

Rates of infertility, the incidence of testicular cancer in young men, Parkinson's disease, autism, endometriosis, childhood diabetes, and asthma have risen dramatically since 1970.

Is there a connection between all of these events? There is reason to believe there might be, but the truth is we simply don't know enough to conclude one way or the other.

There is mounting evidence from the scientific community that exposure to certain environmental toxins, even at low doses, may cause adverse effects on development, growth, reproduction, metabolism, and other hormone-dependent processes in humans. Research interest is growing dramatically as our fear also grows that the pesticides, medicinal drugs, plant hormones, and industrial compounds that we confront every day may be causing many of our health ailments.

In its Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals released two weeks ago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found disturbing exposure levels in individuals. The report calls for further research into this area to find out whether or not the levels CDC measured in its study lead to health problems.

Today, I am proud to introduce the Environmental Health Research Act. This bill would authorize the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to provide grants to either public or non-profit private groups to develop and operate six centers that would conduct research into women's environmental health, and to establish a comprehensive research program on the impact and occurrence of hormone disrupting chemicals as they affect human, ecological, and wildlife health.

This bill is enormously important, and long overdue. To date, federal research on hormone disruption and environmental toxins has been scattershot and underfunded. The research program authorized through this legislation will enable NIEHS to gather solid data about the dangers posed by some chemicals and the mechanisms through which they act. With this information in hand, we can make sensible, informed decisions and policies about our own and our children's health and well-being.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Hormone Disruption Research Act. We owe it to future generations to pursue this scientific research, which has implications for every one of us.

THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF
LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 85th anniversary of Lithuanian independence and the 13th anniversary of freedom from Soviet occupation. In Southfield, Michigan, the Lithuanian-American Community of Michigan will be gathering on Sunday, February 16, 2003 at Divine Providence Lithuanian Catholic Church to celebrate this historic event.

In February 1918, Lithuania declared its independence from Czarist Russia. During this period, Lithuanians were free to follow their

cultural traditions and express their national identity. The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 caused Lithuania to spend the next five decades under Soviet domination, forced to deny their heritage, their language and their traditions.

Despite the military might and repressive acts of the Soviets, the Lithuanians never lost touch with their roots and never lost their will. Lithuania's re-established independence in 1990 served as a testament to the courage, endurance and strength of the Lithuanian people. I was fortunate enough to be in Lithuania as its people celebrated the regaining of its independence.

In the 13 short years since the re-establishment of its independence, Lithuania has made extraordinary advances in restoring democracy, ensuring human rights, securing the rule of law, developing a free market economy, and cultivating friendly relations with neighboring countries. Such achievements should be an inspiration to people everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I unite with Lithuanian-Americans and Lithuanians around the world in celebrating their independence day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRIVACY
PROTECTION CLARIFICATION ACT

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, in introducing The Privacy Protection Clarification Act.

Gramm-Leach-Bliley was landmark legislation that for the first time permitted companies to engage in banking, insurance and securities transactions simultaneously. While considering these new freedoms for entities to operate across business lines, Congress also wanted to ensure that consumer privacy would not be placed at risk.

Title V sought to address this issue by giving regulators latitude to enforce privacy provisions among financial institutions. Unfortunately, in interpreting the language of the law, some confusion has arisen over what, specifically, those "financial institutions" might be.

Well, in seeking to clarify the confusion, the Federal Trade Commission concluded that "financial institutions" include any business that "significantly engages in financial activities." What's the definition of "significantly"? Well, it could be as little as once a year. And what's a financial activity? There are four: debt collecting, financial advisory activities, tax planning preparation and advising, and leasing real or personal property.

Okay, that's fair enough. But in writing its regulations in this way, the Federal Trade Commission appears to have unintentionally swept under its umbrella the one group of professionals that already is governed by the strictest possible confidentiality or privacy regulations.

What group is this? It's attorneys.

Attorneys already are bound by a duty of confidentiality, enforceable under the laws of all 50 states, that prevents misuse of client information and provides a higher degree of privacy than Gramm-Leach-Bliley. For example, lawyers in my home state, Illinois, are prohib-

ited from releasing confidential information. Our code reads, "except in certain specified circumstances, a lawyer shall not, during or after termination of the professional relationship with the client, use or reveal a confidence or secret of the client known to the lawyer unless the client consents after disclosure."

