

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

IMPROVING EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE AND RESPONSE ACT

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss the Improving Emergency Medical Care and Response Act of 2007, which I introduced yesterday. I am joined in this effort by Representative HENRY WAXMAN, who introduced a companion bill in the House.

This bill focuses on improving communication systems used in emergency care response and provides financial support for research in emergency medicine. Disasters that strike our Nation, be it manmade or natural, can have catastrophic effects on the health and well-being of our citizens. The ability to provide adequate, timely health care following these “sudden-impact” events—or any emergency situation, for that matter—relies heavily on an effective and comprehensive emergency communication system. However, recent studies show that various emergency medical services throughout the country are struggling to efficiently handle just the day-to-day operations. Therefore, the concern is even greater when disaster does strike and the struggle becomes grossly amplified, ultimately exposing the gaps in our emergency care and response infrastructure. There was no clearer example of this than the flawed response to the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Patients waiting in the emergency department, ED, for extended periods of time or, potentially worse, patients leaving the ED before medical evaluation because of these long wait-times are both strong indicators that improved strategies and systems are needed to reduce the burden on our emergency medical services across the country. Extended offloading times and diversion of ambulances are also contributing factors to a slow emergency response, which can have a fatal impact on prehospital care. Unfortunately, we do not have to look far to see what tragedies will come from not addressing these issues. In fact, just months ago, tragedy struck Edith Isabel Rodriguez, a Los Angeles woman who made national headlines after she was ignored by hospital personnel, dismissed by 9-1-1 dispatchers, and denied immediate care despite vomiting blood and writhing in pain for 45 minutes until she died. How does this happen in a country that boasts one of the highest standards of living of any nation in the world? Ms. Rodriguez's death is unacceptable and is a harrowing reminder of the ultimate penalty our citizens are paying for a fractured emergency care system.

For these reasons, my bill establishes demonstration programs designed to coordinate emergency medical services, expand communication and patient-tracking systems, and implement

a regionalized data management system. The types of information garnered from such demonstration programs will contain vital information such as the impact of emergency care systems on patient outcomes, program efficiency, financial impact, and identification of remaining barriers to developing regionalized, accountable emergency care systems. Of equal importance is the bill's support for research in the field of emergency medicine and emergency medical care systems. Specifically, funds are requested to support research in the basic science of emergency medicine, model of service delivery, and incorporation of basic scientific research into day-to-day practice.

Improving and identifying the best practices of emergency medical care is necessary to ensure high-quality, efficient, and reliable care for all who need it. I ask my fellow colleagues to support this legislation so that we can better prepare for emergencies and future disasters. •

BOSTON CELTICS “HEROES AMONG US” AWARDS 2007

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, all of us in Massachusetts are proud of the Boston Celtics. The team is one of the most storied franchises in NBA history, and its players are also impressive leaders in the community. Each year, the Celtics honor outstanding persons in New England as “Heroes Among Us”—men and women who have made an especially significant impact on the lives of others.

The award, now in its 10th year, recognizes men and women who stand tall in service to their community. The extraordinary achievements of this year's honorees include saving lives, sacrificing for others, overcoming obstacles to achieve goals, and lifelong commitments to improving the lives of those around them. The winners include persons of all ages and all walks of life—students, community leaders, founders of nonprofit organizations, member of the clergy, and many others.

At home games during the season each year, the Celtics and their fans salute the efforts of various honorees in special presentation to them on the basketball court. So far, over 500 persons have received the “Heroes Among Us” award during the past decade.

The award has become one of the most widely recognized honors in New England. I commend each of the honorees for the 2006 to 2007 season, and I ask unanimous consent to have their names, their achievements, and their communities printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

HERO AMONG US AWARD RECIPIENTS 2006-2007

Arnold “Red” Auerbach (Boston, MA) founded the Red Auerbach Youth Foundation in 1985 to encourage the healthy development of children.

Ayman Kafel (Sharon, MA) as a member of the Massachusetts National Guard, served on

the Military Police Headquarters' Task Force and later on the Protective Service Security Squad during his one year tour in Iraq.

David Youngerman (Hudson, MA) was chosen to be the Child Ambassador for this year's Miles for Miracles Walk for his recovery from Moyamoya Disease.

Catherine Pisacane (Hopedale, MA) is the founder and executive director of Project Smile, a non-profit organization that collects stuffed animals for police officers, fire fighters and paramedics to give to children.

Helen Ford (Cambridge, MA) worked 28 years in security for the Cambridge School Department.

Eric Christopher (Melrose, MA) has been with the Gloucester Fire Department for 8 years and in January went into a fire without protective gear to save the life of a woman trapped in a blaze.

