

The BioShield Program was created to develop and procure medical countermeasures against dangerous chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) agents. The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for determining threats posed to our country by these agents, and for taking specific steps to protect the nation's citizens from these harms. While I fully support the mission of BioShield, the program has encountered several problems since it was enacted nearly three years ago.

One major shortcoming of the program is a lack of efficiency in the assessment of threats. Rather than examining each threat individually, we should be looking for ways to properly group these threats together, so we can develop appropriate countermeasures to combat multiple threats. My colleagues and I are introducing this legislation to improve and expedite the Department's conduct of Material Threat Determinations (MTD) and the more in-depth Material Threat Assessments (MTA). These MTDs and MTAs will promote a more strategic use of our Nation's resources when procuring medical countermeasures and will ultimately lead to a safer and better-prepared public health infrastructure.

To date, DHS has completed fifteen MTDs. It took well over one year to complete the first six, but the pace picked up considerably since a shift towards less in-depth risk assessments of twenty-nine top threat agents listed by the Centers for Disease Control. The Department leveraged those risk assessments to more quickly complete the next round of MTDs. Soon the Department plans another round of risk assessments that will include more chemical agents. I hope this bill sends a clear message to the Department that we in Congress want to support and improve upon their recent efforts.

Risk is assessed based on a combination of threat, vulnerability, and consequences, and we should encourage the Department to use threat information contained in existing risk assessments to inform and expedite the MTD/MTA process. This bill promotes the use of existing risk assessments if those assessments are considered credible by the Secretary.

Another way to both accelerate and leverage assessments is to conduct them in groups, either by the physical or genetic similarity of the agents themselves or the symptoms they cause. Countermeasures that address more than one threat agent are commonly referred to as "broad spectrum medical countermeasures," and these should be the gold standard for efficient use of BioShield resources. We must move beyond the current "One Bug, One Drug" approach we currently use to the "One Drug for Many Bugs" model that broad spectrum countermeasures offer.

Finally, we all know that time is of the essence as we work to address those agents we already know and ensure we are prepared for emerging threats. The legislation I am introducing today requires all MTDs for CBRN agents that the Secretary determines to be capable of significantly affecting national security to be completed by December 31, 2007.

Madam Speaker, this bill will aid the Department of Homeland Security in conducting threat and risk assessments, which is the first step to countermeasure procurement. We must address those agents—known and emerging, natural or engineered—that present

the highest risk to our citizens, and we must do it quickly. Passage of this measure will help advance and improve that process, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

A TRIBUTE TO THE BIRTH, LIFE, AND LEGACY OF BOB MARLEY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 62nd anniversary of the birth, life and legacy of renowned musician, champion of peace, and provocateur of thought; Bob Marley. His music stirred emotions of love; his life inspired the hope of peace. February 6, 1945 marked the beginning of his journey as an ambassador of humanity. Bob Marley was with us such a short time, but left such a rich legacy that on each birthday we ask ourselves what greatness we would have seen if he had lived a full life. We are sad that he died so young and that after all these years he would have just turned 62 this month.

Bob Marley's international appeal is due to his commitment to the unity of mankind. He awakened the consciousness of society as a spokesperson for equality in Africa and for the poor and underprivileged across the world. His efforts to shine a light on the darkest regions across the globe gave a platform to the voiceless to let their stories be heard. Bob Marley was an activist of world peace, and he encouraged us that if we come together "we can make it work."

Bob Marley's ability to empathize with the plight of the poor and destitute is a characteristic that we all must internalize. When we are faced with the widening gap of the haves and have-nots, with our neighbors affected by Hurricane Katrina, and with the citizens of Haiti and Darfur, we must have the compassion and the courage to ensure that all are given the opportunity to live fulfilling lives.

With the revolutionary spirit of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Bob Marley empowered us to realize our inner strength and to continually strive for spiritual maturity. His famous lyrics in "Redemption Song" gave insight in overcoming inner dissonance, advising to "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds." His conviction to personal growth was seen in his commitment to the principles of his faith, and his unyielding desire for others to become fully actualized human beings.

