

I am proud to have been involved in the crafting of this legislation and I hope that my colleagues will support it.

TRIBUTE TO ISRAEL "IZZIE"
BARLAS

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Israel "Izzie" Barlas who passed away on January 23, 2007. Izzie led a long and full life, married for 59 years to Helene, raising his son Lance, and cherishing his two grandsons.

The youngest of six children born to Russian immigrants Max and Esther Barlas, Izzie was raised in Petaluma, California and attended Santa Rosa Junior College. He was a world traveler, but always came home to Petaluma the "best place to live, work and raise a family".

Izzie and his two brothers co-owned Barlas Feeds, founded by their father. The feed and livestock store began by supplying to local farmers, but the business grew to include shipments as far away as the South Pacific. Those business interests developed from Izzie's tour of duty as a U.S. Marine stationed in the South Pacific during World War II.

The years spent with the Marine Corp held a sense of pride for Izzie. He took part in four major battles: Guam, Bougainville, Guadalcanal, and Iwo Jima. He was present at the flag raising on Iwo Jima, a defining moment of the Pacific battles, captured on film and made into a Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, DC.

Izzie became active in politics in the 1950s when the state legislature considered a bill requiring all chickens be sold with the head and feet off and eviscerated. The Jewish farmers in Petaluma, many of whom were customers of Barlas Feeds, were selling their chickens "New York dressed" (with the head and feet on and not eviscerated). To oppose the bill, Izzie drove carloads of farmers to meet with committee members. Each member was given a roaster and asked to cook and eat it before deciding it was not healthy. An amendment passed to allow "New York Dressed" chickens. Thus began his career as a poultry industry lobbyist.

Not satisfied with only meeting with elected officials, Izzie decided to make change from within. He ran and was successfully elected to the local Democratic Central Committee, founded the Petaluma Democratic Club, and became a delegate to the California Democratic Council. In 2004, the Sonoma County Democratic Central Committee honored him as the Democrat of the Year. He also became active with the Congress of Democratic Farmers, which led to his relationship with President John Kennedy and an appointment to the National Agricultural Advisory Committee. He fondly recalled visits to the White House pressroom denying reporters his identity, leaving them wondering who he was and his importance.

Madam Speaker, it is with sadness that I honor Israel "Izzie" Barlas, who fought and worked for his country. He touched many lives in his 84 years as a role model and inspiration as a mover and shaker.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION HONORING THE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution which recognizes the contributions of the architectural profession during National Architecture Week. The architectural profession has made unique contributions to the history, texture, and quality of life in the United States. Through advances in building technology and design innovation, architects are vital to the creation of communities which are safe, livable and sustainable.

This year is the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the American Institute of Architects, which signifies the founding of the organized architectural profession. This bill will honor and celebrate the work of the approximately 281,000 individuals in the United States who create the structures we cherish and towns we treasure. The bill additionally requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to recognize and celebrate National Architecture Week beginning April 8th.

THE PREVENTION FIRST ACT

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, today, I am again proud to introduce the Prevention First Act. By emphasizing prevention first, my bill will help protect women's reproductive health, reduce unintended pregnancies, decrease the spread of STDs, and give women the tools they need to make the best decisions possible for themselves. The Prevention First Act will help to achieve these goals by providing comprehensive access to all forms of contraception and sex education.

Throughout the years, conservative leaders have sought to limit women's rights and freedoms by imposing stricter penalties on doctors who help women faced with an unintended pregnancy. At the same time, these leaders have done very little to ensure that millions of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are prevented in the first place. If they are opposed to abortion, if they support women's health, and if they believe that the right to choose when to start a family should apply to all women, no matter their economic or social situation, then they should be in favor of this bill.

It has been more than 40 years since the Supreme Court said women had the right to access contraception. This decision was revolutionary, for the first time allowing women to choose when to become pregnant and how many children to have. Access to contraception greatly enhanced women's equality in American Society.

It also helps to ameliorate economic disparities among women. The social and economic realities surrounding contraception could not be starker. Many poor and low-income women cannot afford to purchase contraceptive serv-

ices and supplies on their own. About 1 in 5 women of reproductive age were uninsured in 2003, and that proportion has increased by 10% since 2001. Half of all women who are sexually active, but do not want to get pregnant, need publicly funded services to help them access public health programs like Medicaid and Title X, the national family planning program. These programs provide high-quality family planning services and other preventive health care, such as pap smears, to underinsured or uninsured individuals who may otherwise lack access to health care and alternative options for birth control. What's more, each year, publicly funded family planning services help women to prevent an estimated one million unplanned pregnancies and 630,000 abortions. Despite the obvious benefits they bring, these programs are currently struggling to meet the growing demand for subsidized family planning services without corresponding increases in funding. The Prevention First Act authorizes funding for Title X clinics and strengthens states' coverage of Medicaid family planning services.

