

Child Welfare Act of 1980, Congress recognized the need to align Federal incentives with the desired goal of providing abused and neglected children safe, permanent homes. Nearly half a million children make up our nation's foster care population, with more than one in four of these vulnerable children living with a grandparent or other relative. Unfortunately, federal financial assistance currently is available only to foster and adoptive families, with only a few states receiving a waiver to provide subsidized guardianship. However, adoption is not a viable option for many children to exit foster care. For example, courts explicitly rule out this permanency option for approximately 20,000 children in relative care each year. Moreover, adoption is not equally available by families of all races and ethnicities, especially those in African-American and Native-American communities. Thus, subsidized guardianship is an important path to permanency for many abused and neglected children.

The current Federal guidelines also create financial disincentives to guardianship. Almost 19% of kinship care providers live in poverty, and 30% to 40% of children in foster care have chronic medical problems. Subsidized guardianship, like the federal adoption assistance program, provides needed support to these kinship caregivers to afford appropriate care for these vulnerable children. Terminating support to families once guardianship is established presents overwhelming hardships for these children and families that discourage them from leaving foster care. The limited federal support for guardianship is a critical roadblock to permanency for thousands of children, resulting in their remaining in the foster care longer than necessary and possibly aging out of the system without a legal family of their own.

With 10 years of experience under our belts, Illinois shows that subsidized guardianship works. Unfortunately, the subsidized guardianship waiver program expired in 2006. This means that no new states can benefit from the program, and, when the existing waivers for 15 states—including 10 Illinois—expire in the next few years, our children and thousands of children others will be denied this vital permanency option if new subsidized guardianship legislation is not passed.

So, the Kinship Caregiver Support Act allows states the option to provide guardianship assistance to relatives without a waiver. It also implements additional supports for kinship caregivers, such as establishing informational navigator programs to assist grandparents and relatives in accessing appropriate services and supports. Further, it allows states to establish separate licensing standards for relative foster parents and non-relative foster parents and requires state agencies to provide prompt notice to all adult relatives when children are removed from parental custody. The bill also extends innovative Illinois programs to the national level. For example, it expands eligibility for the Foster Care Independence Program so that education and training vouchers as well as independent living services are available to young people who exit foster care after age 14 to guardianship or adoption. It includes as eligible children who live in relative homes determined by the courts and State agency as meeting all applicable State safety standards other than licensure as well.

Subsidized guardianship is a bipartisan issue. Indeed, our bill is a companion bill to

that introduced in the other chamber by Senators HILLARY CLINTON and OLYMPIA SNOWE. Further, as you may recall, the reconciliation bill from the Republican-controlled 109th Congress would have extended authority for these waivers and removed the limit on the number of states eligible, providing further testament to the bipartisan nature of this issue.

As Forest Witcraft said, "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child. . . ." As policy makers, we have the ability and responsibility to make a difference in the lives of foster children. We must use that ability to make sure the downtrodden and neglected of today are the achievers and leaders of tomorrow. I encourage my colleagues to join me and Representative JOHNSON in supporting this critical bill.

ARTISTIC DISCOVERY
COMPETITION

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the winner of this year's California's 32nd Congressional District Congressional "Artistic Discovery" competition and the contribution of all the people that made this event possible. As a Member of Congress, I am proud to support the artistic talent of our local youth by being part of "An Artistic Discovery."

This year students from 16 high schools in California's 32nd Congressional District submitted 186 pieces of work for Artistic Discovery. The winner of the competition was Jose Curiel from Arroyo High School, a resident of El Monte, California, for his piece titled "All Alone." Jose will be invited to Washington, DC, for the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and will have his artwork displayed in the Cannon Tunnel for 1 year. I am proud of Jose, all the runners up and honorable mentions, and all the youth who participated for sharing their talent with the community.

I would also like to thank the 2007 Artistic Discovery Committee for their support for the arts, for their dedication to California's 32nd Congressional District and their young talent, and for a successful "Artistic Discovery" competition. This event could not have been possible without the time and support of the 2007 Artistic Discovery Committee. This year's committee has truly set a standard with their hard work. I would like to recognize and thank this year's committee:

Denise Tornatore from the Baldwin Park Adult and Community Education School, who served as the Chair of the Committee; Carol Facciponti from Carousel Reality; Pascual Garrido from SCE Federal Credit Union; Irene Portillo from Project Amiga; Billy Rugh from Creative Planet School of the Arts; Michael Carney from AT&T; Elizabeth Bagwell from City of Hope; Kristen Pugh from City of Hope; Marianna Lake from the Valley County Water District; Dr. Ramon Zavala from Baldwin Park Unified; Marissa Castro from Southern California Edison; Helen Romero Shaw from the Gas Company; Nadia Andrade from UPS;

Shirley Batman from Bank of America; Michelle Bart from Helping Heroes Productions; Kevin McDonald from Foothill Transit; and, Debbie Guerra from AT&T Pioneers.

