

Our nurses deserve the best work conditions possible, and so do the millions of patients they care for in America.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 192, recognizing national nurses week on May 6 through May 12, 2009. I thank Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON for introducing this important resolution which recognizes and acknowledges the dedication of our nursing community across America.

This resolution is important because nurses represent the largest single component of the healthcare profession, with an estimated 2.9 million registered nurses in the United States. In Texas alone, according to the Texas Board of Nursing, there are 162,163 registered nurses through out the state.

In Harris County, the county encompassing my district, there are 24,480 registered nurses. Nurses are patient advocates and act fearlessly to protect the lives of those under their care. Nurses care for patients, but participate in a wide range of needed scientific research, and fight cultural and ethnic disparities, and treat all patients as equals. Nurses are also teachers, not only to future generations of nurses, but to the public, educating us on health and safety.

It is necessary that we acknowledge the outstanding contribution to society by nurses because nurses can be strong allies to Congress as they help inform, educate and work closely with legislators to improve the education, retention, recruitment and practice of all nurses and, more importantly, the health and safety of the patients they care for.

Federal and State support is needed to enhance existing programs to educate nursing students at all levels, to increase the number of faculty members to educate nursing students, to create clinical sites and have the appropriately prepared nurses to teach and train at those sites, to create educational opportunities to retain nurses in the profession, and to educate and train more nurse research scientists who can discover new nursing care models to improve the health status of the Nation's diverse population. The services nurses can provide are linked directly to the availability, cost and quality of healthcare services, which are at the center of health reform discussions.

In a year where health care reform is a top priority, it is significant to acknowledge that 33 national nursing organizations have endorsed a consensus statement from the Nursing Community that complement five of President Obama's tenets outlined in his Transforming and Modernizing America's Health Care System plan. Nurses protect families and financial health and make health care coverage affordable by providing cost-effective care at all levels of nursing practice. Nurses play a key role in the success of the President's aim for universality. Without a strong investment in the nursing workforce, the goal of reaching universality will be unattainable, particularly for rural communities and underserved populations. When the Administration and Congress invest in prevention and wellness, existing practice and care models, such as the Nurse Family Partnership, derived from nursing science will serve as national exemplars for wellness and prevention. The strength of the nursing profession lies in its contribution to improve patient safety and quality care. Nursing care is critical to improving healthcare

quality and safety to ensure better patient outcomes.

Unfortunately, there is a continuing shortage of professional Registered Nurses. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing released preliminary survey data showing that enrollment in entry level baccalaureate nursing programs increased by only 2 percent from 2007 to 2008. While this makes the eighth consecutive year of enrollment growth, the annual increase in student capacity in 4-year nursing programs has declined sharply since 2003 which enrollment was up 16.6 percent. Due to a lack of nurse educators over 100,000 qualified nursing candidates have been rejected to nursing programs across the U.S. according to the National League for Nursing most recent survey. These shortages have caused the current nurse educators to work on average more than 57 hours per week as well as dedicated nurses to work longer hours and care for more acutely ill patients. The nursing field needs more money invested in its future.

It is only fitting that the end of National Nurses Week is the birthday of Florence Nightingale. She once said "I attribute my success to this—I never gave or took any excuse." So today in her honor we must give no excuse to keep from honoring the noble and important profession of nursing, if anything we should fight to improve its condition because with improved nursing, and funds for nurses, we get a better health care system. I urge my colleagues to pass this resolution and acknowledge and support our country's nurses.

Mrs. CAPPs. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 192 and in support of National Nurses Week. I commend my friend and fellow nurse, Ms. JOHNSON, for introducing this resolution.

As we observe Nurses Week, we have a perfect opportunity to highlight the importance of addressing nursing issues in the context of health reform.

Nurses must have a seat at the table for the discussions and nurses must be part of the solutions. After all, nurses are the best advocates for their patients.

I would like to propose that we use National Nurses Week 2009 to not only thank the nurses who have helped us in our own lives, but to learn more about the roles that they play in our community at-large.

Whether it is the nurse at a patient's hospital bedside, the nurse tending to children at an elementary school, the nurse midwife delivering a baby or the nurse faculty instructing a new generation of nurses, they all play an important part in our health care delivery system.