Having a special talent to recreate the scenes of everyday life, Bob Marley gave us the opportunity to experience the joy, love, pain, and redemption that characterize our humanity through his music. With a message which transcends the reality of which he sung, he speaks to us in this day and time as meaningfully as he did when he lived, leading us to reflect on the complexities of our world, and the enjoyment of the pleasures in our lives.

His numerous awards and accolades reflect his dedication to creating music and a message unhindered by culture, race, time, or space. He and his beloved anthem "One Love" was voted as the most popular international song of the 20th century. Bob Marley's music lives on to remind us to strive

for peace in our society and within ourselves. Because of his contribution to the world of music and the consciousness of humanity, I celebrate the birth, life, and legend of Bob Marley.

INTRODUCING THE FOSTER CHILDREN SELF SUPPORT ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Foster Children Self Support Act." This bill will codify into federal law what should be common sense: abused and neglected children should not be used as a funding stream for states that should be acting in the best interests of these extremely vulnerable children.

In nearly every state in the country, foster children eligible for Social Security benefits because of a disability or the loss of a parent are having those benefits taken by the very state agencies charged with providing for them. The "Foster Children Self Support Act" would end that practice. Instead, it would require states to use a child's Social Security benefits to meet the immediate needs of that child or set aside those benefits to assist the child with transitioning to adulthood when that child emancipates from care.

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) estimates that approximately 30,000 foster children (out of 500,000 nationwide) receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or OASDI (Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance) benefits each month. Unfortunately, hardly any of these children will benefit from these funds. Nor will the children have the option to save the money as a nest egg for when they leave care. This is because state child welfare agencies routinely make themselves the representative payee so that they have control over the child's benefits. Often, neither the child nor the child's advocate knows that Social Security benefits are being sent to the agency. Once the welfare agency controls the benefits they are free to use them however they please.

In this manner, state welfare agencies take an estimated \$156 million per year from foster children. The practice has devastating consequences, as evidenced by the case of "John G.," a foster child in North Carolina. John was willed a house when his adoptive father died of cancer. The house had a \$221 monthly mortgage. Luckily for John he was entitled to approximately \$560 in Social Security OASDI benefits. However, the child welfare agency, who had made themselves John's representative payee, decided they would rather keep the money than ensure John had a place to live when he left foster care. Just as his house was about to be foreclosed on, John went to court. Currently, the welfare agency is making the payments under a court order. The future of John's house is still very much in doubt because the agency has appealed and the law may not be on John's side.

Although John G.'s case is particularly egregious, all foster children and former foster children face tremendous challenges. Foster children often enter care having suffered from serious emotional, mental, and/or physical

abuse. For example, they suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at a rate twice as high as Iraq War veterans. Then, when children emancipate from care they are dependent on public assistance, become incarcerated or homeless, and are unemployed at rates higher than nearly any other group of Americans. The "Foster Children Self Support Act" is especially important since it is safe to assume that those children who have lost their parents or are receiving SSI due to severe mental or physical disabilities are among the most needy.

The "Foster Children Self Support Act" provides a way to help these children. It does so by mandating that states develop a plan for foster children with Social Security benefits. The plan would layout how to best use a child's Social Security benefits as a resource to best meet the current and future needs of that child. The plan must be specific to each child receiving Social Security benefits and made in partnership with the child and the child's advocate. If this bill were law, states would no longer be allowed to simply use children's Social Security money as they see fit. Instead, this money would have to be used as any parent would use it: to provide for the child's particular needs and help plan for the child's future.

The bill will:

Require that states screen all foster children for Social Security eligibility and assist them in application;

Require states to identify other appropriate representative payees for eligible children, such as family members, before becoming the payee themselves;

Prohibit states who are payees from using a child's Social Security benefits to reimburse themselves for the cost of foster care;

Require states to develop a plan, with a child and that child's advocate(s), on how to best use the Social Security benefits to provide for the current and future needs of the child;

Provide for the conservation of Social Security funds in dedicated accounts that a child can access when they leave care to pay for things like housing, education, transportation, and other life expenses;

Increase the Social Security resource limit to \$10,000 (currently it is \$2,000), so that children can conserve up to that amount and still maintain their Social Security eligibility;

Require the GAO to report back to Congress on states' progress in screening all foster children for Social Security eligibility.

