

ISRAEL

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the continued terrorist attacks against Israel.

As we all know the President has recently returned from his first official visit to the Middle East where he attempted to move the peace process forward.

During the summit Israel and the Palestinians agreed to the road map—now comes the hard part.

Progress will be difficult and we must focus now on action, not words. In short, performance matters.

The United States must do more to put pressure on Israel's neighbors and make sure they cease all support of terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

With 16 Israelis dead from Wednesday's bus bombing, four soldiers killed last weekend, and hundreds of other Israelis dead from Hamas attacks, Israel has the right to protect herself and her people from terrorists.

Hamas and other terrorist groups oppose the road map, they oppose any lasting peace with Israel. They oppose the existence of the Jewish State.

These groups have been tolerated for years by the Palestinian Authority and the PA chairman, Yassir Arafat.

The administration must also increase dialog with our European allies who continue to have relations with Yassir Arafat, as if he were the head of state. Support for Yassir Arafat and his terrorist ways must stop.

More support must be given to Abu Mazen so he can disarm the terrorist groups so Israel can live in safety and security.

There will be no peace and there should be no peace plan until all sides agree that Israel has the right to exist and her people the right to live in safety on the streets, in cafés and on their buses—anything else is a failure that the U.S. should take no part in.

MINNESOTA CITIZENS CONCERNED FOR LIFE

HON. MARK R. KENNEDY

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life on their 35th anniversary.

MCCL is Minnesota's largest and oldest organization dedicated to preserving the sanctity of human life. It was founded in 1968 with the goal of protecting the lives of the unborn and elderly from conception until natural death. Since then, MCCL has grown from a handful of individuals meeting in their kitchens to 77,000 members in 241 local chapters today.

MCCL works tirelessly to educate the public on the precious nature of life. MCCL is a major force behind efforts to create a culture of life that refuses to accept as common practice euthanasia, human cloning, assisted suicide, and abortion on demand.

Through their efforts, MCCL has allowed thousands to enjoy the banquet of life who otherwise would not have.

I also applaud the vision and leadership of Scott Fischbach, MCCL's new Executive Director.

Mr. Speaker, I salute MCCL for its 35 years of work on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens.

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, the Survivor Benefit Plan was, at one time, a good plan intended to provide for surviving spouses of veterans. Unfortunately, that intention has been lost.

Now surviving spouses are experiencing the reality of a one-third drop in benefits when they turn 62 and Congress has yet to take any action on rectifying this wrong.

Well, the time has come for Congress to step up to the plate and provide for our veterans what we already provide to our federal civilian retirees.

I believe the message of this tragic inequality is best conveyed by those who must live with it. I would like to read a statement from a constituent of mine from Riverside, California, Mrs. Marilyn T. Owsley about her experience with the Survivor Benefit Plan:

My husband would turn over in his grave had he known what was happening to me with his annuity. He chose SBP for me to have a decent income along with his Social Security. Also, he liked the idea of this annuity because you get a cost of living increase each year where other types of annuities did not. Together with his Social Security and the SBP annuity, I manage. I rent my apartment and pray they don't increase the rent too much each year. I gave up driving my 1983 Chevy as it was too costly to keep up with repairs and insurance. I have to depend on someone else to go to the store or the doctor. If not for my children, I don't know what I would do. I will be 78 years old on October 9, 2003. They say the Golden Years are good. I say my gold turned to rust. I pray every night the government will do something about this problem of the annuity reduction.

Let's return the benefits to the Survivor Benefit Plan and keep our word to the millions of veterans who, in good faith, signed up for this plan with the expectation of taking care of their loved ones after they passed.

PROVIDING FURTHER CLARITY AS TO THE INTENT OF CONGRESS WITH REGARD TO HR 1904, THE HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, last month, the House passed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act on an overwhelming bipartisan basis. The bill creates a number of new procedures and programs to deal with the nation's exploding forest health crisis. Importantly, Title VI of the bill would authorize and direct federal land

managers to establish early detection programs for insect and disease infestations, with an emphasis on hardwood forests, so that agencies can isolate and treat adverse conditions before they reach epidemic levels.

Even though the bill was first considered and marked up in the Resources Committee, the House Agriculture Committee, under the outstanding leadership of Chairman BOB GOODLATTE, received primary referral. While associating myself with the able and accurate work in the Agriculture Committee's Report on H.R. 1904, as the bill's primary author I want to insert some additional language into H.R. 1904's legislative history so as to provide further clarity as to the intention of Congress in Title VI.