As we proceed with comprehensive health reform, we need to take into account the various roles that nurses perform so that we can ensure a viable nurse workforce well into the future.

Health reform will be impossible without a nursing workforce to support the primary and acute care needs of all Americans and I encourage my colleagues to join me in making a commitment during Nurses Week to advocate for nurses during our health reform debate.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 192—Recognizing National Nurses Week. I'd like to particularly thank my colleague Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas for offering this resolution, and to honor my colleagues Representative LOIS CAPPs of California and Representative CAROLYN MCCARTHY of New

York, three Members of Congress who worked as nurses before holding public office and who continue to be strong advocates for nurses and patients.

The men and women who work as nurses in the United States are some of the most important—but also some of the most unsung—heroes who serve in our communities. We all probably have a personal story about a nurse who either cared for us or a close family member or friend during a time of need. They are superb in their skill sets; tender in the care they provide; and deserving of our utmost respect.

When you become a nurse, the conventional wisdom and continuing tradition is that you go into the field because you have a genuine interest in and passion for helping those in need. You don't do it for the money; you don't do it for the glamour; and you certainly don't do it for the hours.

But it's time to encourage men and women to pursue a career in nursing by showing them that we respect and value the careers of the approximate 3 million nurses across America. We can do this by increasing pay for nurses and by making nursing education more affordable and more accessible.

We're facing an unprecedented nursing shortage across this country that could lead to a shortfall of up to 500,000 nurses by 2025. And nursing isn't a job that can be downsized or outsourced. That is why I support the inclusion of \$215 million for the Nursing Workforce Development program in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget and why I worked to help secure \$500 million in the stimulus package for training programs for primary care providers, including nurses.

In my own district in California I fought to keep the Registered Nursing Program alive and funded at L.A. Southwest College, and am happy to announce that this year they will receive a \$285,000 appropriation to improve nursing education through state-of-the-art technology.

Nurses are a precious asset we cannot afford to be without.

With major health care reform on the horizon, we must remember that nurses will be at the center of any meaningful reform. Let us honor their service, their dedication, and their profession by passing this resolution.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 192.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION ON ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 204) congratulating the American Dental Association for its 150th year of working to improve the public's oral health

and promoting dentistry, supporting initiatives to improve access to oral health care services for all Americans, and emphasizing the benefits of prevention of disease through support of community prevention initiatives and promotion of good oral hygiene.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 204

Whereas access to good oral health care is a vital element of overall health;

Whereas the American Dental Association works to improve access to oral health care services that are essential to help ensure the health of the American public;

Whereas the American Dental Association supports community prevention initiatives and promotion of good oral hygiene;

Whereas the American Dental Association continually works to improve dental technologies and therapies through research and adherence to sound scientific principles;

Whereas "The Journal of the American Dental Association" is recognized internationally as a leader in peer-reviewed dental science;

Whereas the American Dental Association encourages its membership of more than 157,000 dentists to donate their time, resources, and services to providing charitable and uncompensated care;

Whereas dental practices provide over \$2,000,000,000 in charitable and uncompensated care to specific underserved populations annually; and

Whereas the American Dental Association advocates sufficient funding for Federal dental research and military readiness programs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the American Dental Association for its 150th anniversary;

(2) commends the American Dental Association's work to improve the public's oral health as well as access to oral health care for all Americans, especially low-income children;

(3) recognizes the tens of thousands of dentists who volunteer their time and resources to provide charitable and uncompensated oral health care to millions of Americans; and

(4) commends the American Dental Association's efforts to keep American dentistry the best in the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to extend and revise their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 204, a resolution that congratulates the American

Dental Association on its 150th anniversary.

The American Dental Association is the largest and oldest professional association for dental providers. Its more than 157,000 members play a vital role in improving access to oral health services.

Former Surgeon General David Satcher has noted that oral health is integral to general health. The American Dental Association has been a lead advocate in ensuring that these important health services are not forgotten.

I would like to thank and applaud my colleague, Representative SIMPSON, for his leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution that commends the American Dental Association for its important work to promote good oral hygiene and community prevention strategies.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to offer this resolution congratulating the American Dental Association on its 150th year of advancing the art and science of dentistry and advocating on behalf of the oral health of the American people. I know many of you join me in offering those congratulations, as the resolution before the House today has 104 cosponsors.

