

Compare the common sense expressed in bedrock journalism against Republican's unlimited access to uncommon hype. You decide.

Mr. Speaker, like oil, even Republican hype is a finite resource, and that's the best energy news for America in a decade.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ANOTHER ACCUTANE DEATH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, on this first day of the Second Session of the 109th Congress, I sadly inform the House of Representatives of another Accutane death. I will enter into the RECORD an article from the Appleton Post Crescent. The article is dated today, February 1, 2006. If I may, I would like to quote from this newspaper.

□ 1845

"Justin Zimmer shot himself January 15 in his bedroom, a shocking suicide his family struggles to comprehend and fears may be tied to Justin's acne medication.

"The day of Justin's death, the family had returned home from a meeting to discuss a trip planned by Justin's church youth group.

"His parents, Wendy and Warren, left for the grocery store. An hour later they pulled into the driveway and learned Justin was dead.

"How could their happy, high-achieving teen, who couldn't wait to take his driver's test on his 16th birthday Thursday, end a life of so much promise?

"All the Zimmers and their other two children are left with are questions, and the only answer they can come up with to explain his death is Accutane, the prescription drug Justin started taking in December for severe acne."

I wish to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Zimmer family. I, too, know the struggle and heartache and pain that they are going through as I lost my son B.J. on May 14, 2000.

To go on the article says that the FDA and the drug manufacturer of Accutane, Roche, indicated that the rate of depression among Accutane users is 1.5 times higher than among nonusers, according to a December 7, 2004 report in USA Today.

As Mr. Zimmer said, "They can snap in as little as an hour. I'd just as soon see it off the market," meaning Accutane. "If this can happen to a kid with all this going for him, think what

could happen to a kid who's struggling?"

"They shouldn't sell it to anyone . . ."

Another doctor, "an Appleton dermatologist, said he has looked at a number of studies and has no qualms about prescribing isotretinoin," which is the medical term for Accutane.

He goes on and says, this dermatologist, "It's something we're concerned about and we ask about, but we don't see any scientific evidence to say there is an increased risk for it." He said the side effects, including the potential for depression and suicide, are there, but he is not concerned about it.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to this floor before, and I have brought forth this PET scan of the frontal orbital cortex. If you take a look at it, this is the medical evidence that directly links Accutane to depression and suicide ideation and suicide in the users of Accutane.

If you take a look at it, here is the baseline of Accutane over on my far right. That is the frontal orbital cortex of the brain. When you take a look there is all the red in the picture over here, that is the baseline. Four months later they take a PET scan of the brain over here, post-Accutane, 4 months on Accutane. Notice there is very little redness in this front part of the brain, the frontal orbital cortex, the front part of the brain we know causes depression.

The reason why there is no redness is because the metabolism of the brain has been stopped or affected by the use of the Accutane. In this particular slide, this person had a 21 percent decrease in brain activity while on Accutane.

So, when this dermatologist says there is no medical evidence, there is. Here is the direct evidence. This has been published in the American Journal of Psychiatry last year. Also, there are animal tests which show the same thing, how Accutane actually destroyed a brain in these animals.

We can even take it one step further. This person who has this PET scan here, if you gave this person, a number of dermatologists said they would monitor them, if you give this person the Beck's depression test, which is standard indication of signs of depression to see if the person is suffering from depression, this person who had a 21 percent decrease in brain activity passed every one of them. The only reason why they knew something was going on besides the PET scan was the personal behavior had changed. Unless you are monitoring that person all the time you never would know that from the Beck's depression test because it did not show a change in personality.

Getting back to the young man that unfortunately took his life on January 15, his parents went on to say, "He had an appointment this Thursday to take his driver's test and it was one of the few times he'd take off of school. We were shopping for cars."

"Justin was sensitive and shy, with a ready smile and a penchant for perfection, said his parents. At school, he was sophomore class president, and ranked No. 1 in his class with straight A's. He was in wrestling, football and baseball."

Mr. Speaker, we presented these findings of this PET scan to then-Secretary of Health and Human Services Secretary Thompson and also to then Mr. Crawford, and we are still waiting for answers back as to these PET scans and what it shows.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many unanswered questions. My time has expired. I look forward to continuing this discussion on this serious drug, and it should be pulled from the market.

