There are countless stories of Americans, including my own constituents in Ohio's 9th District, who are struggling not only with their mental illness, but with the costs of trying to treat it. Our local jails are jammed with inmates who present with serious mental illness as our sheriffs become innkeepers for the untreated mentally ill. Mental illness affects the majority of homeless in our Nation. Treating those who suffer from these cruel illnesses is long overdue. Following are accounts that show a striking difference among my constituents (whose names have been changed for privacy reasons) who have the necessary health coverage to help mange their illness, with those who do not.

Carol is a young woman not yet 30 years old, who had managed to hide her paranoid schizophrenia for several years with treatment until a recent breakdown exposed it in a very public way. She'd lost her job—and thus her health insurance—and was struggling. She had no way to afford COBRA payments, and without health insurance, had to stop treatment. The voices in her head told her to eat bananas and drink beer, and then to drive. After following these instructions, she was picked up by the local police for driving under the influence. It was then that her parents became aware of her true condition. Because she had no health insurance, they could not find a place which would admit her for proper treatment. Her court case for the DUI was placed on suspension because, in her state of psychotic crisis, she could not participate in her own defense. Her parents finally found a counselor through the community mental health system, but her medical bills continue to mount.

Mary's situation is similarly devastating. A single mother raising four children, Mary works in a job which does not offer health insurance. Although she has purchased a private policy, it is very limited and has additional restrictions on mental health care. Mary's teenage son began to experience severe mental health problems and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She found care in a private facility, but reached her insurance limit quickly. Now without the ability to pay for his care, she has found it very difficult to successfully continue his treatment. He has since encountered legal difficulty, and has been placed in a juvenile justice center.

With comprehensive health coverage, Bob's situation is much more fortunate, and a model for how things should be. Bob is a professional with a well-paying job and a young family. However, a crisis sent him into a downward spiral ending in depression. His full insurance coverage afforded him the ability to ''shop around'' as they struggled to find him proper treatment. Bob eventually sought help through a private inpatient treatment facility. Following his stay, he and his family have continued the intensive therapy he was prescribed, which has enabled him to return to a life of productivity and has restored a sense of normalcy in his family.

The Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act will go a long way in ensuring that there are more success stories like Bob's, and fewer situations like that of Carol and Mary. And, by breaking down the barriers to treatment, this bill will also help erase the unfortunate stigma that prevents those in need of mental health and addiction treatment from seeking the care they need.

The Wellstone bill moves America forward and brings hope to millions who know the scourge of mental illness.

HONORING DETECTIVE LUIS RODRIGUEZ

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, the contribution of law enforcement to the community goes well beyond arrests and convictions, and if you are lucky, on occasion you come across someone with that extra sense of commitment to the motto ''protect and serve''. Detective Luis Rodriguez, a 20-year veteran of the New York City Police Department, is the Community Affairs Officer for the 50th Precinct, the liaison to schools, civic groups, tenant associations and houses of worship and Detective Rodriguez is one such officer who is always ready to go above and beyond and to offer a helping hand those in need.

Detective Rodriguez defines his job in terms of what he can do for the community by bringing human warmth to people who are facing stressful situations. Whenever anything occurs in the community whether a serious issue or a simple question, everyone knows that they can call Luis. We don't even need to use a title or last name, he is known simply as Luis. We know that we can count on him for guidance or to be there when needed.

He has had many awards for his work and credits his parents for raising him with a lot of trust. He is passing on this trust to two of his favorite people in the world, his children, Caitlin and Steven.

For his good work with the community, the Riverdale Jewish Community Council is awarding him the Martin Rollins Interfaith Brotherhood Award. I understand that Detective Rodriguez is retiring this summer and I want him to know that the community will miss him and that he can always count on us for a helping hand if ever he needs one.

THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I am extremely pleased that the fiscal year (FY) 2009 Budget Resolution, approved by the Committee on the Budget, recognizes the critical importance of meeting our Nation's infrastructure investment needs, even while achieving a balanced budget by 2012. The Budget Resolution vigorously rejects the short-sighted policies of the President's budget, which cuts virtually every infrastructure investment program within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, including highways, public transit, airports, Amtrak, wastewater treatment, and water resources development.

In contrast to the harmful cuts proposed by the administration, the resolution fully funds highway, transit, and highway safety programs at the levels originally authorized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA–LU). The resolution rejects both the negative $1 billion adjustment for Revenue Aligned Budget Authority, and the administration's proposal to cut highway and transit funding by an additional $1 billion below the authorized levels, which would be detrimental to short-term economic stimulus efforts, as well as long-term economic growth.

For the Airport Improvement Program, AIP, the resolution rejects the $765 million cut proposed by the administration, and instead provides the full amounts authorized in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881), as approved by the House last year. Specifically, the proposed budget provides $3.9 billion for AIP in FY 2009, increasing to $4.1 billion by FY 2011. This funding will allow the AIP program to keep pace with inflationary cost increases, and begin to address the investment gap in airport safety and capacity needs.

For Amtrak, the resolution rejects the $525 million cut proposed by the administration, which would essentially shut down our national passenger rail system, and instead increases funding to meet the costs of Amtrak's new labor agreement, pursuant to Presidential Emergency Board 242.

For environmental infrastructure, the resolution rejects the administration's proposed cut to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, CWSRF, program, the primary Federal program for funding wastewater infrastructure projects throughout the Nation. A year ago, the President requested $687.5 million in capitalization grants for CWSRFs for FY 2008. At that time, it was the lowest level requested by any administration since the creation of the program. For FY 2009, the administration requests a pitiful $555 million, a 20 percent cut from last year's appropriation of $689 million. The administration's proposal puts at risk the water quality gains achieved in recent decades, and the resolution correctly rejects this cut.

Finally, the resolution rejects the administration's proposal to cut funding for the Army Corps of Engineers by $845 million in FY 2009, and instead provides increased funding to begin to address the growing backlog of water resources development projects, including those authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure firmly believes that infrastructure investment is fundamental to stimulating and sustaining long-term economic growth. Therefore, I am pleased that the budget resolution includes an Infrastructure Investment Reserve Fund, which will accommodate legislation to ''Rebuild America'' in FY 2009.

I look forward to working with Chairman SPRATT on continued improvements to our Nation's infrastructure, and I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.