The ADA is the professional association of dentists committed to the public's oral health, ethics, science, and the advancement of the dental profession.

The ADA traces its origins to the mid-19th century, when representatives of eight regional dental societies and two dental colleges came together in Niagara Falls, New York, to establish a representative body of stability and character. They called their fledgling organization the American Dental Association. Today, seven out of 10 U.S. dentists belong to the ADA, with membership of more than 157,000 dentists. The ADA has 53 State and territorial and 545 local dental societies. It is the largest and oldest national dental association in the world.

The association has long been a leader, advocating for improved health care and access for underprivileged Americans. Even today, as Congress wrestles with the issue of health care reform, the ADA is continually reminding us that oral health is an integral part of overall health. The ADA's health care reform principles focus on three things: prevention and wellness, fixing Medicaid, and improving the public oral health infrastructure.

The Association is active in cutting-edge dental research. At the Paffenbarger Research Center, housed on the National Institute of Standards and Technology campus just outside of Washington, D.C., ADA scientists are working on improving dental materials, tissue engineering, and cavity-repairing therapies. Some of

Paffenbarger's research accomplishments include the development of modern high-speed dental drills, panoramic x-ray machines, protective tooth sealants, tooth-colored composite filling material, calcium phosphate, bone cements, and more.

The ADA's Give Kids A Smile is an annual centerpiece to the National Children's Dental Health Month. It is observed every year on the first Friday in February. At more than 1,600 sites nationwide this year, some 45,000 dental professionals provided free services to more than 450,000 children. I can tell you, the spirit behind that one-day event carries over throughout the year. The ADA encourages its members to donate time and services to the underserved. In fact, dentists provide more than \$2 billion in charitable and uncompensated care to specific underserved populations each year. That's \$2 billion worth of free dental work.

I congratulate them on this 150th year of their founding of the American Dental Association. I hope that Members will join me in congratulating the ADA by voting in favor of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my good friend from Indiana, who has been a supporter of the dental profession for many years, Representative BUYER.

Mr. BUYER. I thank my dentist friend for yielding, and I thank him for bringing this resolution to the floor.

I come from a family of dentists. My grandfather is a dentist, my father is a dentist, my brother is a dentist, my sister is a dentist, my uncle is a dentist. I chose not to follow halitosis, so I became a lawyer, which means that I sit in the kitchen with the children at Christmas and Thanksgiving.

I come to the floor to honor my grandfather, Dr. Clarence Cornelius Buyer, my father, Dr. John Buyer, Sr., who on February 24 turned 80 and 4 days later retired from his dental practice. That's a lot of years, isn't it, practicing dentistry?

My deceased uncle, Dr. Earl Moore, was an orthodontist in Indianapolis. My sister, Dr. Diane Buyer, practices dentistry on the north side in Indianapolis. And my brother, Dr. John Buyer, Jr., is a periodontist and recently retired in January from the United States Army.

One thing I note about growing up in a family of dentists that has helped me is when you mention the words "prevention" and "wellness," when I think of the professions in health that are out there, dentists take the lead. It is almost to the point where I believe that anthropologists, a thousand years from now, are going to dig us up, and they are going to look at our bones and say, look at the stress on those bones, but look at those teeth. They've got to

be Americans. Because, see, Americans, what has happened to us? I will eat what I want, I will drink whatever I want; by golly, the health system better be there to take care of my body, but I'm going to take care of my teeth because my smile means everything to me. I just wish the people would put the same focus they have in their teeth that they also place in their bodies. If we were to do that, how much better in wellness as a society would we be?

The contribution that dentistry has had to me, as a leader in health policy for the country, even goes back to the 1990s, when we began to examine Medicare, for example, and we noted that one-third of our Medicare expenditures was diabetes-related. Well, I spoke up and said, I come from a family of dentists, and we focus on preventive medicine. If we spent billions of dollars on the front end, we wouldn't be spending the multibillion dollars on the back end. So it's about wellness of the whole body. So I want to compliment the dentists.

Now I want to pause and talk about military dentistry, too, for a second. If we are going to compliment the ADA, it is not only in their contributions to our society, but also to military dentists. Military dentists are combat multipliers because there are so many non-battlefield casualties, individuals who are taken off the battlefield because of what happens with regard to the deterioration of their dental hygiene. It is those dentists that put them back in, and I want to truly applaud them.

