and Katrina are alumnae of William H. Crocker Middle School, I was delighted to be a part of the celebration both as a father of and as a Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, during my visit to the campus and after spending an assembly period with the students, parents and faculty of Crocker, I witnessed the immense enthusiasm and spirit this school fortunately possesses. As the only middle school in the nation to have received this distinction four years in a row, I have no doubt that under the leadership of Principal Janet Chun, William H. Crocker Middle School will continue to shine.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HEPATITIS B AWARENESS WEEK

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for House Resolution 250, Supporting the Goals and Ideals of a National Hepatitis B Awareness Month. Hepatitis B is a serious health concern that unfairly attacks minority populations.

Almost 350 million people worldwide are infected with hepatitis B, with 75 percent of those infected living in Asia. This disease has similar effects on the same groups of people here in the United States. Asians have the highest rate of chronic hepatitis B of all ethnic groups. Chronic hepatitis B rates for the Asian Pacific Islanders population range up to 15 percent, which is more than half of all the Americans diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B.

African Americans are three to four times more likely than Caucasians to be infected with hepatitis B. Additionally, the African American workforce, consisting of over 3 million people, tend to work in occupations, such as nursing, health care and emergency services with higher exposure to the hepatitis B virus.

Over half the United States' total Asian American population lives in just three states, with 1.2 million living in New York. Seventeen percent of New York's population is of African-American descent.

The hepatitis disease is extremely dangerous, because not only does it lead to life-threatening illnesses such as cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer but it can also be easily transmitted through blood and body fluids, unprotected sex, and unsterilized needles. Also, many of those who have become infected with the disease will not have recognized symptoms until they develop the more serious illnesses.

Hepatitis B can be a preventable disease if vaccination programs, increased awareness, better disease management and public education initiatives are ongoing. By recognizing the week of May 9th as National Hepatitis B Awareness Week, we can join together and attack this life-threatening disease. During Hepatitis B Awareness Week, several community events are scheduled that will bring together physicians and public health advocates, patients and at-risk populations to increase awareness and education on prevention, and treatments for hepatitis B.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to lend my support for passage of this resolution and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT ON THE FAILURE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO ADEQUATELY INVESTIGATE PRISONER ABUSES

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring your attention to the recent Human Rights Watch report, Getting Away with Torture?: Command Responsibility for the U.S. Abuse of Detainees. This report reveals the unthinkable: The torture carried out against prisoners under U.S. authority may have been part of an official government policy. The report also points out that none of the government and military investigations carried out so far has independently examined the culpability of top civilian and military officials.

Despite strong evidence showing that high-ranking U.S. officials may be responsible for carrying out immoral and illegal policies, ''independent'' investigations have focused on protecting high-ranking officials and punishing subordinates instead of bringing the guilty to justice.

These actions run counter to the United States' long-standing commitment to the spirit of the Geneva Convention. The War Crimes Act of 1996 provides criminal punishment for Americans who commit a war crime inside or outside the United States, and defines a war crime as any ''grave breach'' of the Geneva Conventions. The Anti-Torture Act of 1996 crimina1izes acts of torture occurring outside the United States' territorial jurisdiction regardless of the citizenship of the perpetrator or victim.

It should not have to be stated, but the United Stated must operate under the laws it has passed. If crimes have been committed they must be investigated completely.

This report raises important issues and calls for the United States Attorney General to appoint a special counsel to carry out an investigation and prosecute all government officials and private citizens that developed, approved and carried out these torture policies. I urge my colleagues to read the report, available online at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/us0405/.

INTRODUCTION OF EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAND TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION EXTENSION ACT

HON. CATHY McMORRIS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Miss McMORRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to address an issue of importance to Eastern Washington University, located in my district in the town of Cheney, Washington. Eastern Washington University owns a 21 acre parcel of land known as Badger Lake. The property was originally deeded to the university by the federal government under the 1926 State Recreation and Public Purposes Act. This property is restricted to the purpose for which the law was enacted, education and recreation, and it carries a ''reverter clause which says that the land will revert to the federal government, Bureau of Land Management—Department of Interior, if not used for these purposes.

However, the property is located in a rural area that is not conducive to the intended recreation or education uses. The only way Eastern Washington University could legally sell or exchange the land is if federal legislation passed which releases the patent conditions on this property. In 1983, the university, with the help of Speaker Tom Foley and Senator Slade Gorton, and supported by the Bureau of Land Management, was successful in getting legislation passed (Public Law 97–435) that removed the restrictions for a five year period. Unfortunately that window expired in 1988.

In the last Congress former Congressman George Nethercutt was successful in passing legislation extending the 1983 law. H.R. 4596 passed the House of Representatives on September 28, 2004 by unanimous consent.

I rise today to reintroduce legislation to address this issue.

FAMILYCARE ACT OF 2005

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, in our great land of opportunity and wealth, there are many Americans who have no access to one of the most basic needs: health care. In our Nation today, nearly 45 million Americans are uninsured. Today I offer a way to begin addressing this problem by introducing the FamilyCare Act of 2005. In conjunction with the Medicare Early Access Act and the Small Business Health Insurance Promotion Act that my colleagues are also introducing today, the enactment of these bills could cut the number of uninsured in half.

The FamilyCare Act of 2005 is a family-centered bill that aims to provide coverage for the 7.5 million working families with incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level. This act builds upon two programs, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, that have successfully covered many low-income persons, individuals with disabilities, and children. It would ensure families who move from welfare to work do not lose coverage and makes it easier for low-income working families to obtain health insurance.

Improving our Nation's healthcare system continues to be a complex challenge that must be a matter of national priority. By taking these first steps, it is our hope that in the future all Americans will be able to meet their healthcare needs.