

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THAT THERE IS A CRITICAL
NEED TO INCREASE RESEARCH,
AWARENESS, AND EDUCATION
ABOUT CEREBRAL CAVERNOUS
MALFORMATIONS

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, medical science has made great strides in unlocking the mystery of illnesses that have plagued humanity for centuries. Medical breakthroughs have helped control and eliminate diseases that once threatened the life and health of millions. Yet for all our progress, we still face threats that we do not understand and therefore cannot stop.

One of the lesser known—but no less devastating—diseases is Cerebral Cavernous Malformation, also known as CCM, or Cavernous Angiomas. CCM's are caused by abnormal blood vessels that form clusters, known as angiomas, in the brain or spinal cord. If the angiomas bleed or press up against structures in the central nervous system, they can cause seizures, neurological deficits, hemorrhages, or headaches.

In the general population, 1 in approximately 200 people has a cavernous angioma and about one-third of these affected individuals become symptomatic at some point in their lives. In some Hispanic families, however, the rate of prevalence is significantly higher. It is what is known as an autosomal dominant disease, which means that each child of an affected parent has a 50 percent chance of inheriting it.

And Madam Speaker, tragically, for generations of these Hispanic families, that is exactly what has happened throughout the country, and especially in New Mexico. In New Mexico, this genetic mutation has been traced back to the original Spanish settlers of the 1580's and has now spread down and across at least 17 generations, resulting in what could be tens of thousands of cases of the illness in the state. In fact, New Mexico has the highest population density of this illness in the world.

Unfortunately, and in some cases tragically, many of the carriers of the gene and even the disease are unaware. To make matters worse, New Mexico, and the nation, face a shortage of physicians who are familiar with this illness. This makes it dangerously difficult to receive timely diagnosis and appropriate care and puts potentially thousands of individuals at risk of a stroke, seizures, or even sudden death.

One New Mexico resident, Joyce Gonzales, was diagnosed with an angioma in her cervical spinal cord and had it surgically removed three years ago. But this success story followed 15 years of pain and misdiagnosis. Tragically, Mrs. Gonzales's 9-year-old second cousin was not as fortunate, recently suffering a cerebral hemorrhagic death caused by CCM.

Madam Speaker, much of the misdiagnosis of CCM, the inexact figures, and lack of knowledge in the medical community is attributable to a lack of research of the disease. NIH funds only eight projects on CCM. This, despite recent indications that staff at the Na-

tional Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke believes CCM to be a "paradigm illness," meaning research findings on CCM could apply to other illnesses that have similar characteristics.

It is clear, Madam Speaker, that more education, awareness, and research is necessary on this disease. That is why I am introducing this resolution today to express the sense of the House of Representatives that there is a critical need to do exactly that; expand education, awareness and research of CCM. This is only a preliminary step in the fight against this disease. I believe a Center of Excellence is needed to provide the highest quality medical and surgical care for families with CCM. An expansion of the existing DNA/Tissue and Clinical Database is also needed. The current database is underfunded, which means that they cannot accept all the samples that are offered. I will be working to establish both of those.

In the meantime, Joyce Gonzales, Dr. Leslie Morrison of the University of New Mexico, and Connie Lee, the President of the Angioma Alliance, are on the forefront of the fight against CCM. It is my honor to join them in this fight by introducing this resolution today and I urge my colleagues to help raise awareness of this devastating disease. There is too much at stake to ignore it.

TRIBUTE TO CELEBRATE THE 60TH
BIRTHDAY OF THE STATE OF
ISRAEL

HON. BILL SALI

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, the 60th birthday of the State of Israel is a time of joyous celebration for all who honor hope, dignity and liberty.

Since even before the First World War, Jewish people from all over the globe have traveled back to their historic homeland. The hope of a secure Jewish homeland was a dream worked for by so many for so long. From dispersion and oppression to bitter pogroms and on through the murderous horror of the Holocaust, the Jewish people have endured more than can be put into words.

Still, through it all, they have persisted and persevered, maintaining their identity, traditions and faith.

On that great day some 60 years ago, the State of Israel declared its independence. Only eleven minutes after Israel did so, President Harry Truman declared America's recognition of the new Jewish State. Since this time, all the leaders of the United States have expressed their support for the State of Israel, and the people of both countries have continually nurtured, promoted and developed their shared values and interests.

President Bush recently made a public statement which summarizes my own views on Israel: "The United States will never abandon its commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state and homeland for the Jewish people."