And Illinois is no exception. All 50 states have equally restrictive language. In all 50 states, lawyers who violate these laws face disbarment and/or other penalties that are much more onerous than those for a violation of Title V under Gramm-Leach-Bliley.

Do attorneys "significantly engage in financial activities" as defined by the FTC? Yes, some attorneys do give tax-planning advice. Others may handle debt collection cases.

Still others may take up cases related to the other two named "financial activities" providing financial advice or leasing real or personal property.

Yet in order to comply with the privacy provisions under Gramm-Leach-Bliley, these attorneys now run the risk of violating the client-confidentiality restrictions placed on their profession.

Why is that? Well, under the FTC interpretation, every attorney who engages in any of the four defined "financial activities" for a non-corporate client must mail to that client a privacy notice—every year, for as long as he or she is in practice. And what does that privacy notice convey? Well, it informs clients that they may direct their attorney not to share their personal information with other entities—the so-called "opt-out" provision of Gramm-Leach-Bliley. Yet the attorney-client confidentiality relationship is, by nature, an "opt-in" protection.

In short, for attorneys, the very act of disclosing a privacy policy can create a confidentiality violation.

This was not the intent of Congress. It was not our intent to regulate attorney-client relations. Our intent was to regulate the growing use and sale of consumers' personal information for marketing, profiling and other commercial purposes by banks, thrifts, securities firms, insurance companies, credit unions, and other bona fide financial institutions.

At the end of the day, our bill will make the intention of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act crystal clear. The scope of the law was not intended to include law firms and sole practicing lawyers.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE COURAGE AND
SACRIFICE OF UNITED STATES
ARMED FORCES HELD AS PRISONERS
OF WAR DURING THE
VIETNAM CONFLICT AND CALLING
FOR A FULL ACCOUNTING
OF THOSE WHO REMAIN UNACCOUNTED
FOR

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, those of us who have served our country in war understand in our hearts what every American understands in his head. We understand what it says—carved in stone—on the Korean War

Memorial down at the other end of the National Mall. We understand that FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.

For more than two centuries, Americans have sacrificed in war for their families, for their communities, and for their nation. Many thousands have died. But of those who did not die, few have gone through what our friend and colleague SAM JOHNSON went through in Vietnam. For many long years he suffered torture, imprisonment, and solitary confinement. They worked on him relentlessly to break his spirit. But the spirit of SAM JOHNSON could not be broken. He stood up to his captors with dignity and with grace. He refused to betray his country. And he refused to give up on his God.

I believe SAM would tell you, if you asked, that it was the Lord in heaven who saw him through those dark days in the Hanoi Hilton. But his reliance on our Creator does not make him less of a hero or less of a man. It makes him one of the greatest living heroes in the United States of America. And it makes him an example to us all.

The Sam Johnsons of this world are few and far between. But somehow, this country seems to find one when one is needed.

Another hero worthy of being recognized is Captain Edward Davis from the U.S. Navy, retired. Captain Davis, a constituent of mine, also served our country during the Vietnam War and was a Prisoner of War from 1965 to 1972.

Captain Davis served in VA-152. His decorations include three Silver Star medals, the Legion of Merit with Combat Citation, four Bronze Stars with valor device, five Air Medals, two Purple Hearts and three Navy Commendation medals. He retired from the Navy in 1987.

His service to America should be remembered. I am honored to have him reside in my congressional district.

I pray that next time around, whether it's in Iraq or somewhere else, the enemies of freedom will once again find themselves looking in the face of someone like SAM JOHNSON or Ed Davis, someone who is living proof that what this country stands for is right, and just, and good.

IN HONOR OF DANIEL HUMBERTO JARA, RECIPIENT OF THE HISPANIC AMERICAN GOOD SCOUT AWARD

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Daniel Humberto Jara, who was honored on February 7th at the Hispanic American Good Scout Award Dinner at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark, New Jersey.

