1966, Mr. Dart traveled to Vietnam to investigate the conditions of its rehabilitation system and had an experience which caused him and his wife, Yoshiko, to dedicate the rest of their lives to the advancement of human rights for all. Instead of rehabilitation centers for children with polio, he found squalid conditions where children had been abandoned on concrete floors. He was confronted with a young girl who reached out, held his hand and gazed into his eyes as she lay dying. "That scene," he would later write, "is burned forever in my soul. For the first time in my life, I understood the reality of evil, and that I was a part of that reality."

After several years of building a grassroots movement and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in Texas, Justin Dart was appointed in 1981 by President Reagan as Vice Chair of the National Council on Disability. He and his wife embarked on a nationwide tour at their own expense during which he met with activists in all 50 States and helped lead the Council in drafting a national policy that called for civil rights legislation to end the centuries-old discrimination of people with disabilities. This policy laid the foundation for the eventual passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Mr. Dart held leadership positions in both the Reagan and Bush administrations, first as Commissioner of the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration and then as the chairman of the President's Com-

mittee on Employment of People With Disabilities.

As Chairman of the President's Committee, he directed a change in focus from its traditional stance of urging people to hire the handicapped to advocating for full civil rights of people with disabilities. Justin is best known for the pivotal role he played in ensuring passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

As Co-chair of the Congressional Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities, he once again toured the country at his own expense to build grassroots support for his landmark civil rights legislation.

The sight of Justin in his trademark Stetson hat and cowboy boots was a familiar sight to all Members of Congress. He made what he called a very difficult decision of conscience in 1996 and campaigned for the reelection of President Clinton, telling his followers to get into politics as if your life depended upon it, because it does.

In 1998, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian award. The revolution of empowerment Mr. Dart talked about extended far beyond the rights of people with disabilities to making the world a better play for all humanity.

Please hear, as I close, some of the words that Mr. Dart addressed to a group of us in his final public statement a few weeks ago at a rally for the passage of the Micassa bill. "Listen to the heart of this old soldier. As with all of us, the time comes when body and mind are battered and weary. But I do not go quietly into the night. I do not give up struggling to be a responsible contributor to the sacred continuum of human life. I do not give up struggling to overcome my weakness, to conform my life, and that part of my life called death, to the great values of the human dream. Let my final actions thunder of love, solidarity, protest, of empowerment. I adamantly protest the richest culture in the history of the world which still incarcerates millions of humans with and without disabilities in barbaric institutions, back rooms and worse, windowless cells of oppressive perceptions, for the lack of the most elementary empowerment supports. I call for solidarity among all who love justice, all who love life, to create a revolution that will empower every single human being to govern his or her life, to govern the society and to be fully productive. I die in the beautiful belief that the revolution of empowerment will go on. I love you so much. I'm with you always. Lead on. Lead on."

Mr. Speaker, Justin Dart was truly a great American, and I join with millions around the country who are interested in the empowerment of people with disabilities to extend condolences to his wife and family.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. SULLIVAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about an issue that is very important to the First Congressional District of Oklahoma and all across America: the need for a prescription drug benefit for our seniors.

During the last few weeks, the Republican plan has been criticized by my Democrat colleagues with a number of half-truths about our plan. I have received several calls from constituents and family members who are scared about the Democrats' misstatement about higher prices for their prescriptions. They are using this issue for political gain during an election year.

I ask the other side of the aisle to please stop scaring my grandmother and millions of seniors who buy prescription drugs. For the past few months, I, along with several Members of Congress of this body, have been visiting with seniors about their wants and needs and a prescription drug benefit. From these conversations, the House Republicans have developed a plan in line with helping seniors receive coverage immediately. I ask the Democrats to stop scaring my grandmother and my constituents for political advantage.

The House Republican plan is the only plan that lowers drug costs for seniors through best-price competition and the promotion of generic drugs. Recently, the Health and Human Services Department released a study that shows an average senior would save nearly 70 percent of the money spent on their current coverage under the GOP plan. The liberal Democrats say our plan is a meaningless benefit that protects the pharmaceutical industry, but studies done on this issue say just the opposite.

The Republican plan uses a best-price competition model that will lower the dollar amount through competition, cutting into the pharmaceutical company's bottom line. I ask Members on the other side of the aisle to stop scaring the Nation's seniors.

The House and Senate Democrat plans fail to use any competition measures. Instead, the Senate plan calls for a copayment on the prescriptions. Seniors would pay \$10 for generic drugs, \$40 for name-brand drugs, and the government would pick up the rest of the cost, regardless of the price.

Without price competition, the drugmakers will be able to dictate and raise their price whenever they want. And of course the Democrats want the American taxpayer to pick up the tab on the price difference. This could potentially cost Americans more than a trillion dollars. I call on the Democrats to stop scaring my grandmother and millions of seniors in our Nation who are looking for a workable plan from Congress. This is not a political issue.

It is a life issue important to seniors throughout our Nation. I urge Members to support the House Republican prescription drug plan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

KEEP AMTRAK RUNNING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of representing the North Shore of Massachusetts; and, like many of my colleagues, I am deeply concerned about a possible Amtrak shutdown and the effect on my constituents. I am doubly troubled by the fact that this situation was avoidable and totally unnecessary. Congress is now being asked to step in and help after the administration failed to take action.