Just as important as the committee's dedication to California's 32nd District's "An Artistic Discovery" competition is the dedication of all the teachers of the participating schools. All our teachers deserve a big thank you for recognizing and supporting the talented students that participated in this event and encouraging them to submit their artwork. I thank all of our teachers for the work and generosity they give each and every day in the classroom. These submitted pieces of artwork are a testament to the energy, enthusiasm, encouragement and support that our teachers are providing.

The artwork that was submitted to California's 32nd District's artistic competition was awe-inspiring. I commend all the students who participated for using their talents in such a positive way and sharing those talents with others. I look forward to next year's "An Artistic Discovery" art competition and encourage all the supporters to continue with their good work.

TRIBUTE TO MR. BILL HARDISTY

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, we often hear so much about what is wrong with America. I'd like to focus on what is right. And today throughout America, there are great teachers making a great difference in the lives of their students. As I often say, many people spend their lives building careers but teachers spend their careers building lives.

And few have done it better or longer than Mr. Bill Hardisty, the principal of Cassata High School in Fort Worth, Texas.

This year, Mr. Hardisty concludes a 37-year career in education. For two and a half decades, he served in the Fort Worth Independent School District as a coach, teacher and assistant principal. And for the past 11 years, he has served at Cassata. He started as associate director and in 2002, he was named principal.

Hardisty's service extends beyond our children's education. Before he taught in our schools, he defended our country. A marine who later served in the Army Reserve, Mr. Hardisty was the very embodiment of the noble Marine Corps motto: Semper Paratus. He was always faithful.

But it is his work as an educator that has touched the lives of so many future leaders. One of his students later served on my staff. Here is what he told me about Hardisty: "He taught with his heart. He knew that kids don't care what you know until they know that you care. Mr. Hardisty cared. And so his students listened and learned from him."

This is what teachers do: they shape minds and change lives. It was Yeats who wrote that education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire. Thanks to Mr. Hardisty, countless people are today living lives fueled by a flame lit long ago in his classroom.

Cassata High School will miss Mr. Hardisty. But it will never forget him. His leadership and his legacy will live on in the many students whose lives he touched.

Thank you, Bill Hardisty, for your service to your students and your service to your country.

STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN
SCOTT GARRETT IN HONOR OF
NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise to praise some of the most under-valued public servants in our society: American nurses. They are ever-present at every stage of our lives—at our birth, through childhood illnesses and adult traumas, and in our final days. Yet, while people remember the doctor who delivered their children or cared for their aging parents, they rarely remember the friendly, caring individuals who stayed by their side while busy doctors made rounds.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, registered nurses constitute the largest segment of the health care workforce, with more than 2.4 million jobs in 2006. And, they are projected to create the second largest number of new jobs amongst all occupations. Yet, the demand for nurses is far outstripping the supply and many parts of the Nation—from the most urban inner city to the most remote rural community—are experiencing extraordinary nursing shortages.

Nursing is a noble profession, but one which is too often upstaged by other health care professionals and too often given little credit for the enormous role played in sustaining the high quality of American health care. As we celebrate National Nurses Week this week, let us all take a moment to thank the nurses in our hospitals and doctors' offices, nursing homes and hospices, and all throughout our communities for all their tremendous service.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 1873, SMALL BUSINESS
FAIRNESS IN CONTRACTING ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1873) to reauthorize the programs and activities of the Small Business Administration relating to procurement, and for other purposes:

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in support for H.R. 1873, the Small Business Fairness in Contracting Act and join my colleagues in efforts to ensure that small businesses are given a fair opportunity to compete for Federal contracts. I recognize that government agencies have recently been bundling hundreds of small contracts into single mega-contracts, which are awarded to only the largest contractors.