The article I previously referred to is as follows:

[From the Post-Crescent, Feb. 1, 2006]

ACCUTANE BLAMED IN SUICIDE

(By Kathy Walsh Nufer)

MENASHA.—Justin Zimmer shot himself Jan. 15 in his bedroom, a shocking suicide his family struggles to comprehend and fears may be tied to Justin's acne medication.

The day of Justin's death, the family had returned home from a meeting to discuss a trip planned by Justin's church youth group.

His parents, Wendy and Warren, left for the grocery store. An hour later they pulled into the driveway and learned Justin was dead.

How could their happy, high-achieving teen, who couldn't wait to take his driver's test on his 16th birthday Thursday, end a life of so much promise?

All the Zimmers and their other two children are left with are questions, and the only answer they can come up with to explain his death is Accutane, the prescription drug Justin started taking in December for severe acne.

Accutane is a brand name of the anti-acne drug isotretinoin, which went on the market in 1982.

It has become controversial because of its serious side effects, including birth defects, mental disorders and even suicide.

Those side effects, however, are so rare that many doctors think they statistically are insignificant, and the Food and Drug Administration only warns people to be aware of them, not to abstain from using the drug.

The Zimmers blame their son's death on the drug, said Warren, who was aware of the side effects but saw no warning signs in his son's behavior.

"That's why we felt it necessary to get this out. We want parents to know just how sudden this can come on. If we can save someone, maybe his death isn't a total loss and someone else doesn't have to go through this."

U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Mich., whose son committed suicide in 2000 while taking Accutane, has pressed for more public warnings about the link between depression and isotretinoin, more restricted distribution and more tracking of side effects.

The Zimmers say they have talked to countless people who know someone taking isotretinoin. "It's more prevalent than you think," Warren said.

The couple now urges parents to take their teens off the medication if they are on it.

"They can snap in as little as an hour," Warren said. "I'd just as soon see it off the market. If this can happen to a kid with all this going for him, think what could happen to a kid who's struggling?"

"They shouldn't sell it to anyone under 18," Wendy said.

Adrianne Marsh, a spokeswoman for Stupak's office, said Tuesday the FDA has attributed about 200 suicides to the drug so far and last spring put out an isotretinoin alert.

Dr. Charlie Kagen, an Appleton dermatologist, said he has looked at a number of studies and has no qualms about prescribing isotretinoin.

"It's something we're concerned about and we ask about, but we don't see any scientific evidence to say there is an increased risk for it," he said of the side effects, including the potential for depression and suicide.

"There's a suggestion it (Accutane) might play a role, but statistically we can't say it does. Well over 6 million people in the U.S. alone have used it since 1982."

Side effects are explained in the medication guide Roche Laboratories, the maker of Accutane, puts out for patients.

The literature notes that some patients may become depressed or develop such symptoms as sadness, anxiety, irritability, anger, thoughts of violence and suicide.

Patients sign a consent form, agreeing to stop using the medication if they notice any symptoms, and are required to meet with their doctor once a month, which Justin did.

Justin, who had taken Accutane for a month before his death, had tried other topical acne medications with little luck, said his parents. He had decided on Accutane, which is prescribed when other treatments don't work, after discussing it with his dermatologist.

He also had discussed the side effects with his parents.

"It's not that we took it lightly," said Warren. "We were watching for warning signs."

"We saw nothing," said Wendy. "I could talk to him about things, and he promised he would come to me if anything bothered him."

When police asked the Zimmers what they thought happened, Warren noticed the prescription slip for Accutane on the kitchen counter.

Justin's last appointment with the dermatologist had been Jan. 12 and on the slip was the orange sticker giving the pharmacist the OK for a new 30-day supply.

Warren and Wendy Zimmer insist their son's suicide had to be related to the drug.

"He had so much going for him," said Warren. "He was good at everything he did. He respected everybody. He didn't have an enemy in the world."

"He had an appointment this Thursday to take his driver's test and it was one of the few times he'd take off of school. We were shopping for cars."

Justin was sensitive and shy, with a ready smile and a penchant for perfection, said his parents. At school, he was sophomore class president, and ranked No. 1 in his class with straight A's. He was in wrestling, football and baseball.

"He had an undefeated season in wrestling and was so looking forward to baseball," Wendy said. "He'd been sleeping with his baseball glove by his pillow."