Contraception is, of course, more than a means of fighting economic inequalities. It also provides a way to save scarce public health dollars. For every \$1 spent on providing family planning services, an estimated \$3.80 is saved in Medicaid expenditures for pregnancy-related and newborn care.

And what's more, improved access to emergency contraception (EC) has been proven to significantly reduce the staggering rates of unintended pregnancy and, as a result, abortion. EC prevents pregnancy after unprotected sex or a contraceptive failure. The Alan Guttmacher Institute estimates that increased use of EC accounted for up to 43 percent of the total decline in abortion rates between 1994 and 2000. In addition, EC is often the only contraceptive option for the 300,000 women who are reported to be raped each year. Unfortunately, even with the recent FDA decision to allow EC to be sold over-the-counter to women 18 years of age and over, many women do not know about EC and many still face insurmountable barriers in accessing this important product. The Prevention First Act mandates that the Secretary of Health and Human Services implement an education campaign about EC and requires that hospitals receiving federal funds provide victims of sexual assault with information and access to EC.

Despite the fact that contraceptives have a proven track record of enhancing the health of women and children, preventing unintended pregnancy, and reducing the need for abortion, far too many insurance policies do not cover them. While most employment-related insurance policies in the United States cover prescription drugs in general, many do not include equitable coverage for prescription contraceptive drugs and devices. Although 21 states now have laws in place requiring insurers to provide contraceptive coverage if they cover other prescription drugs, 29 states still have no corresponding law on the books. Out of pocket expenses for contraception can be costly. Women of reproductive age currently spend 68 percent more in out-of-pocket health care costs than men, much of which is due to reproductive health-related supplies and services.

The Prevention First Act requires that private health plans to cover FDA-approved prescription contraceptives and related medical services.

Madam Speaker, it is critical in any discussion of reproductive rights to devote time to teenagers, who face the consequences of so many of these issues more acutely than other age groups. Teens face additional barriers regarding access to services and information. Sixty percent of teens have sex before graduating high school. Those who receive comprehensive sexuality education that includes discussion of contraception as well as abstinence are more likely than those who receive abstinence-only messages to delay sex, to have fewer partners, and to use contraceptives when they do become sexually active. Efforts by conservatives to restrict access to family planning services and promote abstinence-only education programs—which are prohibited from discussing the benefits of contraception—actually jeopardize adolescent health and run counter to the views of many mainstream medical groups.

Nearly 50 percent of new cases of STDs occur among people ages 15 to 24, even though this age bracket makes up just a quarter of the sexually active population. Clearly, teens have the most to lose when faced with an unintended pregnancy or an STD infection.

Moreover, 1 in 3 girls becomes pregnant before the age of 20, and 80 percent of these pregnancies are unintended. Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school. Children of teenage mothers have lower birth weights, are more likely to perform poorly in school, and are at greater risk of abuse and neglect. Improving access to contraceptive services and information does not cause non-sexually active teens to start having sex. Instead, teens need information to help them both postpone sexual activity and to protect themselves if they do become sexually active. A November 2006 study of declining pregnancy rates among teens concluded that the reduction in teen pregnancy between 1995 and 2002 is primarily the result of increased use of contraceptives.

The Prevention First Act provides funding to public and private entities to establish or expand their teenage pregnancy prevention programs. This bill also provides for comprehensive, medically accurate sex education programs that teach young people about abstinence, health, and contraceptives. Moreover, this bill requires federally funded programs that provide information on the use of contraceptives to ensure that the information is medically accurate and includes health benefits and failure rates.

Madam Speaker, virtually everyone can agree that reducing unintended pregnancies, lowering STD infection rates, and promoting the health of all women and their children, regardless of their economic or social situation, are important public health goals. It should come as no surprise that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention included family planning in their published list of the "Ten Great Public Health Achievements in the 20th Century." My bill, the Prevention First Act, will improve access to family planning services for women in need throughout America, and will go a long way toward fulfilling the promise of this important public health achievement.

