

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, as co-Chairman of the Congressional Kidney Caucus, I would like to recognize that March is National Kidney Month. The Kidney Caucus partners with groups such as the National Kidney Foundation to increase public awareness of risk factors for chronic kidney disease and emphasize the importance of early detection. Anyone with high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease is at risk.

This March, the National Kidney Foundation is urging all those at risk to undergo a kidney screening. Simple urine and blood tests during a routine doctor's visit can show the earliest signs of kidney damage. According to the National Kidney Foundation, more than 20 million Americans—that's one in nine adults—have chronic kidney disease. More than 20 million more are at increased risk for developing the disease. Nearly half of all Americans with chronic kidney disease are unaware of their condition.

Early detection and intervention can halt the progression of the disease before it reaches kidney failure, at which point there are no other alternatives but dialysis or transplantation. Catching kidney disease at an early stage saves patient's lives and saves the taxpayer tremendous sums otherwise spent on costly dialysis and transplant procedures. Please help me honor National Kidney Month by urging those at risk for kidney disease to take this threat seriously and undergo a screening.

LETTER FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH LIAISON GROUP

HON. TED STRICKLAND

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following letter for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES STRICKLAND AND MURPHY: The undersigned organizations in the Mental Health Liaison Group, representing patients, health professionals and family members, are pleased to support your legislation, the Medicare Mental Health Co-payment Equity Act. Under your legislation, Medicare's historic discriminatory 50 percent coinsurance for outpatient mental health care would be reduced over six years to 20 percent, bringing the coinsurance into line with that required of Medicare beneficiaries for other Part B services.

Simply put, current law discriminates against Medicare beneficiaries who seek treatment for mental illness. This affects elderly and non-elderly Medicare beneficiaries alike when they seek mental health care. According to the 1999 U.S. Surgeon General's report on mental health, almost 20 percent of elderly individuals have some type of mental disorder uncommon in typical aging. In addition, elderly individuals have the highest rate of suicide in the U.S., often the result of depression. The Surgeon General's report states, "Late-life depression is particularly

costly because of the excess disability that it causes and its deleterious interaction with physical health. Older primary care patients with depression visit the doctor and emergency rooms more often, use more medication, incur higher outpatient charges, and stay longer at the hospital."

The 50 percent coinsurance requirement is also unfair to the non-elderly disabled Medicare population. Because many of these individuals have severe mental illnesses combined with low incomes and high medical expenses, a 50 percent coinsurance obligation is a serious patient burden. For elderly and non-elderly Medicare beneficiaries alike, Medicare is a critical source of care. Your legislation to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries needing mental health care incur only the same cost-sharing obligations as required of all other Medicare patients would end the statutory discrimination against Medicare beneficiaries seeking treatment for mental disorders.

Thank you for your leadership in addressing this important issue for the nation's 40 million Medicare patients.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry.

American Association of Children's Residential Centers.

American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

American Association of Practicing Psychiatrists.

American Group Psychotherapy Association.

American Mental Health Counselors Association.

American Occupational Therapy Association.

American Psychiatric Association.

American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

American Psychoanalytic Association.

American Psychological Association.

American Psychotherapy Association.

Anxiety Disorders Association of America.

Association for the Advancement of Psychology.

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare.

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

Clinical Social Work Federation.

Clinical Social Work Guild.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance.

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action.

Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems.

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses.

NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

National Association for Children's Behavioral Health.

National Association for Rural Mental Health.

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD).

National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils.

National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems.

National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems.

National Mental Health Association.

Suicide Prevention Action Network USA.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday March 2, 2005, I was unable to cast my vote on H.R. 27, the Job Training Improvement Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall 46, the Scott of Virginia amendment and "nay" on rollcall 48, the final passage of H.R. 27. I also would have voted "yea" on rollcall 43, 44, 45, and 47 and "nay" on rollcall 42.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WEBB COUNTY COMMISSIONER JUDITH GUTIERREZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important achievements of Judith G. Gutierrez in Laredo, TX in my Congressional District.

Judith G. Gutierrez (Pct.2) was elected in 1986, she held the office for two consecutive terms. Re-elected in 1999 and again in 2002, she will begin her fourth term of office in January 2003. Throughout her tenure, Gutierrez has taken a hands-on approach to colonia issues.

