

the subcommittee, Mr. HINOJOSA, the field hearings that we had, the wonderful staff, the bipartisan vote out of committee. I urge all my colleagues to vote "aye" on this great piece of legislation for our aging seniors across our country.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Senior Independence Act of 2006.

The Older Americans Act was enacted in 1965 to establish the Administration on Aging to institute and support Federal nutritional and social programs for this Nation's seniors, and since then, millions of this Nation's elderly have benefited from the Act's many programs.

This Act is more important to the country today than ever before. More than 49 million people in the United States are over the age of 60, making it the fastest growing age group in the country. By 2050, that number will reach nearly 90 million and will count as almost a quarter of our population.

With this rapid demographic increase, it is essential that we ensure the establishment of effective Federal efforts to aid America's elderly. There are more seniors who are minorities, more seniors who are trying to go back to work; more seniors who are living longer; and more seniors living in urban areas. Specifically, the Senior Independence Act will promote home- and community-based supports to help older individuals avoid institutional care, strengthen health and nutrition programs, improve educational and volunteer services, increase Federal, State, and local coordination, and safeguard employment-based training for older Americans.

This Act was conceived forty years ago in a spirit of bipartisanship to better the lives of those put in less fortunate circumstances. I would like to commend Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member MILLER today on their spirit of bipartisanship during this reauthorization.

I am especially thankful to the Chairman and his committee staff for working with me to include my amendments that would recognize the growing number of older Americans who are living in urban areas and would encourage life-long learning.

The number of Americans aging in urban areas is growing and its diversity is increasing. Between 1999 and 2030, the urban minority population of 65 and older is projected to increase by 217 percent, as compared with the projected 81 percent increase among the white population. My amendment, which has been included in the bill, will assist urban seniors by providing grants to discover how older Americans can age successfully in urban areas.

The bill also adds my amendment to promote and disseminate information about life-long learning programs. Researchers and clinicians are increasingly interested in the concept of successful aging, and they are finding that a person who engages in a healthy lifestyle including continuing education, thinking and maintaining social contacts are part of successful.

Together, these amendments will improve the lives of older Americans by helping to address the unique needs of those living in urban areas and also to help promote the benefits of taking part in life-long learning programs.

In closing, I would also like to pause and remember the life and work of Dr. Elizabeth

Kutza. Dr. Elizabeth Kutza was the Professor of Community Health and former Director of the Institute on Aging at Portland State University. Dr. Kutza died on Friday, June 9, 2006, after a seven-year battle with breast cancer. Dr. Kutza and her family are in my thoughts and prayers.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman MCKEON and Ranking Member MILLER for their outstanding writing of this bill and for making sure that the Older Americans Act can continue to provide for the growing number of seniors in our country today.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of providing the social and nutritional support that older Americans need, and in support of the Seniors Independence Act of 2006.

Since originally enacted in 1965, the Older Americans Act has been an important vehicle by which senior citizens in need have received nutritional support, community service employment, pension counseling services, protections against neglect and abuse, and many other services.

Nutrition services through Title III of the Older Americans Act, such as the "Meals on Wheels" program, are essential in helping senior citizens who cannot prepare their own food to still have access to convenient and nutritious meals. The program serves those most in need, such as the aged, the less affluent, those who live alone, and members of minority groups.

I was pleased that I was able to amend the Seniors Independence Act during markup to stop the Department of Labor from using an unfair calculation of income to determine eligibility for Title V seniors community service employment programs (SCSEP). In January 2005, the Department of Labor issued a "Training and Employment Guidance Letter" that unilaterally changed the eligibility criteria for Title V. Instead of discounting certain forms of income like veterans' compensation, Social Security Disability Insurance, unemployment compensation, and a portion of traditional Social Security benefits, the new regulation mandated inclusion of that income, thus making fewer seniors eligible for vital services.