Madam Speaker, I urge every Member to stand with the women of our country and to support this important bill.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 800, THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, today, I am pleased to be joining 230 of my colleagues in introducing H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act. The Employee Free Choice Act is a bipartisan bill designed to provide workers with a fair opportunity to bargain with employers for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

In recent years, despite a growing economy, the middle class has been squeezed. Corporate profits and executive compensation have skyrocketed, but the middle class has seen their wages stagnate, while the costs for basic needs like healthcare, education, food, energy and housing continue to increase. Globalization and misguided government policies have contributed to a growing income disparity and less economic security for middle class families.

One way to help the middle class is to provide them with a fair opportunity to organize and join unions, so they can have a say in what goes on in the workplace. Workers who belong to unions earn 30 percent more than nonunion workers. In addition, they are 62 percent more likely to have employer-provided health coverage and four times more likely to have pensions.

The current process for forming unions is badly broken and so skewed in favor of those who oppose unions, that workers must literally risk their jobs in order form a union. Although it is illegal, one quarter of employers facing an organizing drive have been found to fire at least one worker who supports a union. In fact, employees who are active union supporters have a one-in-five chance of being fired for legal union activities. Sadly, many employers resort to spying, threats, intimidation, harassment and other illegal activity in their campaigns to oppose unions. The penalty for illegal activity, including firing workers for engaging in protected activity, is so weak that it does little to deter law breakers.

Even when employers don't break the law, the process itself stacks the deck against union supporters. The employer has all the power; they control the information workers can receive, can force workers to attend anti-union meetings during work hours, can force workers to meet with supervisors who deliver anti-union messages, and can even imply that the business will close if the union wins. Union supporters' access to employees, on the other hand, is heavily restricted.

The Employee Free Choice Act would add some fairness to the system by: (1) allowing a majority of employees the opportunity to select to be represented by a union by expressing their decision through the signing of authorization cards; (2) provide for mediation and arbitration when workers and employers cannot agree on a first contract; and (3) increase penalties against employers who threaten, intimidate or fire workers for engaging in protected activity.

I urge all my colleagues to join in this effort to provide working people with a real opportunity to bargain for better wages and benefits.

TO REQUIRE THAT ALL SHIPS WITH BALLAST WATER TANKS, INCLUDING VESSELS THAT ARE NOT CARRYING BALLAST WATER, TO CARRY OUT THE EXCHANGE OF BALLAST WATER OR ALTERNATIVE BALLAST WATER MANAGEMENT METHODS PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO ANY PORT WITHIN THE GREAT LAKES

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I introduced a bill to require all vessels, including those with no ballast water on board, NOBOBs, to undergo ballast water exchange before entering the Great Lakes.

Invasive species pose a dangerous threat to the Great Lakes. These creatures can cause irreparable ecological and economic damage to a variety of locations and industries. In 2005, economic losses were estimated at an annual \$5 billion to the region. More than 160 non-native species have already invaded the Great Lakes ecosystem. As the largest source of our Nation's fresh water, the Great Lakes must be protected from further introduction of invasives.

One method by which these species enter the Great Lakes is through ballast water tanks. Current law requires ships carrying ballast water to undergo ballast water exchange to flush out invasive species before entering the Great Lakes from another port. However, 90 percent of all ships entering the Great Lakes have no ballast water on board. These NOBOBs are not subject to the same ballast water exchange laws, even though they still have ballast tanks. Invasive species often survive in the sediment at the bottom of these tanks. When these ships operate in the Great Lakes, they may add and then pump out new ballast water before leaving. This mixes with residual ballast water and sediments, and provides an unregulated pathway for the introduction of new invasive species when the ballast water is released.

In other words, the contamination begins.

We must not leave 90 percent of ships entering the Great Lakes untreated. This bipartisan legislation requires all ships with ballast tanks, including NOBOBs, to undergo ballast water exchange. In addition, the bill commissions a study of the effectiveness and environmental soundness of other ballast treatment options. The language fixes a current problem and works towards an even stronger solution for the future.

Madam Speaker, this legislation, while small, has enormous consequences for the health and safety of one of our national treasures. I am proud to introduce this ballast water legislation to significantly reduce the infiltration of invasive species into the Great Lakes.

STAFF SERGEANT RICHWELL
ARZADON DORIA—A TRUE HERO

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, United States Army Staff Sergeant Richwell Arzadon Doria