Let me close with the infinite wisdom of the United States Army. I came out of The Citadel. I received my commission as a second lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps. My first assignment in the United States Army was with a dental clinic. I did everything I could, dad, to get away from dentistry, but for whatever reason, it totally consumes me, even in my life today.

Let me say congratulations to the ADA and to all the dentists and the dental assistants and the dental hygienists and the specialties for which the ADA represents. Thank you, and good job.

Mr. SIMPSON. I appreciate the gentleman's comment. I should note that I also come from a family of dentists; I just couldn't escape. I ended up going into the dental profession where he went into the law profession. We will argue for some time who made the better choice. But I appreciate everyone's support and would encourage their positive vote on this resolution.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 204, which honors one of our nation's oldest African-American medical professional organizations, the National Dental Association. For nearly 150 years, the NDA has committed itself to opening the doors to the dental profession—a profession that has traditionally been dominated by the privileged few who could afford dental training—to men and women of color.

Even more importantly, the NDA has been a voice for the under-served in our society,

often speaking out about disparities in access to dental care when others in the provider community would not. The dentists who make up the NDA, like I, believe that the right to dental care must be a fundamental human and civil right—not a privilege. In the wealthiest nation in the history of the world, there is no reason that some Americans lack access to a dentist or oral surgeon.

We all mourn the loss of Demonte Driver, a young African-American boy who died in 2007 as the result of not getting timely and medically necessary dental care because his family was uninsured. I am committed to working with the NDA and all other provider groups to ensure that our country reaches a point where stories like Demonte's will become increasingly rare and, eventually, cease to exist. We must work to ensure that young dental students who wish to practice in communities served by Medicaid have the fiscal flexibility to do so. This necessarily means addressing the \$145,000 debt the average dental student incurs during the course of his or her education.

To this end, I will soon introduce legislation that expands funding for the National Health Service Corps. The program provides for medical and dental students' reasonable educational expenses and a monthly stipend for room and board. After school, the student must apply for pre-approved positions in underserved areas. By increasing the funding levels between 2009 and 2019 by \$100 million each year, my bill will ensure that every citizen in every community has access to the doctor and dentist of their choice.

I applaud the NDA for their 150 years of excellence and compassionate advocacy and I wish them 150 more. Together, we will end dental access disparity once and for all. I encourage my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 204.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the grounds that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

BELATED THANK YOU TO THE MERCHANT MARINERS OF WORLD WAR II ACT OF 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 23) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Mer-

chant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States Merchant Marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 23

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. PAYMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION FUND.—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§533. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund

"(a) COMPENSATION FUND.—(1) There is in the general fund of the Treasury a fund to be known as the 'Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund' (in this section referred to as the 'compensation fund').

"(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, amounts in the compensation fund shall be available to the Secretary without fiscal year limitation to make payments to eligible individuals in accordance with this section.

"(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—(1) An eligible individual is an individual who—

"(A) during the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009, submits to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require;

"(B) has not received benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-346); and

"(C) has engaged in qualified service.

"(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), a person has engaged in qualified service if, between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, the person—

"(A) was a member of the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) serving as a crewmember of a vessel that was—

"(i) operated by the War Shipping Administration or the Office of Defense Transportation (or an agent of the Administration or Office);

"(ii) operated in waters other than inland waters, the Great Lakes, and other lakes, bays, and harbors of the United States;

"(iii) under contract or charter to, or property of, the Government of the United States; and

"(iv) serving the Armed Forces; and

"(B) while so serving, was licensed or otherwise documented for service as a crewmember of such a vessel by an officer or employee of the United States authorized to license or document the person for such service.

"(c) AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall make a monthly payment out of the compensation fund in the amount of \$1,000 to an eligible individual. The Secretary shall make such payments to eligible individuals in the order in which the Secretary receives the applications of the eligible individuals.

"(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the compensation fund amounts as follows:

"(A) For fiscal year 2010, \$120,000,000.

"(B) For fiscal year 2011, \$108,000,000.

"(C) For fiscal year 2012, \$97,000,000.

"(D) For fiscal year 2013, \$85,000,000.