It would be inconsistent to state that the program targets persons with greatest economic need and persons who are disabled, and then use their Social Security income or disability benefits to exclude them from participation. It would also be a mistake to hold someone's service in the Armed Forces against them in determining their eligibility for employment assistance. The amendment that I offered in the Education and the Workforce Committee restores the eligibility criteria to the pre-2005 levels, and it was unanimously agreed to. I thank Chairman MCKEON and the rest of the committee for their help and cooperation on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Seniors Independence Act of 2006 reauthorizes vital services for some of the most vulnerable Americans, and those in greatest need. I rise in support of H.R. 5293, and I urge its passage by this body.

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5293, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 426) recognizing the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Food and Drugs Act for the important service it provides the Nation, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 426

Whereas the Food and Drugs Act of June 30, 1906 (34 Stat. 768; chapter 3915), transformed the Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") into a scientific regulatory agency;

Whereas the FDA is the oldest consumer protection agency in the United States;

Whereas the FDA is the primary consumer protection agency in the United States and the world;

Whereas FDA has the critical mission of protecting the public health by ensuring that—

(1) foods are safe, wholesome, sanitary, and properly labeled;

(2) human and veterinary drugs are safe and effective;

(3) devices intended for human use are safe and effective;

(4) cosmetics are properly labeled; and

(5) consumers are protected from electronic product radiation;

Whereas FDA is also responsible for advancing the public health by helping to speed innovations which improve peoples' lives;

Whereas, in protecting and promoting the health of citizens of the United States, the FDA has been a pioneer and leader in the field of food and drug science;

Whereas people around the world enjoy a higher quality of life due, in part, to the work of the FDA to expand food safety, medical product safety, and regulatory science; and

Whereas the centennial anniversary of the passage of the 1906 Food and Drugs Act occurs on June 30, 2006, marks the 100th anniversary of the Agency's founding, and is a major milestone in FDA's celebrated history: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That the Congress recognizes the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services and its employees for—

(1) 100 years of service in working to ensure the safety of our food and the safety and efficacy of our medical products;

(2) providing leadership to the world in the regulatory sciences; and

(3) their hard work and extraordinary dedication to the protection and promotion of our Nation's public health.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 426, a resolution offered by the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. JOE BARTON of Texas, and the ranking member of the committee, Mr. JOHN DINGELL of Michigan.

Today the House is honoring the 100th anniversary of the Food and Drug Administration, an organization responsible for ensuring the gold standard of safety for the medical products Americans use and the foods we consume.

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For a century now, the dedicated public servants at FDA have worked professionally and tirelessly to promote public health by regulating drugs, biologics, medical devices and cosmetics in a science-based way. As a result of their continued efforts, the United States stands alone, rightfully laying claim to the safest and most effective medical product supply in the world.

Additionally, the agency's vigilant work on food safety protects us against natural and man-made threats to the safety of the foods we eat.

The long-standing tradition of professionalism and diligence of this importance agency, which regulates roughly 25 percent of our gross domestic product, continues today under the able leadership of the Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach. Under his leadership, the FDA enters its second century of service, with both a broad history and a bright future.

As chairman of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, I look forward to continuing to work closely with Dr. von Eschenbach and his agency's outstanding staff on many important public health issues. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Dr. von Eschenbach and the more than 10,000 civil servants for their continued service to the American people who are safer and healthier because of their efforts.

Again, I would like to commend Chairman BARTON and Ranking Member DINGELL for offering this worthy resolution and for their strong leadership on FDA-related issues. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my colleagues, both Chairman BARTON and Ranking Member DINGELL, for introducing this resolution.

The Food and Drug Administration is the Nation's premier consumer protection agency. It ensures that food and drugs are safe and properly labeled, that medical devices are safe and effective, and that cosmetics are properly labeled. In the 100 years since its founding, the FDA has changed with the times and has adapted to the health and safety needs of Americans.

As initially enacted, the 1906 Food and Drug Act prohibited food, drinks and drugs to be adulterated or misbranded.

Over the years, the scope of the FDA has increased significantly. In 1938, its authority was extended to cosmetics and devices through a law that also established a new system for regulating drugs. The 1938 law also gave the authority to inspect factories.

By the 1960s, the FDA's role in ensuring drug safety expanded even more as the 1962 drug amendments required pharmaceutical manufacturers to prove the effectiveness of their drugs before being allowed to market them.