I am an uncompromising advocate for Israel's security and freedom. Anything which infringes upon the rights and welfare of the State of Israel is not in America's interests and

must never be tolerated. I have served and will continue to serve proudly on the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus. I have co-sponsored legislation to protect this great nation through condemning ongoing Palestinian rocket attacks on innocent Israel civilians, anti-Semitic rhetoric and the glorification of terrorism.

Support for Israel must remain central to American foreign policy. This support is especially essential given the threats Israel continues to face. The brutal terrorist organization Hamas is an ongoing threat to Israel's well-being. Iran continues to shake its potential nuclear sword against Israel, and Al-Qaeda fights for a foothold in Pakistan in order to spread its viral cruelty all the way to Jerusalem. Syria proudly maintains its hostility to the Jewish State, seeming only to be waiting for an opportune moment to pounce.

We must always help Israel keep a well-armed guard up. To do less would be to breach our national interest and our national honor.

For 60 years, the Israelis have strained and endured in their desert home, overcoming in several major wars, endless attacks and terrorism. Amazingly, out of all of this turmoil, pain, and violence, a home has bloomed out of the Middle Eastern sands for these wonderful individuals who only seek a home for themselves and their families.

Sixty years is an anniversary well worth celebrating. While the pain of the past cannot be eradicated, nor can the courage, fortitude and hope of a people who have endured and triumphed, again and again.

May we all join in the prayer of the 122nd Psalm:

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They that love thee shall prosper.

Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will say now, peace be within thee.

For the sake of the House of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.

I trust that all my colleagues will join me in saying "amen" to this prayer.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FAMILY-
FRIENDLY WORKPLACE ACT

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I have tried to come up with legislation that would give us more than 24 hours in a day—but I have not figured out how to do that. So for the time being, I am introducing the Family-Friendly Workplace Act that aims to give working people the opportunity to spend more time with their families.

Time is one of our most precious resources. We all want more of it and yet we only have 24 hours in a day. That means we have to figure out how to work a full day, run errands, pack lunches, make dinner and spend quality time with our kids, spouse, or elderly parent.

One of the biggest struggles parents face is how to balance work and family. Being a new mom, I struggle with it every day. This bill will give people more flexibility so you can put in the time you need to get the job done, but also make sure you can make the school play, stay home with a sick child or care for an elderly parent.

The perception is that working mothers and parents have a greater desire for workplace flexibility than other workers; the reality is that men and women, parents and non-parents, young and older workers alike place a high priority on increased flexibility at work. We all want more time.

A study by the Employment Family Foundation found that 75 percent of workers prefer time off instead of overtime and 81 percent of women prefer to have that benefit.

For many employers, flexible work arrangements are necessary to attract and retain quality employees. In return for offering employees alternative work arrangements and greater flexibility in work schedules, employers gain a workforce that is more productive, committed and focused. For example an insurance company in my home State of Washington saw per-employee revenue increase 70 percent over 5 years after implementing flexible work options.

In talking with Wayne Williams who runs Telect in Spokane, Washington, he told me that they are doing more to give their employees greater flexibility including personal days and technology to give them the flexibility to work from home.

This isn't just a workforce issue, it is also a community and family issue.

The bill I am introducing would allow private sector employers to offer their employees additional time off in lieu of overtime pay. One of the greatest obstacles to flexibility in the workplace is the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (known as the "FLSA"), which governs the work schedules and pay of millions of hourly workers. While the law may have been a good fit for the workforce of 70 years ago, it is simply not relevant to the needs of modern families.

Our labor force isn't what it used to be. Between 1950 and 2000, the labor force participation rate of women between 25 and 55 years of age more than doubled. Today, more than 75 percent of these women are in the labor market. Less than 12 percent of mothers with children under the age of 6 were in the labor force in 1950. Today, more than 60 percent work outside the home.

The FLSA fails to address the needs and preferences of employees in the area of flexible work schedules. Although salaried employees typically have greater flexibility in their day-to-day schedules, hourly employees are much more restricted—due in large part to the outdated FLSA—in their ability to gain greater flexibility in their work schedules.

The goal of the Family-Friendly Workplace Act is simple: to reconcile the overtime requirements under the FLSA with employee demands for increased workplace flexibility. Specifically, the bill would give private sector employers the option of allowing their employees to voluntarily choose paid compensatory time off (known as "comp time") in lieu of overtime pay. Since 1985, public sector employees have been able to bank comp time hours in order to have additional time off for vacation or other family needs. There is no justification for denying private sector employees an option under the FLSA which, by most accounts, has been successful and immensely popular with public sector hourly employees for over 20 years.

