

has fallen well below allotment levels for a variety of reasons. One of the most striking reasons is that States have had difficulty enrolling enough children to meet the allotment standards. Enrollment in SCHIP has involved lots of redtape, and the complexity of the application has discouraged families from signing up.

To address this problem, States are beginning to utilize new technology and the Internet to streamline enrollment in SCHIP and Medicaid. This new technology has enabled States to reduce program enrollment time, improve accuracy, increase access for applicants, and centralize social service applications in State government. States that have launched or are planning to launch web-based enrollment in SCHIP include: California, Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

While web-based enrollment is promising, many States are challenged by high start-up costs. This bill would provide States with more flexibility to use their Federal SCHIP funds for this kind of activity, and would create a grant program to help States promote web-based enrollment.

The SCHIP Web-Based Enrollment Act of 2003 meets these objectives in the following ways:

First, it would allow States to use unused, "retained" (redistributed from the Federal Government back to the State) SCHIP money for this effort. Under current law, a State may use up to 10 percent of retained 1998 allotments for outreach activities approved by the Secretary. The bill adds an additional provision under that section that allows States to use any amount of their retained funds for web-based enrollment outreach.

Second, the bill establishes a separate grant program, allowing States to apply for additional funds (separate from SCHIP money) for this purpose. The grant program would make \$50 million available over 5 years, and grants would be subject to a match rate. The match rate would be tied to their SCHIP match rate, but States would be eligible for up to 20 percent more than their rate, not to exceed 90 percent.

Finally, this legislation provides assistance to States from HHS for development and implementation of the web-based enrollment system by providing information and technical assistance.

There are 9 million uninsured children in the United States. In fact, a child is born without health insurance every minute in this country. We must do everything we can to make it easier for families to enroll children in the health insurance programs available to them. I believe that this bill will provide the necessary means to help states expand enrollment in SCHIP. I urge my Colleagues to support this important legislation.

LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE TO OVERSEE RESEARCH AND COMPLIANCE WITHIN THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation to establish an office to

oversee research compliance and assurance within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am pleased that this legislation has bipartisan support, including CHRIS SMITH, Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; Representative LANE EVANS, Ranking Democratic Member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee; Representative TERRY EVERETT, the former chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; Representative MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, Vice Chairman, Veterans' Affairs Committee; Representatives MICHAEL MICHAUD, JULIA CARSON, BOB FILNER, MICHAEL MCNULTY, BOB BEAUPREZ, JEFF MILLER, JOHN BOOZMAN, CLIFF STEARNS, JOHN SWEENEY, JACK QUINN, HENRY BROWN, GINNY BROWN-WAITE, and JOHN MCHUGH.

The VA has made tremendous contributions in the field of medical research. I think we all recognize the many accomplishments made by the VA in discovering new drug therapies and developing medical devices that have benefited not only veterans but all Americans. For instance, the VA invented the implantable cardiac pacemaker, developed the nicotine patch, performed the first successful liver transplant, and assisted in the development of the first oral vaccine for smallpox.

The intent of this legislation is to ensure that all research funds are directed with focus and accountability. It does not seek to impede the VA from continuing with the research it conducts.

Before I summarize the bill, I want to provide some pertinent background information as to why this legislation is necessary. In April 1999, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing to examine violations of human research protections that occurred in the West Los Angeles and Supulveda Veterans Affairs medical facilities that resulted in the shutdown of all research activity at those two facilities. These violations were traced as far back as 1993 and came to light in 1998. The subcommittee's hearing reviewed what happened and what was being done to correct the situation.

At the hearing, the VA announced that it had created a new Office of Research Compliance and Assurance (ORCA). Then-Under Secretary for Health Kenneth Kizer stated at the April 1999 hearing, "I want to emphasize that this new Office of Research Compliance will be an independent, objective, and unbiased entity in its compliance and oversight activities." Dr. Kizer also said, "By placing the Office of Research Compliance outside of the Research Office, and directly reporting to top management within the Veterans Health Administration, it is my intention to minimize any real or perceived weakness of this type." In subsequent hearings, Dr. Thomas L. Garthwaite, who succeeded Dr. Kizer as Under Secretary for Health, and Dr. Robert H. Roswell, the current Under Secretary both echoed the sentiments expressed by Dr. Kizer in his April 1999 testimony.