H.R. 1873, the Small Business Fairness in Contracting Act, will un-bundle many of these contracts and level the playing field for small businesses. The bill addresses the major

problems that have resulted in limited opportunities for small businesses in the Federal marketplace. The bill ensures that more contracting opportunities are available to small firms, fights fraud in the contracting process and raises the Federal small business government-wide contracting goal. H.R. 1873 implements changes that will remove a number of the barriers facing entrepreneurs in accessing Federal contracts, creating a more level playing field for this Nation's 26 million small businesses.

I want to thank Chairwoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ for bringing this legislation to the committee and to the floor. The Detroit region's 420,000 small businesses account for 99.2 percent of all firms; this includes almost 300,000 sole proprietors. Small businesses with employees other than themselves employ 915,000 people or 47 percent of the region's employees. While big businesses have consolidated a large portion of their services and number of employees they hire, small business has helped mitigate the pain with modest but steady employment gains. The continued growth in the small business sector, especially in the formation of fair contracting for the diverse population not only in Detroit, but throughout Michigan, will create much-needed jobs and assist in the diversification of our region's economy.

By law, Federal organizations are required to support small businesses. However, contract bundling has resulted in less small business participation in Federal contracts. It is essential to help remove the barriers blocking small businesses from entering the nearly \$400 billion per year Federal marketplace.

I believe in the value of small businesses as the number one job creators in this country and strongly support this legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "NO OIL
PRODUCING AND EXPORTING
CARTELS ACT OF 2007"

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels Act of 2007" ("NOPEC"), legislation that would effectively force OPEC to begin pricing in a competitive, free market manner or face the possibility of being prosecuted for civil or criminal antitrust violations. This legislation will establish that OPEC's activities are not protected by sovereign immunity and that the Federal courts should not decline to hear such a case based on the "act of state" doctrine. I am joined by Representatives CHABOT and LOFGREN, as original co-sponsors of this bill.

For the past year, American consumers have paid exorbitant prices at the pump, as gas prices have hit their highest levels since the first gulf war. For the past several months, oil prices have remained stubbornly high, sitting above \$65 at the end of last week. Since January of this year, oil prices have climbed more than 20 percent, driving gasoline prices in the United States to record levels while producing budget surpluses in nations like Saudi Arabia. And as of May 8, 2007, the average U.S. price of a gallon of gasoline was \$3.036,

just 2 cents short of the record high reached in September 2005 after Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast.

The group of 12 nations comprising OPEC represent the classic definition of a cartel, and they hold all the cards when it comes to oil and gas prices. OPEC accounts for two-thirds of the world's oil reserves, and over 40 percent of the world's oil production. Most significantly, OPEC's oil exports represent about 70 percent of the oil traded internationally. This affords them considerable control over the global market. Its net oil export revenues should reach nearly \$395 billion this year, and its influence on the oil market is dominant, especially when it decides to reduce or increase its levels of production.

The OPEC nations have for years conspired to drive up prices of imported crude oil, gouging American consumers. Their price-fixing and supply-limiting conspiracy is a clear violation of U.S. antitrust laws, yet we have no recourse for action against these nations. The international oil cartel continues to avoid accountability, shielding itself behind the veil of sovereign immunity by claiming that its actions are "governmental activity"—which is protected under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act ("FSIA"), 28 U.S.C. § 1602 et seq.—rather than "commercial activity."

This legislation, the "No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels Act" ("NOPEC"), is simple and effective.

It exempts OPEC and other nations from the provisions of FSIA to the extent those governments are engaged in price-fixing and other anticompetitive activities with regard to pricing, production and distribution of petroleum products.

It makes clear that the so-called "Act of State" doctrine does not prevent courts from ruling on antitrust charges brought against foreign governments and that foreign governments are "persons" subject to suit under the antitrust laws.

It authorizes lawsuits in U.S. Federal court against oil cartel members by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission.

We do not have to stand by and watch OPEC dictate the price of our gas without any recourse; we can do something to combat this conspiracy among oil-rich nations. I am hopeful that Congress can move quickly to enact this worthwhile and timely legislation.

BREAST CANCER AND ENVIRONMENTAL
RESEARCH ACT OF 2007

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 1157, and, in doing so, to honor my mother and all the women in my life. With Mother's Day approaching on Sunday, May 13, I urge my colleagues to join me in co-sponsoring this legislation, the Breast Cancer Environmental Research Act as a tribute to each of our mothers. This bill would invest in the research still necessary to determine the potential links between breast cancer and the environment, so that we can cure it and eventually eradicate this terrible disease.

Currently, despite the efforts of numerous researchers, less than 30 percent of breast