To be clear, the Family-Friendly Workplace Act would not change the employer's obligation under the FLSA to pay overtime at the

rate of one-and-one-half times an employee's regular rate of pay for any hours worked over 40 in a seven-day period. The bill would simply allow overtime compensation to be given—at the employee's request—as paid comp time off, at the rate of one-and-one-half hours of comp time for each hour of overtime worked, provided the employee and the employer agree on that form of overtime compensation. The bill contains numerous protections to ensure that the choice and use of comp time is a decision made by the employee.

Since we can't do anything about adding more hours to the day, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting something that gives us a little more flexibility in how we spend that time—the Family-Friendly Workplace Act. We need to respond to the growing needs of workers who want to better integrate work and family. Let's allow working women and men to decide for themselves whether paid time off or extra pay best fits their needs and that of their families.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DANNY FEDERICI

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life long achievements of musician Danny Federici, long-time organ and accordion player for the E Street Band, a band that has become a staple of modern day American culture. Over his four-decade long career, Mr. Federici's signature style of playing has affected and inspired the lives of innumerable musicians and fans around the world.

Born in Flemington, New Jersey, Danny Federici began teaching himself how to play the accordion at the age of seven. His talents quickly earned him many local radio gigs, where he performed classical and polka music. A truly natural musician, it was he and original E Street Band drummer Vini Lopez, who invited Bruce Springsteen to join their band as they began conquering the music scene on the colorful boardwalk of Asbury Park, New Jersey. Often introduced by Springsteen as "Phantom Dan", he spent forty years lending his spontaneous and soulful playing to the countless performances of the E Street Band. Mr. Federici was one of the pillars of their signature sound and his playing evoked the boardwalk at Asbury Park, where he and his fellow band mates spent their childhood together. His accordion playing is most memorable in E Street Band hits such as "Fourth of July" and "Asbury Park".

During the time he spent away from the E Street Band, he recorded two solo albums, both jazz instrumentals. He had an unbreakable dedication to his music and his band mates but even more so to his wife Maya, and his three children, Jason, Harley and Madison. During his battle with Melanoma, he set up the Danny Federici Melanoma Fund, in the hopes that he could help others who were facing the same challenges that he was. His talents will forever be remembered by his family, friends, fans and band mates. In the words of Bruce Springsteen, "Those you are with, in the presence of miracles, you never forget. Life does not does separate you. Death does not sepa-

rate you. Those you are with who create miracles for you, like Danny did for me every night."

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring the life of Danny Federici, whose inspiration and musical genius will continue to touch the lives of generations to come.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank Chairman FRANK, Ranking Member BACHUS and the Committee for their hard work. They have presented a thoughtful and creative proposal.

Housing is a very complex issue—it is also a very emotional one. We aren't just talking about abstract concepts, we are talking about a person's home. We're talking about real people with a real problem.

Prior to Congress I was a Realtor for over 20 years. I have worked with many families to help them realize their dream of home ownership. I have also served as chairman of the Virginia Housing Study Commission. Housing is an important issue for me and something I feel very strongly about.

I have seen good markets and bad. I have witnessed many changes to the mortgage market. I have struggled with how to define and protect against predatory lending practices. I have seen interest rates and loan products that seemed too good to be true—unfortunately, we have seen that in fact, many were too good to be true. I rise today to share my observations and concerns about the bill before us.

There are many components of this bill which I think are excellent and fully support. First Federal Housing Administration modernization is long overdue. FHA must be streamlined and made more efficient. Government Sponsored Enterprise regulatory reform would also help stabilize the housing market. I support an amendment to be offered today that will create a first time home buyer tax credit for low- to mid-income buyers. This would increase the number of buyers in the market—increasing demand now for an oversupply of homes. The bill also increases funding for foreclosure counselors and financial education. I also appreciate the additional funding for law enforcement to prevent mortgage fraud, and that Department of Veterans' Affairs loan limits are raised, and the enhanced appraisal standards and appraisal independence.

These are all well thought out, very important reforms that will help American families and the marketplace.

However, my concerns with today's package include the establishment of a new affordable housing fund to create new grants that can be directed to organizations that work specifically on housing issues. The bill does contain a provision that will prohibit the use of these grant funds for political activities, the fact is that many of the possible recipients engage in partisan political activities and therefore should