Justin planned to join the military, Warren said. "He was a big 'CSI' fan. Who knows where he would have gone? He had a heck of a start on life."

The Zimmers can't say enough about the support of family, school personnel and the community, especially Menasha students, through their ordeal. "When we came home from the wake there were 100 kids in our front yard having a candlelight vigil. They encircled us. It was so healing," Wendy said.

Even so, Warren said he is beset by "streaks of anger" when he thinks about Justin's death.

"Your life changes so quickly in a matter of an hour. You go to the grocery store and

come back and you don't have five people at home anymore. You have four."

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as always, I profoundly appreciate the privilege to address this body and on a subject matter before us that we have not had the opportunity to debate and deliberate within this Chamber and one of the broader subjects that I would like to address in this upcoming 60 minutes. Mr. Speaker, is the President's State of the Union address last night. I have a copy in my hand here, the one I took notes on as he spoke in this Chamber last night.

Before I move into that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a couple of subject matters that were raised by one of the previous speakers and point out that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, this seems to be something that is debated across this country intensively by the mainstream media. It fits within the same category of the PATRIOT Act which we extended at least from this floor today.

I sat through in the Judiciary Committee at least part if not all of the 12 to 13 hearings that we had, and we asked continually, give us some names, give us some specific examples of someone who had their rights trampled or abused or usurped under the PATRIOT Act and I say also under FISA. The criticism continues, Mr. Speaker, but I still continue to ask, name the case, name the individual, give me the circumstances by which these laws that have protected us so well have been abused by anyone this administration or the opening by which that might be done. I have not heard that answer, and I continue to ask that question.

This country has not been attacked because we have been prudent in our surveillance. This surveillance under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act has been used by many Presidents and only challenged now after it was brought forward in the New York Times, the very morning that there is a PATRIOT Act vote in the United States Senate. I would question the motives of that newspaper that sat on that story for a year. We need to continue to ask that question and what was the motive of the paper, and by the way, what was the motive of the Members of this body and the other body when they had been briefed on FISA and those kind of foreign intelligence surveillance, they did not seem to have an objection when they were briefed. They only had an objection when they were briefed by the media. We have a larger responsibility than that, Mr. Speaker, and I would point that out.

Also, one of the previous speakers addressed the issue of "our addition to

foreign oil." I would ask those people, help us use this domestic supply of energy that we have. Let us unlock ANWR, let us unlock the Outer Continental Shelf. Let us develop these domestic supplies of renewable energies that we have. Let us join together in a bipartisan effort to grow the size of this energy pie.

So those two in response to the previous remarks that were made, Mr. Speaker, and then I would also address the idea, the President covered a whole series of subject matters last night. Our national defense is one. Energy is another. Education is another.

Of course, one of the key components to our national security is immigration, border enforcement, and here with us tonight to address the border security issue and border enforcement and I expect will have some kind words to say about our brave border patrol is the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) to whom I would be pleased to yield to.

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from the Mexican border and I am here to report my findings.

We were 5,000 feet up in the mountains along the border California shares with Mexico at 2:00 a.m., freezing in 30-degree weather with the wind howling in our faces. Eight shivering young men, illegal aliens in their late teens and early 20s, sat on the cold ground in handcuffs, grateful to be caught. One of them pleaded with the border patrol agent to find his girlfriend Maria who was still stuck on one of the cliffs.

Illegal aliens, like the ones I saw in handcuffs, continue to enter the United States from the Mexican border at the rate of 8,000 per day. Today, we have 11 million illegal aliens in the United States.

Illegal immigration presents a huge problem. That is why I decided to spend a week along the southern border to see firsthand how bad the problem was and what Congress could do to fix it.

Last year, our border patrol agents arrested 1.2 million illegal aliens attempting to enter the United States from Mexico. Significantly, 155,000 of those arrested were from countries other than Mexico. They included illegal immigrants from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. Our porous Mexican-U.S. border offers the perfect cover for terrorists, especially since tighter controls have been imposed at airports.

This poses a very serious national security problem, according to CIA Director Porter Goss. I personally spoke with border patrol agents who had apprehended suspects on the terrorist watch list.

One night while I was riding along with the border patrol two illegals from Pakistan were captured. One convicted sexual predator was caught trying to cross, so were wanted murder suspects, drug dealers and smugglers.