

sample of hospital emergency rooms and then estimates national numbers. Nevertheless, NEISS has been gathering these statistics systematically over many years, so that trends become clear over time.

Beginning in 1996, a sharp upward trend can be seen in hospital emergency room visits by passengers on unregulated “fixed” rides—the category of rides exempt from CPSC regulation under the Roller Coaster Loophole. These injuries soared 96 percent over the next 5 years. Meanwhile, such emergency room visits were falling for passengers on rides that the CPSC still regulates.

The theme park industry likes to tell the public that its rides are safer than the mobile rides because they are overseen by a permanent park staff, but according to this independent government safety agency report, the mobile parks have less of an injury problem than the theme parks.

Why has this startling increase in amusement park rides occurred recently? No one knows for sure. If the facts were known to the CPSC, it could do its job. But the facts are kept from the CPSC, so we are left to speculate. We know, for example, that new steel technology and the roller coaster building boom of the 1990s resulted in an increase in the speed almost as dramatic as the increase in serious injuries. All of the nation’s 15 fastest coasters have been built in the last 10 years. In 1980, the top speed hit 60 mph. In 1990, it hit 70 mph. The top speed today is 120 mph, and Six Flags is advertising a new ride for 2005 of 128 mph. The roller coaster arms race is alive and well.

For the most part, these rides are designed, operated and ridden safely. But clearly, the margin for error is much narrower for a child on a ride traveling at 100 mph than on a ride traveling 50 mph. Children often do foolish things, and the operators themselves are often teenagers. People make mistakes. The design of these rides must anticipate that their patrons will act like children, because they often are children.

THE BILL RESTORES BASIC SAFETY OVERSIGHT TO THE CPSC

The bill we are introducing today will close the special-interest loophole that prevents effective federal safety oversight of amusement park rides. It would, therefore, restore to the CPSC the standard safety jurisdiction over “fixed-site” amusement park rides that it used to have before the Roller Coaster Loophole was adopted. There would no longer be an artificial and unjustifiable split between unregulated “fixed-site” rides and regulated “mobile” rides. When a family traveled to a park anywhere in the United States, a mother or father would know that their children were being placed on a ride that was subject to basic safety regulation by the CPSC.

It would restore CPSC’s authority to: 1. Investigate accidents, 2. Develop and enforce action plans to correct defects, and 3. Act as a national clearinghouse for accident and defect data.

The bill would also authorize appropriations of \$500 thousand annually to enable the CPSC to carry out the purposes of the Act.

I urge my colleagues to join us in this effort to make this the safest summer ever in our theme parks. Let’s pass the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the historical decision and individuals involved in the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. This Supreme Court decision was one of the most significant decisions in the history of the United States and was an important impetus in the Civil Rights Movement. Those involved moved the country forward and opened the doors for generations of Americans that would no longer believe that “separate but equal” was a justifiable policy.

In 1896, the Supreme Court held in Plessy vs. Ferguson that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment permitted separate facilities of equal quality for blacks and whites. It established the policy of “separate but equal” as a constitutionally acceptable system in this country. For the next seventy years, many parts of this great Nation promoted segregation in education, housing, transportation, and other facilities. Blacks and whites had separate water fountains, rode in separate railroad cars, and were educated in separate schools.

For the first half of the 20th century, there were two distinct Americas—one black, one white. White schools had far greater educational resources. They receive larger portions of state budgets for education. Their books were current and up-to-date. Their teachers were paid competitive salaries. Black schools were far from equal. Black students were barely prepared for the educational and living challenges ahead of them. Black students were closed to many of the opportunities for advancement. Segregation proved that separate would be inherently unequal.

Lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, including Thurgood Marshall, would lead a series of court cases challenging the constitutionality of segregated educational facilities. Their argument would rest on the disparities in the educational funding and spending, the quality of the educational systems, and the psychological impacts of segregated schools.

Researchers and scholars across the Nation provided evidence of the harmful effects of segregation of young minds. Dr. Kenneth Clark demonstrated that segregated schools nurtured feelings of inferiority in black children. Others showed how the preparation, opportunities, and access of black children were severely hampered by separate educational facilities.

The Supreme Court heard these arguments and agreed with the NAACP and its panel of experts. Separate facilities were inherently unequal. States must treat all its citizens equally, regardless of race. The value of education demanded that the opportunities available to one group be available to all groups.

The ruling nonetheless would have larger import outside of education. It provided hope to African-Americans that they would no longer be treated like second class citizens. It encouraged African-American leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, to pursue full equality through the Civil Rights Movement.

Despite considerable resistance, this Nation has moved forward in equalizing the educational and social opportunities of its citizens, but more can still be done. Public facilities are no longer separated based on race. The gap in educational opportunities is slowly narrowing. The opportunities available to minorities are increasing. We could do more to close the gap in education and to ensure equal opportunities for all.