Lawanda Myrick (Dorchester, MA) has been a committed parent, employee and advocate for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Lynn Dadekian (Worcester, MA) volunteered to donate her liver for a chance for her ailing father to live.

Robbie and Brittany Bergquist (Norwell, MA) started the “Cell Phones for Soldiers” campaign, which has collected over \$1,000,000 and has sent more than 80,000 calling cards to troops in the Middle East.

Corp. Gregory M. Chartier (East Templeton, MA) upon returning from Afghanistan, volunteered to be deployed to Iraq to help create a local police force.

Brian Binette (Saco, ME) was born with cerebral palsy, but has overcome this challenge and will begin a career at the Saco Island School in Maine as a mentor, assistant teacher and head of the school's monthly newsletter.

Clementina Chery (Dorchester, MA) co-founded the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and also founded the Mothers' Walk for Peace, an annual walk now in its tenth year.

Benjamin Smith (Springfield, MA) is the executive director of Dream Studios Inc., to introduce urban youth to the performing arts and provide mentoring to strengthen their academic skills.

Alan Borgal (Boston, MA) has spent the last 31 years with the Animal Rescue League of Boston, working tirelessly for the care and protection of animals.

Dick Arieta (Kingston, MA) has been the head basketball coach at Silver Lake Regional High School since 1970 and has instilled his values of sportsmanship, hard work and teamwork to all he has coached.

Dante Carroccia (Johnston, RI) single-handedly assisted a man injured in an automobile accident and saved his life.

Helen Lamb (Boston, MA) founded “Camp Jabberwocky” in 1953, which has brought the simple joys of childhood to thousands of children with disabilities.

Seth Lampert (Sudbury, MA) earned the Volunteer of the Year Award from Easter Seals for his fundraising efforts for the annual Easter Seals Shootout.

Kevin Sullivan (Carver, MA) moved his truck to absorb the impact of a speeding truck heading directly towards a highway work crew and a police officer on duty, probably saving their lives.

Jennifer Putnam (Wellesley, MA) a volunteer for Horizons for Homeless Children, has spearheaded the preparation of annual feasts for hundreds of homeless children and their families.

Danny Vierra (Somerville, MA) is a Transit Police Officer who pulled a man from the railroad tracks before a speeding train could hit him.

Brooke Rallis (Hampton, NH) is one of only seven people to have overcome the type of

extreme spinal injury she suffered and has since dedicated her life to inspire others through the power of faith, courage, and tenacity.

Marilyn Smith (Medford, MA) has given foster care to over 70 children and was recognized as the Massachusetts Foster Parent of the Year.

Eric Weißenmayer (Amelia Island, FL) is the only blind person to have climbed the tallest peak on each of the seven continents. He also led a group of blind teenagers up Mount Everest, higher than any blind group had ever climbed before.

Rob McCormick (Norton, MA) a former Navy Rescue Swimmer, was driving home from work when he saw a house in flames and saved two people trapped inside.

Cheryl Durant (Mattapan, MA) is a foster mother who has taken in more than 25 teenage girls over the past 20 years.

Jason Schappert (Lakeville, MA), without regard for his own safety, crossed thin ice to rescue a man who had fallen into a freezing pond.

Ralph Marche (Tewksbury, MA) and Anthony Santilli (Woburn, MA) co-founded the New England Winter Sports Clinic for Disabled Veterans which enables these veterans to enjoy skiing and snowboarding despite their disabilities.

Carla Lynton (Brookline, MA) has spent more than 22,000 hours volunteering with the deaf-blind community at Perkins School for the Blind over the past 33 years.

Michael Dennehy (Newton, MA) was named the director of Boston University's Upward Bound program eight years ago and under his leadership, 95% of his students have pursued higher education.

Stefan Nathanson (Newton, MA) is the founder of The Room to Dream Foundation, a local charity whose mission is to create healing environments for children facing chronic and debilitating illnesses.

Dylan DeSilva (Brewster, MA) at age 12 founded "Cape Cod Cares For Our Troops," which has sent over 1,500 care packages and raised over \$40,000 for our soldiers in Iraq.

John Duffy (Winchester, MA) since 1997 has taken students to Peru to install solar panels to provide power for medical clinics in remote villages.

John Gonsalves (Taunton, MA) is the president and founder of Homes for our Troops, which has collected over \$10 million in donations to build adaptive homes for severely wounded veterans.

Sean Cronk (Everett, MA) overcame the challenge of being born with cerebral palsy and scored two critical free throws in Everett High School's league championship basketball game.