Improving our child welfare system has repercussions throughout our society. Foster children who age out of the child welfare system without having developed family supports or skills that can lead to employment create a large societal cost. In the next 15 years 300,000 foster children will age out of care without any transition supports. Congress has a moral obligation to provide foster children with the resources they need to become independent adults. The "Foster Children Self Support Act" is a small part of fulfilling this obligation and a large step toward helping one of the most vulnerable groups of foster children.

Attached are two news articles for the RECORD that illustrate the consequences of our current policy.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION CIVILIAN MANAGEMENT ACT

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, today, Mr. SAXTON and I are pleased to introduce the bill, Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act.

In his State of the Union speech, the President called on Congress to support a civilian response corps which "would function much like our military reserve. It would ease the burden on the Armed Forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them. It would give people across America who do not wear the uniform a chance to serve in the defining struggle of our time."

The Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act would authorize a civilian response corps. Why is this authorization necessary? Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has been engaged in a stabilization or reconstruction operation once every 18–24 months. By default, the services have taken on the task of nation building, and OSD Directive 3000.05 makes stabilization and reconstruction operations a core competency of the military.

While our military personnel have done an excellent job for which they have not been trained, filling the void should be the responsibility of the State Department. In order for our operations to be successful, the State Department must fill this void, and can do so by creating a comparable civilian force to take over once the military has stabilized a war-torn country.

Combating failed states requires a complex combination of political, diplomatic, development assistance and military actions, as well as the ability to respond quickly in the immediate aftermath of crisis. The military plays an extremely important role in stabilizing a country, but civilians play an equally important role and have comparative advantage in helping to develop civil society—judicial systems, law enforcement, health care, economic development, trade promotion and other essential sectors to stabilize a country.

The Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act establishes the legislative framework for authorizing this integral civilian capacity by:

Authorizing the establishment of the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, S/CRS;

Authorizing the establishment of a 250-person Civilian Response Corps with both Active-Duty and Reserve components. The corps would be rapidly deployed with the military for both initial assessments and operational purposes. They would be the first civilian team on the ground in post-conflict situations, well in advance of the establishment of an embassy.

Establishes personnel exchange programs with other relevant Federal agencies that can help a failed state develop government and civil society infrastructure.

Importantly, the bill promotes a stabilization and reconstruction curriculum and the utilization of already existing programs like the Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies at the Naval Postgraduate School.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important piece of legislation that would greatly assist in improving the capacity of our Government to respond to some of the most important and pressing security threats of our time.

TRIBUTE TO JONATHAN QUARLES

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jonathan Quarles, the keynote speaker at the Flint NAACP's Freedom Fund annual dinner to be held on March 3rd in Flint Michigan.

Jonathan Quarles is currently serving the mayor of Detroit, the Honorable Kwame Kilpatrick, as the executive assistant. Jonathan began his public service career after graduating from Florida A&M University in 2004 with dual degrees in business administration and political science. He worked for People for the American Way Foundation in partnership with Tavis Smiley to increase civic awareness and engagement in the public process by young people in Florida, Michigan, Illinois, Texas and Ohio.

In addition to his current position with the city of Detroit, Jonathan has a lifelong commitment to the NAACP, is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated Beta Nu Chapter. He serves as a precinct delegate for the city of Detroit, as board member of Leadership Transformation, a steering committee member for New Detroit National Leadership Summit on Race, a trainer for the Paul Wellstone Action Network, and an ambassador for Tavis Smiley's Youth 2 Leaders Foundation. Recently Jonathan founded Common Link Consulting Services to better educate the community about public policy and foster links between the public and private sectors.

Recognized for his accomplishments, Jonathan was selected by Black Enterprise as one of America's emerging leaders. He was recognized by Jet Magazine as one of Black America's most promising leaders of the 21st century. The Governor of Michigan named him a "Michiganian of the Year" in 2000 and Florida A&M University has granted the Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award to Jonathan for two consecutive years. The February 2007 issue of Ebony Magazine listed him as one of the country's top 30 leaders under the age of 30.

Madam Speaker I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating a fellow Flint native, Jonathan Quarles, as he is honored by the Flint Chapter of the NAACP for his work to make our community a better place.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO STEVEN G. SCHORR

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend Steven G. Schorr, Vice President of Public and Government Affairs for