The president and founder of the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, Mr. Jara oversees a network of business partnerships that represent over forty thousand businesses throughout New Jersey and Philadelphia. He has attained national acclaim for his leadership and role in the Hispanic business community, and Hispanic Business Magazine listed him as one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in the nation. The State-

wide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey was rated first out of the top 50 chambers by Business New Jersey in 1998 and 1999.

In 1992, Mr. Jara was appointed to chair the National Hispanic Legislative Forum and in 1993 he chaired the National Convention of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He was elected to serve as vice chairman of the Board of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to founding the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey, Mr. Jara was president of the Greater Paterson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for two consecutive terms, served on Governor Whitman's Advisory Council on Minority Business Development, and the Governors Study Commission on Discrimination in State Employment and Contracting.

Mr. Jara has received the Hispanic Achievement Award from Hispanic Magazine and the Lifetime Achievement Award by the New Jersey Policy Research Organization. He has also been an active advocate for the disabled community and has been recognized by the Association of Hispanic Handicapped of New Jersey for his exemplary contributions.

Mr. Jara obtained his bachelor's degree in Economics and master's degree in Finance and Business Administration from Rutgers University, where he was president of the Rutgers Newark Program Board and the head of a number of Hispanic student organizations. He is an honorary member of the Rutgers Leadership Recognition Society.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Daniel Humberto Jara for his leadership in the Hispanic business community and his contributions to the state of New Jersey.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITING AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2003

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation, the Higher Education Accrediting Agency Responsibility Act of 2003, that will remove the requirement that institutions of higher education be accredited in order to be eligible for federal funds. The system of accreditation of colleges and universities that has developed in the United States does not serve its avowed purpose of ensuring that institutions of higher education have good academic programs and standards, and it fails to provide hardly any benefit at all to our higher education system. Additionally, more effective and less costly mechanisms are already in place to protect students. For example, no institution can receive federal funds until the Department of Education certifies its financial and administrative capacity, and institutions also must meet various state licensing and oversight requirements related to quality.

Accreditation these days has little to do with academic rigor or educational outcomes; rather, it serves only to show that a school has the right set of inputs, and virtually every college and university in the nation is able to comply with these standards. Because federal

law makes eligibility to receive federal student loan funds conditional upon retaining accredited status from an accrediting association recognized by the Department of Education, schools have a rather large incentive to maintain their accreditation status. This places an enormous amount of influence in the hands of the accrediting agencies, which oftentimes force schools to reallocate resources or even adopt policies at odds with a school's individual mission in order to comply with accreditation requirements and recommendations.

As we continue to pursue policies of accountability for our education institutions and strive to do our part in making higher education affordable for more Americans, we must examine ways that the accreditation process can be changed to play a more useful role—one that provides meaningful information about a school to students and parents. I believe the Higher Education Accrediting Agency Responsibility Act of 2003 is the necessary first step to achieve this goal.

A TRIBUTE TO ST. LOUIS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to St. Louis Children's Hospital. I am extremely honored to commend them for their dedication and commitment to the well-being of precious children in need of medical attention. They were recently ranked 6th in the nation among the top 10 Best Children's Hospitals in America by Child Magazine. The hospital's devotion to ensuring that children are receiving high quality and appropriate medical, nursing and mental health care, earned them the privilege of a five-star customer service award for patient satisfaction. They placed fourth for their excellent neonatology/neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

St. Louis Children's Hospital is highly devoted to improving the health of children and providing the highest quality care. This hospital has the country's largest full-service pediatric cerebral palsy program and the world's largest pediatric lung transplant program in the world. The doctors at St. Louis Children's Hospital performed 70 pediatric transplants in 2001, more than any other hospital surveyed.

St. Louis Children's Hospital diligently researches to generate scientific information that provides insight to the cause, treatment and prevention of childhood disease. In addition, such studies provide essential knowledge for improving the general health of all children. The hospital has conducted more than 500 peer-reviewed clinical trials, including the largest and longest childhood asthma study.

Mr. Speaker, St. Louis Children's Hospital has provided specialized care for children for over 120 years. Their health care professionals are both skilled and compassionate with all patients and their families. They are well-deserved of our honor and I urge my colleagues to join me in commending them for the commitment and remarkable care they provide to the children of the greater St. Louis region.