For today, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we reflect on the importance of that Brown vs. Board of Education decision. The Supreme Court made a wise and important decision that changed the course of this Nation for the next 50 years. It guaranteed to all of our citizens equal treatment before the law regardless of race. This was a clearly important event in American history. The men and women who challenged the policy of segregation should be commended for their deeds. They should have the full appreciation of this Nation.

HONORING MISS JEAN CORNELL

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an exceptional young lady, Jean Katherine Elizabeth Cornell. Miss Cornell is a resident of Mt. Laurel, New Jersey in my district, and is currently in the seventh grade at Harrington Middle School. She is a member of the school’s Student Council, and a talented singer in the First United Methodist Church of Moorestown’s Youth Choir. Above all, she is a motivated and inspired young lady who is standing up for equal rights for all women.

Miss Cornell has been involved in the Alice Paul Institute’s Leadership Program, and helped start the Alice Paul Institute Girls’ Advisory Council. She is very active in her community, spreading Alice Paul’s message of leadership and equality. She is helping to build support for the Equal Right Amendment by educating the public about this vital piece of legislation. This amendment to the Constitution would guarantee the equality of rights under the law for all persons regardless of gender.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Miss Cornell for her contributions to her community, and to women everywhere. Her efforts are much needed in the struggle to close the equality gap between men and women. If there were more girls like Jean, our Nation would be a more just and equal society.

RECOGNIZING REAR ADMIRAL GREG SLAVONIC

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to congratulate Rear Admiral Gregory J. Slavonic upon the completion of his career of service in the United States Navy and Navy Reserve. Throughout his 34-year military career, Rear Admiral Slavonic served with distinction and dedication, ultimately

becoming the Deputy Chief of Information and Director of the Navy Reserve Public Affairs program, responsible for the training and readiness of more than 500 public affairs reservists.

In June 2004, Rear Adm. Slavonic was ordered to active duty in support of Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom II, Baghdad, Iraq. He was assigned to the Multinational Force—Iraq (MFN—I) staff. He served as the senior public affairs officer for Army Gen. George W. Casey, Commanding General for MFN—I, and the Director, Combined Press Information Center (CPIC).

From June to November, Rear Adm. Slavonic led a 65-person team responsible for ensuring more than 500 national and international media organizations received timely and accurate information concerning daily combat operations throughout the Iraqi theater.

Rear Adm. Slavonic began his Navy career in 1971, as a Seaman who enlisted after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in advertising from Oklahoma State University. After completing boot camp at Navy Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill., and attending Signalman "A" school in Newport, R.I., he received orders to the aircraft carrier USS *Constellation* (CVA 64) and completed two western Pacific deployments.

Upon separation from active duty, Rear Adm. Slavonic affiliated with the Navy Reserve Command in Oklahoma City. He received a direct commission as a restricted line officer in public affairs and, in 1976, earned a master of education degree from the University of Central Oklahoma.

In November 1990, Rear Adm. Slavonic was recalled to active duty for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He was assigned to the staff of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf at U.S. Central Command and served at the Joint Information Bureau in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. During his tour in the Arabian Gulf theater, Rear Adm. Slavonic served as a Chief of Navy News desk and combat media escort officer, which included escorting media pools on board USS *Curts* (FFG 38) to document processing and interrogation of more than 40 Iraqi prisoners of war.

He was serving as media escort officer with a media pool on the 18,000-ton amphibious assault ship USS *Tripoli* (LPH 10) in the Arabian Gulf when it struck an Iraqi underwater tethered mine.

Rear Adm. Slavonic has served four commanding officer tours, twice with Navy Office of Information Southwest Detachment 111 Dallas-Fort Worth and twice with the Office of Information Detachment 411 Oklahoma City. He also served as executive officer of 01 Det 411 and staff public affairs officer for REDCOM Eleven.

Rear Adm. Slavonic's Oklahoma City unit earned the Rear Adm. Robert Ravidz Award for Public Affairs Excellence and was a finalist for the Readiness Command Ten Admiral Robert Natter (small) Unit Award. In 1984, Rear Adm. Slavonic was the first recipient of the Navy Reserve Association's "Junior Navy Reserve Officer of the Year" Award.

A native of Great Bend, Kansas, Rear Adm. Slavonic was raised and resides in Oklahoma City where he is an account executive with NBC affiliate KFOR-TV. He is a life member of the Navy Reserve Association as well as Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma alumni organizations.