Title VI of H.R. 1904 authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program that uses geospatial and information management technologies (remote sensing imaging and decision support systems) to inventory, monitor, characterize, assess, and identify forest stands (and potential forest stands) in the southern and eastern portions of the United States, with special emphasis on hardwood forest types. The approach for this effort includes utilizing NASA remote sensing technology, emerging geospatial capabilities in research activities, validating techniques using application demonstrations, and integrating results into pilot operational systems. Important issues to be addressed in this region of the U.S. include, but are not limited to, early detection, identification and assessment of environmental threats (insect, disease, invasive species, fire and weather-related risks, other episodic events), loss or degradation of forests, degradation of stand quality due to inadequate forest regeneration practices, quantification of carbon uptake rates, and other counter management practices. Developing a comprehensive early warning system for potential catastrophic environmental threats to Eastern forests would significantly increase the likelihood that managers could isolate and treat any such outbreak before it gets out of control. Such a system could prevent the kind of epidemic, like that of the American chestnut blight in the first half of the twentieth century, which could be environmentally and economically devastating to Eastern forests.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1904 is as important as any environmental legislation that this House has passed in a very long time. Title VI in the bill is a critical piece of that landmark forest health program.

STATEMENT FROM REPRESENTATIVE TOM DAVIS HONORING THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF SID YUDAIN, THE ROLL CALL NEWSPAPER FOUNDER

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, "At every dramatic turning point of our long national nightmare known as Watergate, Roll Call was there. Sid Yudain reported the Watergate break-in a full three days before Nixon's resignation," quipped Washington's favorite political satirist, Mark Russell some twenty years ago.

Russell's dig was aimed at the man credited with discovering him, Sid Yudain, founder, publisher, editor, and even occasional delivery boy of Capitol Hill's own newspaper, Roll Call. Now, this weekend Mark and his wife Ali are hosting—and perhaps roasting—Sid at a party celebrating his 80th birthday.

Sid, who had spent several years in Hollywood following World War 11 where he became a columnist and raconteur for movie stars, had come to Washington in the early 1950's to work as press secretary for Congressman Al Morano of his home state of Connecticut. He soon noticed an ongoing void of information about what was going on around the Capitol Hill community. Sure, there were plenty of newspapers in town that wrote about Congressional legislation and political debates. But an incident involving two Ohio Congressmen, who were exchanging greetings when one expressed total surprise at learning from the other that a member of their state delegation had died, provided the spark that finally led Sid to create his own newspaper, Roll Call, in 1955.

Interestingly, Roll Call was not to be a newspaper about Capitol Hill, but as its masthead boldly proclaimed, "The newspaper of Capitol Hill." Judging by the names of those who wrote its early columns and stories, it lived up to its assertion, because Members of Congress and their staffs eagerly contributed to its pages. Vice President Richard Nixon insisted on writing a piece about a doorman who had passed away, and Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson related through the pages of Roll Call his experiences and thanks following his recovery from a recent heart attack.

For the 32 years that Sid owned Roll Call, the paper chronicled life on the Hill and promoted a community spirit where Members and staffers of all political persuasions could come together to celebrate their common service to the American people. Roll Call nurtured clubs and organizations, issued the "Outstanding Staffer" award each year, sponsored Congress' annual baseball game, and gave gifted and often famous writers of all backgrounds the opportunity to inform and entertain arguably the most influential readership on the planet.

And, all this time Sid was having the time of his life. His Capitol Hill townhouse parties featuring steaming cauldrons of his homemade soups fed to noteworthy musical and journalistic friends were legendary, and his zany humor brought raucous laughter to any occasion.

Sid sold Roll Call in 1988 to spend more time with his family, friends, and saxophone, and to get more use out of the stage he built in his back yard for his music parties, a facility dubbed by associates as "Sid Trap." Mr. Speaker, his get-togethers fall somewhere between a Pavarotti concert and a Don Rickles roast.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me with Sid's wife Lael; their children Rachel (and husband Amar Kuchinad) and Raymond; Sid's other family members; and his cadre of friends in wishing him a most happy 80th birthday. And, with all that talent he still holds in reserve, perhaps it's time to get started on the book he's promised to write.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, on June 11, 2003, I was unable to vote on the motion for the previous question on the rule for H.R. 2115. Had I been present, I would have voted yes (rollcall 257). I was also unable to vote on the rule for H.R. 2115. Had I been able to vote, I would have voted yes (rollcall 258). Finally, I was unable to vote on H. Con. Res. 110, recognizing the sequencing of the human genome. Had I been able to vote, I would have voted yes (rollcall 259).