ORCA served as the primary advisory component for the Under Secretary for Health on all matters affecting the integrity of research in the protection of human subjects and welfare of laboratory animals, promoting enhancements in the ethical conduct of research in conformance with regulations and policies and investigating any allegations of research improprieties and scientific misconduct. ORCA's major responsibilities included providing direc-

tion, guidance, and oversight to its field offices that perform their delegated roles and responsibilities, in promotion of the office's mission.

ORCA conducted a follow-up review of the Greater Los Angeles Health Systems Research Program and recommended lifting its probationary status. The review also made recommendations for improvements in the research programs. ORCA oversaw the implementation of these recommendations.

Further oversight hearings conducted by my subcommittee produced GAO recommendations on necessary VA actions to strengthen the protection of human research subjects. GAO recommended that VA identify adequate funding levels needed to support human subject protection activities at medical centers and ensure an appropriate allocation of funds to support the activities.

The VA's Office of Research Development also provided preliminary guidance to VISN Directors on the needed Independent Review Board, IRB, staffing levels. The IRBs approve and monitor research protocols for all projects at the facility level.

In January, 2003, it came to the committee's attention that the VA intended to combine the oversight responsibility for all human and animal research within the Office of Research Development, ORD, the very body it was supposed to oversee. I, along with several other members of the Oversight Subcommittee, including Representative LANE EVANS, strongly objected to the proposal and requested the Department review its decision and brief the subcommittee before any further action was taken.

The move to combine ORCA with ORD came after a report of alleged research misconduct involving human subjects at the VA medical center in Albany, NY. My colleagues and I want to insure that oversight of human subject research remains truly independent.

The bill I am introducing would:

First, create an independent office to oversee research compliance and assurance.

Second, require that the new office have a director who reports directly to the Under Secretary for Health.

Third, provide that the missions of the new office be to offer regular counsel to the Under Secretary for Health on all matters related to the protection of human research subjects, research misconduct, laboratory animal welfare and bio-safety; to promote and enhance the ethical conduct of research; to investigate allegations of research impropriety and misconduct; to suspend, restrict, or modify research to ensure the safety, and ethical treatment of human subjects; to preserve integrity and validity of research; to prevent mistreatment of laboratory animals used in research; and to assure compliance in the conduct of research.

The bill would require that the director of the office conduct periodic inspections at research facilities; observe external accreditation site visits; investigate allegations of research improprieties, research misconduct, and non-compliance with research policies and regulations. The bill would also require the immediate notification of the Under Secretary for Health when endangerment of human research subjects is evident or suspected and requires that Congress be notified when impropriety of misconduct of research conducted by the Department has been found.

The bill will provide that funding for the new office would come from the medical care account of the Veterans Health Administration rather than from ORD funding.

Finally, the legislation mandates that the Comptroller General of the United States conduct a study of the effectiveness of the new office and submit a report to Congress by January 1, 2005.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation to improve protection for our Nation's veterans who participate in VA medical research

COMMENDING SHERIFF HAROLD N.
HAL BARKER

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to commend and thank Sheriff Harold N. "Hal" Barker for his public service as the Sheriff of El Dorado County, California. His retirement in January of this year marked the end of a law enforcement career that lasted four and a half decades and spanned from Southern to Northern California.

Law enforcement is one of the most basic and honorable services provided by government. Those who put their own lives on the line to uphold peace and order and protect their fellow citizens deserve the thanks and respect of all. It is in this spirit that I thank Hal Barker for his leadership and hard work in helping make California safe and prosperous.

Hal's professional service has consisted of both excellent training and extensive experience. His formal education includes an Associate of Arts degree in Police Science from Ventura College, a Bachelor of Science degree in Police Administration from California State University at Los Angeles, and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Southern California. Additionally, he graduated from the P.O.S.T. Command College and graduated first in his class from the FBI National Academy, earning the Hoover Medal.

Hal first hit the street as a reserve officer in the Santa Paula Police Department in 1958, ultimately rising to the rank of captain and assistant chief. From 1974 to 1984, he was the San Mateo County Assistant Sheriff. During that time, he acted as the San Francisco International Airport Police Chief for 18 months. Then, in 1984, he began a 12-year tenure as Chief of the Folsom Police Department. In this capacity, he led the department through a period of unprecedented growth.

In 1997, Hal was appointed Sheriff in El Dorado County, and was elected to the position for a full term the following year. As Sheriff, he managed 400 employees and a \$30 billion budget in a growing county.

I join with the communities he has protected to thank Hal Barker for his long and distinguished service. I am proud to call him a friend, and I wish him well in all of his future endeavors.