Mr. Speaker, 23,000 workers across the country fear job losses. A shutdown will mean lost jobs for thousands of employees already demoralized by years of wage deferrals and wage freezes that have left Amtrak workers among the lowest paid in the industry. A thousand jobs have been lost already in the past months, as Amtrak has cut corners in the absence of government support. We cannot allow additional jobs and benefits to be lost.

Local commuter rail riders have voiced their fears about being left stranded by a possible Amtrak shutdown. Failure to act now will mean suspension of Amtrak service in the busy Northeast Corridor, and this will jeopardize commuter rail services for Massachusetts' communities such as Lynn and Salem in my district, not to mention the likely permanent loss of the system's long-distance trains.

Amtrak's current financial difficulty is a result of unwise and unattainable congressional goals established in 1997 that forced unfortunate managerial choices and undermined Amtrak's financial viability and access to capital. Congress realized it made a mistake and has since repealed the 1997 requirement that Amtrak file a plan for its own liquidation if it not achieve operating self-sufficiency by the end of 2002.

Unfortunately, the damage has been done, and it is imperative that Congress correct its public policy misadventure. We are at the point where Congress has to step in and offer some assistance.

As today's Boston Globe reports, "Rail shutdown would be a slap to the region. Amtrak ridership is on the increase." The article notes that ridership in the Northeast Corridor was up

23 percent in May, with a 44 percent growth in revenue over the last year. Over the years, and particularly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, Amtrak ridership in the Northeast Corridor has decreased traffic at the airports, providing another option for people to travel for business and pleasure.

We should reward, not punish, this good service with increased Amtrak investment. Indeed, every G-8 country knows the value of investing in mass ground transportation. All of them support their national passenger rail system. Amtrak is held to a double standard as no other segment of America's transportation system is forced to meet the capital and operating needs without substantial government financial assistance. Amtrak has responded to the growing expectations placed on the passenger rail carrier since September 11; and Congress should, too.

America needs better energy and environmental policies. Rail service conserves energy as compared to other forms of intercity transportation. A 1999 Congressional Research Service report determined that general aviation uses more than three times the energy used by Amtrak. Passenger rail service generates less air pollution and less energy than the airplane and the automobile. This is even more significant in high-density areas.

Mr. Speaker, let us compare Amtrak with investments in airports and highways. Overall, our highways, aviation and mass transit programs receive almost \$57 billion in annual government investments, but Amtrak only receives 1 percent of that. \$571 million is slated for fiscal year 2003.

□ 1845

Amtrak has only received \$25 billion in Federal funding over the past 30 years in comparison with \$750 billion spent on highways and aviation during that same period. We can and we should do better.

While administration critics propose to shut down Amtrak because not every route is self-sufficient, we should note that the airlines received \$150 million this year alone in Federal funding to provide air service to 80 cities where passenger revenues were insufficient to support the provision of service. Amtrak is a bargain by comparison to that.

That is why I join my colleagues and asked appropriators to provide sufficient supplemental funding to keep the trains running. The administration seeks to privatize, their solution for government programs they just do not like, from Social Security to prescription drugs, all the way to mass transportation. The fact is, privatization is not the answer. We only have to look at the tragic accidents, delays and system failures in Great Britain to know that privatization does not work. For the security of our commuters, our workers, our environment and our economy, we must keep the trains running. Shutting down Amtrak is clearly

not in the public interest. I urge the administration to listen to the American people and respond with a thoughtful, sensible plan to keep Amtrak going.

AMTRAK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KERNs). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to continue the discussion this evening on the future of Amtrak. There is a rumor going around the Capitol that Senator BYRD has put together a rescue that ties together the supplemental, the debt ceiling vote with resources that will keep Amtrak going. If that rumor is true, I say good for Senator BYRD for making it happen, but I say shame on Congress and the administration for making it necessary for yet another extraordinary step to keep America's passenger rail system going.

This is sadly part of the 30-year history where Congress and numerous administrations have done their best to dismantle and slowly bleed Amtrak to death. What is perhaps most remarkable, Mr. Speaker, is not that we may be able to rescue Amtrak from being shut down this week, but that despite the system that has been inflicted upon them, they continue to exist and ridership continues to increase.

It was a rather bizarre deal we saw in 1997, an exercise in denial on the part of the then-majority parties in Congress where they mandated in the last reauthorization a program under which for the next 5 years Amtrak would become self-sufficient. Part of that deal was that Congress, the Federal Government, would supply adequate resources to deal with the capital requirements for Amtrak, not unlike what happens in other industries where the United States, for instance, provides the infrastructure for aviation. There are now some in the administration and sadly some in Congress who are arguing, Shut it down. It is not self-supporting. They did not keep the deal.

Well, Congress provided less than half of the money that was authorized. In no year did we provide the full capital allocation. Yet despite that, despite that, we have seen ridership increases that is not just passengers with train nostalgia. In the Pacific Northwest, we have seen almost three-quarters of a million people ride the Cascades rail corridor last year. Ridership has increased sixfold over the last 8 years. We have heard about the situation that is taking place with ridership increases here in the eastern corridor. And all of us in Congress are well aware that if it were not for Amtrak, that sad week of September 11, without Amtrak, if people were relying on their SUVs and waiting for the grounded planes to travel, that there would have