Former Attorney General Dan Morales appointed Commissioner Gutierrez to the state's Colonia Task Force. Former Governor Ann Richards selected Gutierrez to chair the Regional Review Committee for scoring federally funded projects such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and colonia set-aside funds. She served in this capacity for four years.

Commissioner Gutierrez worked with State legislators in 1989 to pass Senate Bill 2, which created the first colonia legislation, implementing rules to limit unscrupulous development. Senate Bill 2 also authorized the mechanism needed to provide funding for water and sewer improvements. To ensure regulatory enforcement at the local level, she created the Webb County's first Planning Department. This department has been recognized by the Texas Attorney General's office under Generals Morales and Cornyn as the model for colonia regulation and enforcement.

Total grant funds for projects initiated in Webb County during Gutierrez' term in office exceeds \$100 million. Since 1992, Commissioner Gutierrez has secured more than \$25 million in colonia improvement funds for her precinct alone. Projects have ranged from infrastructure—water, storm drainage, and community centers to educational and health initiatives.

In 1994, Commissioner Gutierrez was Governor Ann Richards' appointee to the South Texas Regional Prosperity Plan and also served on the Environmental Transition Team organized to consolidate the Texas Air Quality Control Board, the Water Commission and selected divisions of the Texas Health Department. In 2003 Governor Rick Perry appointed Commissioner Judith Gutierrez to the South Texas Regional Review Committee.

She is a past President of the South Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association and currently serves as trustee for the Texas Association of Counties Health and Employees Benefits Pool. She has the distinction of being the only commissioner from Webb County to have ever served on the Intergovernmental Relations Steering Committee for the National Association of Counties, based in Washington, D.C.

She is the Secretary for the Texas Council Board of Directors and serves on the board of the Texas Council of Community Mental Health Retardation Centers, Inc. (MHMR). She chairs the County's Villa Antigua Committee, a historical preservation project, as well as the Committee to create the new Webb County Morgue. She was appointed by Judge Mercurio Martinez to serve on the Purchasing Board and to chair an Art Committee for the New Administration Building. She has also been elected in the year 2002 to be President of the Webb County HFC. Commissioner Gutierrez also serves on the Board of Texas Association of Counties 2003 and on the Texas Association of Counties Health and Employee Benefits Pool since 2001. She was recognized as one of the 2003 Tiger Legends for Martin High School. She was recently asked to join the Mercy Health Center Advisory Board for 2003 as well as the Border Area Nutrition Council.

Judith G. Gutierrez was born in Laredo, Texas to Sabino and Olga Garza. She attended Laredo schools and holds an Associate of Arts degree from Laredo Junior College. A successful businesswoman, for more than a decade Gutierrez owned and operated La Hacienda Mexican Restaurant. Commissioner Gutierrez has her Real Estate license and is in the process of securing a Real Estate Brokers license. She is the mother of four and has two grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize Webb County Commissioner Judith Gutierrez.

REINTRODUCING “HOLLY’S LAW”

HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reintroducing “Holly’s Law”—a bill that would suspend FDA approval of the drug RU-486. This bill has been introduced with 48 cosponsors. Senator JIM DEMINT has reintroduced Holly’s Law in the Senate.

Holly’s Law is named in memory of Holly Patterson, an 18-year-old Californian who died after taking the drug in 2003. When I tell people that the FDA approved a drug to treat a life-threatening illness that has killed three pregnant women and seriously injured dozens of other pregnant women in the United States, they’re shocked. They want to know why the FDA and Congress would allow a drug that kills and injures young women to stay on the market. RU-486 is a drug that always kills babies and sometimes kills and seriously injures healthy young women.

I urge my colleagues to support Holly’s Law to take the dangerous and unsafe drug RU-486 off the market.

TRIBUTE TO AM 1490 WMBM, SOUTH FLORIDA’S FIRST BLACK-OWNED AND OPERATED RADIO STATION—NEW BIRTH BROADCASTING CORPORATION CELEBRATES 10 YEARS IN RADIO

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to Bishop Victor T. Curry, D.D., Min, President and CEO, and to everyone at the New Birth Broadcasting Corporation as they celebrate their 10th year in radio.