Kevin Whalen (Danvers, MA) raised money and donated three months of his salary to aid an Iraq veteran displaced by Hurricane Rita who gave birth to a premature baby that needed 24-hour care at Children's Hospital.

Officer Michael Briggs (Manchester, NH) a Manchester, NH police officer, was shot and killed while responding to a domestic disturbance call.

Rick Phelps (Hanson, MA) rushed into a burning house to save four girls trapped by a fire.

Kathy Savage (Revere, MA), a dedicated volunteer for Special Olympics of Massachusetts since 1985, was named Special Olympics Volunteer Medical Chair and has helped countless athletes to compete.

Billy Starr (Needham, MA) founded the Pan Mass Challenge with 35 friends in 1980, which has raised over \$100 million for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Deborah Weaver (Cambridge, MA) is the founder and Executive Director of Girls LEAP, a free self-defense and safety-aware-

ness program for girls aged 8-18 in low-income communities in Greater Boston.

17TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today we celebrate the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, one of the great civil rights laws in the Nation's history. Seventeen years ago, Congress acted on the fundamental principle that people should be measured by what they can do, not what they can't do. The Americans with Disabilities Act began a new era of opportunity for millions of disabled citizens who had been denied full and fair participation in society.

For generations, people with disabilities were treated with pity and as persons who deserved charity, not opportunity. Out of ignorance, the Nation accepted discrimination for decades and yielded to fear and prejudice. The passage of the ADA finally ended these condescending and suffocating attitudes and widened the doors of opportunity for all people with disabilities.

The anniversary of this landmark legislation is a time to reflect on how far we have come in improving the "real life" possibilities for the Nation's 56 million people with disabilities. In fact, the seeds of action were planted long before 1990.

In 1932, the United States elected a disabled person to the highest office in the land, and he became one of the greatest Presidents in our history. But even Franklin Roosevelt felt compelled by the prejudice of his times to hide his disability as much as possible. The World War II generation began to change all that.

The 1940s and the 1950s introduced the Nation to a new class of Americans with disabilities—wounded and disabled veterans returning from war and finding a society grateful for their courage and sacrifice but relegating them to the sideline of the American dream. Even before the war ended, however, rehabilitation medicine had been born. Disability advocacy organizations began to grow. Disability benefits were added to Social Security. Each decade since then has brought significant new progress and more change.

In the 1960s, Congress responded with new architectural standards, so we could have a society everyone could be a part of. No one would have to wait outside a new building because they were disabled.

The 1970s convinced us that greater opportunities for fuller participation in society were possible for the disabled. Congress responded with a range of steps to improve the lives of people with mental disabilities as well. We supported the right of children with disabilities to attend public schools. We guaranteed the right of people with disabilities to vote in elections, and we insisted on greater access to cultural

and recreational programs in their communities.

The 1980s brought a new realization, however, that in helping people with disabilities, we can't rely only on Government programs. We began to involve the private sector as well. We guaranteed fair housing opportunities for people with disabilities, required fair access to air travel, and made advances in technology available for people hard of hearing or deaf.

The crowning achievement of these decades of progress was passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its promise of a new and better life for every disabled citizen in which their disabilities would no longer put an end to their dreams.

As one eloquent citizen with a disability said, "I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk, to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I want to enjoy the benefits of my creations and face the world boldly, and say, this is what I have done."

Our families, our neighbors, and our friends with disabilities have taught us in ways no books can teach. The inclusion of people with disabilities enriches all our lives. Every day, my son Teddy, who lost his leg at the age of 12, continues to teach me every day the greatest lesson of all—that disabled does not mean unable.

As the saying goes, when people are excluded from the social fabric of a community, it creates a hole—and when there is a hole, the entire fabric is weaker. It lacks the strength that diversity brings. The fabric of our Nation is stronger today than it was 17 years ago because people with disabilities are no longer left out and left behind, and because of that, America is a greater and better and fairer Nation.

Today, in this country, we see the many signs of the progress that mean so much in our ongoing efforts to include persons with disabilities in every aspect of life—the ramps beside the steps, the sidewalks with curb-cuts to accommodate wheelchairs, the lifts for helping disabled people to take a bus to work or the store or a movie.

Disabled students are no longer barred from schools and denied education. They are learning and achieving at levels once thought impossible. They are graduating from high schools, enrolling in universities, joining the workforce, achieving their goals, enriching their communities and their country. They have greater access than ever to the rehabilitation and training needed to be successfully employed and become productive, contributing members of their communities.

With the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act in 1999, we finally linked civil rights much more closely to health care. It isn't civil and it isn't right to send a disabled person to work without the health care they need and deserve.

These milestones show that we are continuing the way to fulfilling the