Rear Adm. Slavonic has also served as president of the Navy Reserve Association (central chapter); president of the U.S. Navy League (local chapter); minority owner of the Oklahoma City Cavalry (Continental Basketball Association team); and as an adjunct professor at the University of Central Oklahoma. He is also active in the Oklahoma City Advertising Club and Leadership Oklahoma City.

Awards earned by Rear Adm. Slavonic include the Bronze Star Medal; Meritorious Service Medal (two awards); Navy Commendation Medal (two awards); Navy Achievement Medal (three awards); Presidential Unit Citation; Combat Action Ribbon; Vietnam Cross of Gallantry; Vietnam Service Medal (one star); Republic of Vietnam Service Medal; Southeast Asia Service Medal (two stars); Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia); Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; and the Joint Service Unit Citation, as well as other service and campaign awards.

Mr. Speaker, I know Rear Adm. Slavonic personally. We first met when he was assisting veterans of the USS *Oklahoma*, obtaining the financial and civic support necessary to create a permanent memorial to their lost ship and fallen comrades. This told me a great deal about his appreciation of Americans of every generation who have worn the uniform for their country and placed their lives at risk for their countrymen. My second opportunity to see Rear Adm. Slavonic was in Baghdad, where he was serving professionally, capably, and courageously in the combat zone. This more than anything else demonstrates that Rear Adm. Slavonic lives according to the values he professes. Like every other American, I am grateful for his service.

I asked the Rear Admiral to call upon me when he returned from Iraq because I was interested in his candid appraisal of our country's efforts there. Upon his arrival in Washington, he visited my office, and our exchange was so productive that I asked him to join me for a breakfast meeting to continue our conversation. He graciously complied, and as a result I had the benefit of his profound expertise, professional judgment, and keen insights into the challenges our country and our military face in Iraq.

On every occasion on which I have encountered and interacted with Rear Adm. Slavonic, he has impressed me with his professional courtesy, his commitment to our country, and his wise counsel. He is an able and honorable sailor who embodies the finest traditions of the United States Navy.

His family and fellow shipmates can be proud of his service. Rear Adm. Slavonic, his wife Molly, and children Kara, Maggie, and Blake, and Blake's wife Kasey and grandson Hogan have made many sacrifices during his Naval and civilian careers, and we appreciate their contributions of conscientious service to our country. As he departs the Pentagon to start his third career, I call upon my colleagues to wish Greg and his family every success, and the traditional Navy "fair winds and following seas." It is a pleasure to recognize this gentleman at the conclusion of a distinguished career of service to the United States of America.

STATEMENT DURING HEARING ON "FOSTERING DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST"

### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 19, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, May 17, 2005, I, as the Ranking Minority Member for the House Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations made the following statement during a hearing on "Fostering Democracy in the Middle East: Defeating Terrorism With Ballots":

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to the distinguished witnesses that are here today for this important hearing. We have much to learn from the experts who are here with us, and we must listen and use this knowledge to correct the disastrous foreign policy road that this Administration has embarked upon—a policy which has already taken the lives of over 1,600 U.S. soldiers and wounded thousands more. Congress can help save many more lives by changing these failed policies immediately. As the journalist Thomas Friedman wrote recently, "you can't build a decent society on the graves of suicide bombers and their victims."

Our policy is greatly misguided and also misrepresented. During the President's 2005 State of the Union address there were Iraqis in the audience who held up ink-stained thumbs in a symbol intending to convey that democracy had reached finally reached Iraq—thanks to the U.S. Their hope was to send the message that even though WMDs were never found, the victory of bringing democracy to Iraq was worth the cost in blood and treasure.

But before we congratulate ourselves, I must admit that I am skeptical of the Administration's policy of promoting democracy. The United States does not have a history of bringing democracy to nations out of pure altruism. Rather there is usually something we have to gain by overthrowing a nation and the promotion of democracy is the excuse we use to do it. Or in the case of Iraq, it was our fall-back excuse. The war to eradicate WMDs quickly transformed into the war to bring democracy to Iraqis—once the world discovered that WMDs did not in fact exist in Iraq.

Perhaps the greatest argument against this vision of pure altruism is that when it is in our interest to leave undemocratic governments alone, we do.

Examples of this argument are the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These countries have well-known horrendous human rights records and have serious impediments to democracy. According to the State Department's 2004 Report on Human Rights Practices,

"Uzbekistan is an authoritarian state with limited civil rights. . . . the December 26 elections fell significantly short of international standards for democratic elections . . . the executive branch heavily influenced the courts and did not ensure due process . . . Government's human rights record remained very poor . . . police and National Security Service forces tortured, beat, and harassed persons . . . the Government restricted freedom of religion and movement . . . the Government severely restricted fundamental worker rights."

These conditions are more or less present throughout the other Central Asian states. Yet the U.S. has not taken firm steps to encourage reforms. There have been provisions