WHERE THE AMERICANS COME,
THEY MAKE ORDER

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member wishes to commend to his colleagues the March 31, 2003, editorial from the Norfolk Daily News entitled "Unharmful."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains critical to Slovenia and other countries who until recently suffered under the yoke of tyranny. Such countries have made difficult, immediate sacrifices to gain the long-term protection which NATO membership provides and should be recognized for their efforts.

UNHARMED

SLOVENIA'S VOTE INDICATES NATO NOT HARMED
BY WAR ON IRAQ

Critics of Bush administration policy have feared, that the war in Iraq and U.S. "unilateralism" might damage critical alliances like NATO.

From tiny Slovenia—population 1.9 million—comes heartening evidence that this may not be so. Slovenia is the most successful of the Balkan nations to come out of the breakup of Yugoslavia, and from the beginning, its leaders decided the future lay with the West.

In recent referendums, Slovenes voted to join both NATO and the European Union. The E.U. vote was never in doubt, but Slovenia's leaders, who fully understand that NATO membership has real obligations, feared the effect of the war on that vote. In the end, two-thirds of the voters approved.

An economist, Milan Cadez, gave the New York Times a reassuring reason why as he left a polling place: "Only America is capable of doing anything for peace. The E.U. is not capable of doing anything. They watched the crimes in Bosnia and when the Americans come, they make order." And, it should be noted, are still there to help maintain order.

The Slovenes might have their doubts about the war in Iraq, but they have few reservations about the benefits of the U.S.-led military alliance.

A CELEBRATION OF YOUTH IN
HONOR OF CHAUNCY FLOYD
SMITH OF MICHIGAN

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion to honor the life and birth of our tenth grandchild, Chauncy Smith. Born on March 20, 2001, to Brad and Diane Smith, Chauncy is a source of great joy to both me and my wife Bonnie, in part because he was named after my brother who was killed 44 years earlier when his jet fighter went down. We celebrate with Chauncy's other grandparents, Neville and Jennifer Monteith from Kitchener, ON.

It is for this young life, and many others just like it, for which we make decisions in Congress each day. In 2001, the year of Chauncy's birth, we passed one of the largest tax cut packages in history bringing historic

levels of tax relief to working families in America. I'd like to think that we did that to help assume a strong economic future.

In that same year the events of September 11' forever changed the diplomatic landscape in ways still unknown to us. Today, we face great challenges as we seek a world without terror in an effort to avoid the fear we knew during the Cold War.

As we consider the first pieces of legislation of this Congress, let us also consider the children and grandchildren who will bear the burden of our debt and the fears of our miscalculations. We must consider each bill with all the wisdom possible so that future generations do not bear our burdens and fear our fears, but, instead, live their dreams.

As Abraham Lincoln said on December 3, 1861, "The struggle of today, is not altogether for today—it is for a vast future also. With a reliance on Providence, all the more firm and earnest, let us proceed in the great task which events have devolved upon us."

In this time of constant change may we remember and take hope in the great potential of our children and grandchildren and remember that our struggle today is for their vast future also.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF MASTER
SERGEANT DAVID L. BENSON

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Chief Master Sergeant David L. Benson. Originally from Chittenango, NY, Chief Benson enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1962 and subsequently has spent over 38 years with New York Air National Guard. Chief Benson has been decorated with numerous medals, awards and service distinctions. It is my honor to recognize such a distinguished citizen and soldier.

Chief Benson's career began as an Aircraft Mechanic at Amarillo Air Force Base, Texas. Soon after he was assigned to the 4626th Support Squadron, Sage, Air Defense Command at Topsham Air Force Station in Brunswick, Maine. After completion of his four year tour of duty, Chief Benson was granted his release from active duty and became a member of the 174th Fighter Wing of the New York National Guard. Here he performed duties as an Aircraft Crew Chief on the F-86H Sabrejet Fighter Aircraft and the A-37B Dragonfly. He was also an Egress Shop Chief and Accessories Element Supervisors. Concluding his career, Chief Benson served as a Non-commissioned Officer In-charge of the Component Repair Flight.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Benson has served our nation proud in many military arenas. He has been deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of the Persian Gulf War and once again to the Middle East during Operation Northern Watch as part of contingency operations enforcing the no-fly zone over Northern Iraq. He also participated in Operation Noble Eagle after the September 11th attacks.

During these times and throughout his career, Chief Benson has displayed honorable character and service to the 174th and our country. His military decorations include the