In 1958, the FDA played a key role in the country's response to the growing AIDS epidemic by approving the first blood test for AIDS.

Given the sensitive nature of its many activities and the effect they have on Americans from all walks of life, the FDA has not been without controversy or its critics. Yet, 100-years after its creation, I hope that we can all agree that the FDA remains a critical part of our efforts to protect and improve the health and safety of our Nation.

Every day, the FDA evaluates and approves new drugs and medical devices that improve our lives and productivity. It regulates food packages so we know what we are getting when we buy food for our families at the grocery store. The agency develops oversight policies regarding blood donations to ensure safe blood supplies. These are just some of the way the FDA's responsibilities are essential to protecting the public health.

As we come up on the 100th anniversary of this vital Agency, I am happy to support this resolution honoring the FDA and its staff for their 100 years of work to protect and improve public health.

Just a side note, Mr. Speaker, the FDA Commissioner von Eschenbach actually was a great researcher at MD Anderson in Houston, and with the National Cancer Institute, now at the FDA. Again, I know of no better person to be at the FDA because of both his experience, both as a cancer patient, but also as a researcher. He knows how important it is to make sure our drugs are protected will actually cure us, and will do what they say they will.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no other additional speakers, and

I will be prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have two speakers, and I am glad to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), a colleague from the same class of mine.

(Mr. HINCHEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to my good friend and colleague from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for providing me with this opportunity.

As we have heard, Mr. Speaker, next week the Food and Drug Administration turns 100 years old, and it is unfortunate that this agency is not making laudatory headlines as it celebrates such an auspicious occasion.

Instead, the Food and Drug Administration is at the nadir of its trustworthiness with the American people. Its basic defense of the public health has simply been perverted in the name of so-called conservative interests.

As a member of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee which has oversight over the Food and Drug Administration, I have been frustrated by the agency's cozy relationship with the pharmaceutical industry whose products it is supposed to regulate.

In 2001, fees paid by the drug companies funded 32 percent of the FDA's budget for drugs. Today, that figure is nearly 50 percent, and it is expected to go higher. Making matters worse, the FDA must negotiate with the drug industry on how those user fees are allocated. This financial dependency, along with the FDA's constant negotiations with companies over how to spend the fees, is the foundation for the conflict of interest that exists between the FDA and the pharmaceutical industry and others it is supposed to regulate.

I have been alarmed that financial conflicts of interest are waived by the FDA among its advisory committee members. The agency relies heavily on these scientists and these experts to guide policy when questions arise concerning medical treatments. When the FDA allows conflicted scientists to serve on these boards, events that have occurred over 100 times already during this fiscal year alone, the public health is obviously jeopardized at the expense of inappropriate personal interests.

I have been saddened by the stories I have heard from American families who have paid the price for mismanagement of this agency. I have met with many of these families on the efforts by the FDA to preempt their right to sue pharmaceutical companies in local and State courts. These families must be allowed to seek the understanding and justice they are owed after their loved ones are injured or killed from an adverse reaction to a product regulated by the FDA. I will meet with some of these families again later next week.

For these and many other reasons, I and many of my Democratic colleagues have introduced legislation, the FDA Improvement Act and others, to address many of the loopholes that currently exist at this agency. This legislation would sever the financial links between the FDA and the drug companies. It would restore the independence of the FDA. It would strengthen the agency's efforts to guarantee post-market drug safety. It would eradicate conflicts of interest on FDA advisory boards. It would restore the public trust in this very critically important agency.

Last month, the Wall Street Journal and Harris Interactive released a poll on public perceptions of the job that the FDA is doing on the safety of prescription drugs. Only 36 percent of the adults polled believe that the agency was doing a good job on ensuring the safety and efficacy on new prescription drugs. Eighty-two percent of the people polled believed that the FDA's decisions are influenced by politics over medical science to a great extent or at least to some extent.

According to its own Web site, the FDA is our country's oldest consumer protection agency. It should be given the authority to do its job independently, and the administration should sufficiently use that authority to protect the American people. It is a two-step process.