Celebratory events will begin with a community worship service at 7 p.m. on March 9th and will feature Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr. of the Eastern Star Church of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Since the purchase of AM 1490 WMBM, the landscape of gospel radio has changed dramatically. WMBM has received local as well as national recognition for its contribution to our local community, for it not only plays the best in gospel music, but it also provides its listeners with late-breaking news and inspirational, life-changing programming. WMBM, the first black-owned and operated station in South Florida, is one of the first radio stations to stream its broadcast via the internet. WMBM also publishes a quarterly nationally distributed magazine and an annual directory of black-owned and supported businesses.

I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Bishop Curry and his staff for doing such an important job so well, and my best wishes for another outstanding decade in broadcasting.

JOB TRAINING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT C. SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, had under consideration the bill (H.R. 27) to enhance the workforce investment system of the Nation by strengthening one-stop career centers, providing for more effective governance arrangements, promoting access to a more comprehensive array of employment, training, and related services, establishing a targeted approach to serving youth, and improving performance accountability, and for other purposes:

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I submit the following information regarding H.R. 27 for the RECORD.

MARCH 2, 2005.

THE REAL DEMOCRATIC RECORD ON
CHARITABLE CHOICE,

DEAR COLLEAGUE: I wanted to be sure you had a copy of the Real Democratic Record on Charitable Choice. I hope this is helpful as we debate H.R. 27, containing a vast expansion of Charitable Choice to federally-funded job training programs for the first time since 1965.

THE 2004 DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

“We honor the central place of faith in the lives of our people. Like our Founders, we

believe that our nation, our communities, and our lives are made vastly stronger and richer by faith and the countless acts of justice and mercy it inspires. We will strengthen the role of faith-based organizations in meeting challenges like homelessness, youth violence, and other social problems. At the same time, we will honor First Amendment protections and not allow public funds to be used to proselytize or discriminate. Throughout history, communities of faith have brought comfort to the afflicted and shaped great movements for justice. We know they will continue to do so, and we will always protect all Americans’ freedom to worship.”

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD ON
CHARITABLE CHOICE

1996—The Clinton Administration submitted amendments as part of its technical corrections package to Congress regarding concerns over the constitutionality of Charitable Choice provisions contained in welfare reform. They filed the following comments with the amendment: “[P]rovisions of sec. 104 and its legislative history could be read to be inconsistent with the constitutional limits. . . . We recommend amending sec. 104 to clarify that it does not compel or allow States to provide TANF benefits through pervasively sectarian organizations, either directly or through vouchers redeemable with these organizations.” Congress did not act on those amendments.

1998—The Clinton Administration issued a signing statement placing limitations on the Charitable Choice provisions contained in the Community Services Block Grant: “The Department of Justice advises, however, that the provision that allows religiously affiliated organizations to be providers under CSBG would be unconstitutional if and to the extent it were construed to permit governmental funding of ‘pervasively sectarian’ organizations, as that term has been defined by the courts. Accordingly, I construe the Act as forbidding the funding of pervasively sectarian organizations and as permitting Federal, State, and local governments involved in disbursing CSBG funds to take into account the structure and operations of a religious organization in determining whether such an organization is pervasively sectarian.”

2000—The Clinton Administration issued a signing statement placing limitations on the Charitable Choice provisions contained in the reauthorization of the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Act (SAMHSA): “The Department of Justice advises, however, that this provision would be unconstitutional to the extent that it were construed to permit governmental funding of organizations that do not or cannot separate their religious activities from their substance abuse treatment and prevention activities that are supported by SAMHSA aid. Accordingly, I construe the Act as forbidding the funding of such organizations and as permitting Federal, State, and local governments involved in disbursing SAMHSA funds to take into account the structure and operations of a religious organization in determining whether such an organization is constitutionally and statutorily eligible to receive funding.”

Very truly yours,

ROBERT C. “BOBBY” SCOTT,
Member of Congress.

FEBRUARY 28, 2005.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The undersigned organizations are writing to urge you to vote against H.R. 27, the Job Training Improvement Act, unless it is modified to address the concerns outlined in this letter, and to oppose any effort to expand the block grant authority in the bill along the lines of the Administration’s “WIA Plus” proposal.