CONCERN OVER ILLEGAL USE OF PAINKILLER OXYCONTIN

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I want to bring attention to the illegal use and abuse of the powerful painkiller OxyContin that is destroying families and crippling communities, particularly in rural parts of the country. Southwest Virginia, western Kentucky and Maine have been hit particularly hard.

OxyContin does serve a very real and useful purpose for people with chronic, debilitating pain or who are terminally ill. It is hailed as a miracle drug for terminally ill cancer patients. I know what it is like to see people suffer from cancer. Both my mother and father died of cancer.

My concern is that this powerful painkiller has increasingly become a drug of choice for people who choose to abuse it; for people who have no legitimate need for this pain-killing drug. When taken properly, OxyContin is a wonder drug. But when it is ground up or chewed, the time release mechanism in the tablet is disabled, providing abusers with a heroin-like high.

I am also concerned about how this drug has been allowed to be marketed. Clearly, OxyContin should be available for the terminally ill. It should also be available to those people who suffer with severe chronic pain. I do not believe it should be prescribed to treat moderate pain.

Earlier this year I wrote to the Honorable Tommy Thompson, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, asking him to review the marketing of OxyContin and its classification for treatment of moderate to severe pain. Here is the text of the letter:

DEAR SECRETARY THOMPSON: In December 2001, the Commerce-Justice-State and the Judiciary appropriations subcommittee held a hearing on the illegal diversion of the prescription drug OxyContin, a pain-killing Schedule II narcotic manufactured by Purdue Pharma L.P. One of the witnesses, the father of a recovering OxyContin addict, told a gripping story of the devastating impact the drug has had on his family and his son, who was in his early 20s. He proudly told the committee how his son had just finished rehab and had kicked his addiction. Sadly, a few months after appearing before the subcommittee, the son died as a result of abusing the drug.

When used properly, OxyContin is considered a wonder drug, especially for terminally ill cancer patients. I know what it is like to see people suffer from cancer. Both my mother and father died of cancer. I can remember my mother constantly asking the nurses for more morphine but being told she couldn't have any more. My mother was in a great deal of pain. OxyContin, if it had been available when she was dying, probably would have made her a lot more comfortable at the end.

When used illegally, however, OxyContin destroys families and communities. It also can lead to death. This powerful painkiller has increasingly become a drug of choice for people who choose to abuse it by chewing it or grinding it up. By disabling the time release mechanism in OxyContin, abusers get a heroin-like high.

Initially, cases of abuse and illegal diversion occurred primarily in poor, rural communities in Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio. Abuse is no longer limited to Appalachia. The drug has found its way to urban areas and there are now reports of widespread abuse as far away as Arizona. Florida, I am told, has been hit extremely hard.

Several pharmacies in my congressional District have been robbed at gun point in recent months for OxyContin. No money was taken; the robbers only demanded the drug. Earlier this month, a prominent defense lawyer in northern Virginia who twice served as a local prosecutor in Prince William County pleaded guilty to federal drug charges linked to a large-scale investigation into the illegal distribution of OxyContin and other painkillers.

Communities where the illegal drug has taken hold are being completely destroyed. I am told there is one county in southwest Virginia where no one isn't either using the drug, knows someone using the drug or been the victim of a crime by someone needing the drug.

When a professional baseball player recently died after taking the dietary supplement ephedra, your agency immediately issued fact sheets regarding potential serious risks of dietary supplements containing ephedra. You were even quoted as cautioning all Americans about using dietary supplements that contain ephedra.

According to fact sheets produced by the FDA, two deaths, four heart attacks, nine strokes and five psychiatric cases involving ephedra have been reported. More than 240 people have died from the abuse of OxyContin and countless numbers of families and communities have been torn apart by this drug.

Your agency has done a good job educating the public about the dangers of ephedra and other dietary supplements. I urge you to initiate a similar public information campaign about the dangers of abusing OxyContin.

I have previously written to your department asking for a review of the marketing of OxyContin and its classification for treatment of moderate to severe pain. The Food and Drug Administration did change the warning label on OxyContin but more needs to be done. The drug should not be marketed to treat moderate pain. I urge you to no longer allow OxyContin to be prescribed for moderate pain.

Too many people have died, too many families have suffered and too many communities have been devastated by the improper use of this drug.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Chairman,

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
State and the Judiciary