Yesterday, the American Association of Retired Persons reported that prices for brand-name pharmaceuticals jumped nearly 4 percent during the first 3 months of this year alone. The men and women paying for these drugs should be able to trust in the safety and the efficacy of the products for which they are paying so dearly.

The Food and Drug Administration's 100th anniversary should be a time of celebration, and if we are going to make it such, we have to bring forward legislation to the floor of this House, legislation which makes the Food and Drug Administration free and independent, legislation which reestablishes the arm's-length relationship between the regulator and the regulated. That arm's-length relationship has completely disappeared because the FDA has become financially dependent upon the agency, the entities, the corporations, the drug companies that it is supposed to regulate, and that regulation has fallen apart.

Let us bring forward legislation to the floor of this House which improves the FDA and protects the American people.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to our colleague from Chicago (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleagues in thanking Congressmen BARTON and DINGELL for introducing H. Con. Res. 426, which recognizes the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Food and Drug Act. I also want to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

I rise in support of this resolution. First of all, Chicago had a great deal to do with the development of the Food and Drug Act because of the book that Upton Sinclair wrote, "The Jungle," and the vast stockyards and meat packing plants that were in Chicago, running amok and running afoul at that time.

But I most directly want to associate my comments with those of the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY), who just spoke, because I too believe that we must, in fact, have enough distance between the Food and Drug Administration and any kinds of political considerations.

I have had the opportunity in the last few weeks to meet and hear and be in the presence of Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, the new acting director, and I must tell you that I have been tremendously impressed with his vision, with the articulation of a mission for the Food and Drug Administration, and with the assurances that he continues to give that science-based evidence will be his approach.

So I am optimistic about what the Food and Drug Administration is going to continue to do in the future, and we are going to find ourselves pleasantly pleased, I believe, under the leadership of Dr. von Eschenbach.

So I thank the gentleman again from Texas for yielding.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, again, I know I do not have the right to close, but I just encourage passage of this bill and recognize the 100 years, not that it is perfect, but we are still working on it, particularly in our committee, and encourage passage of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here today to say that the Food and Drug Administration is infallible. They certainly have made mistakes, as I am sure every Member of this body has made mistakes.

We are here, though, to say that over the past 100 years, there have been tens of thousands of FDA employees who have dedicated their lives to ensuring that our food and our medical products are safe. Time and again, Congress has entrusted fundamental safety responsibilities to the FDA.

We do not have a perfect system, but because of the dedicated public servants at the FDA, the United States stands alone as having the safest and most effective medical products supply in the world.

In 2002, we entrusted the FDA with new authorities to protect our food supply from terrorist threats. Every day, the employees at the FDA go to work to protect the best interests of the American people.

Although we may have disagreements over particular issues, we are better off as a country by having the dedicated individuals at the FDA working for the American people. We should

not politicize a resolution that seeks to recognize their hard work. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this concurrent resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 426, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HEALTH CENTERS RENEWAL ACT OF 2006

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5573) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide additional authorizations of appropriations for the health centers program under section 330 of such Act.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5573

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Health Centers Renewal Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Community, migrant, public housing, and homeless health centers are vital to thousands of communities across the United States.

(2) There are more than 1,000 such health centers serving over 15,000,000 people at over 3,700 health delivery sites, located in all 50 States of the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and other territories of the United States.

(3) Health centers provide cost-effective, quality health care to poor and medically underserved people in the States, the District of Columbia, and the territories, including the working poor, the uninsured, and many high-risk and vulnerable populations, and have done so for over 40 years.

(4) Health centers provide care to 1 of every 8 uninsured Americans, 1 of every 4 Americans in poverty, and 1 of every 9 rural Americans.

(5) Health centers provide primary and preventive care services to more than 700,000 homeless persons and more than 725,000 farm workers in the United States.

(6) Health centers are community-oriented and patient-focused and tailor their services to fit the special needs and priorities of local communities, working together with schools, businesses, churches, community organizations, foundations, and State and local governments.

(7) Health centers are built through community initiative.

(8) Health centers encourage citizen participation and provide jobs for 50,000 community residents.

(9) Congress established the program as a unique public-private partnership, and has continued to provide direct funding to community organizations for the development and operation of health centers systems that