

during their lifetime, someone with Spina Bifida will face at least a \$1 million in medical expenses, including surgeries continuing throughout adulthood, and most can expect to spend much of their lives in a wheelchair or walking with braces.

One significant challenge facing this population is that, while we have a coordinated system of care designed to treat children with Spina Bifida in the U.S., there is no equivalent for adults. Spina Bifida is still largely taught in medical schools as a pediatric condition and education has failed to keep pace with the rapid rise in the adult Spina Bifida population. The result is that adults face a “care cliff” and enter a very fractured medical system where they are unable to find physicians willing or even knowledgeable enough to provide treatment. Thousands of adults are left with few options other than to seek care in the emergency room or continue to see their pediatric care team until insurance will no longer cover their care because of their age.

To make matters worse, many of these adults rely on Medicaid as their insurance provider, so even if they have the means to travel to an adult specialist who may be located in another state—as is often the case—their coverage is denied. Across the country, there are more than 100 pediatric clinics devoted to caring for children with Spina Bifida. There are less than 30 whose focus is on adults.

There are a number of concrete steps at the federal level we could take that would make dramatic improvements in the ability of adults with Spina Bifida to access quality care. One is to increase funding of the CDC’s National Spina Bifida Program—the sole federal program tasked with improving the care and outcomes for people with Spina Bifida. In 2008, the Spina Bifida Program created a National Spina Bifida Patient Registry to collect the scientific data needed to evaluate existing medical services for Spina Bifida patients, and to provide clinicians, researchers, patients, and families a window into what care models are effective and what treatments are not making a measurable difference. Building on this in 2014, the Spina Bifida Program funded the development of a Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network to identify and to disseminate best practices for the care of people with Spina Bifida at all ages. However, with only \$7.5 million in annual funding, there are only 11,000 patients in the national registry, limiting the ability of medical professionals to glean knowledge that would advance research in areas critical to improving quality of life. Even modest increases to this funding would make an enormous difference.

Another important step would be to reform Medicaid policies to require coverage or treatment received across state lines for rare disorders, as there simply aren’t enough specialists in each state to provide the care that people with Spina Bifida desperately need and deserve.

And finally, we must continue to allow patients to receive insurance coverage for telehealth services once the COVID-19 emergency declaration expires. Telehealth is a critical tool in improving health outcomes for everyone, particularly those with unique conditions where care isn’t easily accessible geographically.

We are so fortunate today that our country is benefiting from the talent and contributions of the first generation of adults living with

Spina Bifida. Today, I honor and celebrate all of them, along with their care partners, and also remember those we have lost to this condition. I urge my colleagues to not only increase funding for the National Spina Bifida Program, but to work together to reform insurance policies so that these Americans receive the care and treatment all of us want for our families and loved ones.

HONORING CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON FROM INDIANA LOIS J. WAGONER

HON. JAMES R. BAIRD

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor Congressional Liaison Lois J. Wagoner on her sixty years of government service.

Ms. Lois J. Wagoner began working as a civilian clerk typist at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1961. Ten years later, she came to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to work in the Finance Division of the Indianapolis Regional Office as a program support clerk.

Further on in her career, she became a Veterans Benefits Counselor and eventually was named the Congressional Liaison in 1990. This position required Ms. Wagoner to work and communicate regularly with Veterans and the offices of D.C. government officials.

I am pleased to add that Ms. Wagoner was recognized with many awards including the Indianapolis Regional Office’s Employee of the Year award in 2009 and two awards from the Disabled American Veterans titled the National Commanders’ Award for the Veterans Benefits Administration in 2020 and the Award of Excellence in 2021 at their annual convention.

Ms. Wagoner has been a valuable resource for countless American heroes by directly supporting Veterans and providing families with the knowledge they need to care for their loved ones. Her passion for public service is unparalleled, and I believe her journey will act as inspiration for those who wish to follow in her footsteps.

While Ms. Wagoner has traveled all across the country to serve, it is within The Hoosier State where she has made a distinctive impact. I, along with other Veterans in Indiana’s 4th Congressional District, am proud of all she has done for those who fearlessly defended freedom and democracy.

On behalf of all Hoosiers, I want to congratulate Ms. Lois J. Wagoner, we truly value her six decades of dedicated public service.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOE VAN WYE AND HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I rise, along with DAVID CICILLINE, Chair of the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law to thank Joe Van Wye for his service to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Joe received his bachelor’s degree from Brown University and began his career in pub-

lic policy as a Staff Assistant and then Legislative Correspondent for Representative DAVID CICILLINE. Joe first joined the Judiciary Committee as a Professional Staff Member, Legislative Aide, and Clerk in February 2019 for the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law.

Joe’s work was essential to the success of many of the Subcommittee’s activities. For three years, Joe served as clerk for all the Subcommittee’s business, including Subcommittee hearing preparation and markups, as well as coordination of briefings, press conferences, and events for congressional staff and advocacy groups.

Joe also worked on legislation to end forced arbitration so that survivors of sexual assault or harassment could bring their stories out of the shadows and pursue justice in our courts. He helped lead the Subcommittee’s efforts to pass the Forced Arbitration Justice Repeal Act, the Justice for Servicemembers Act, and the Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Harassment Act—the last of which became law in March 2022, codifying one of the most important workplace reforms in our nation’s history.

Joe was also instrumental to the Subcommittee’s investigation of competition in digital markets in the 116th Congress. He was essential to the Subcommittee’s collecting of more than 1.2 million documents as part of the investigation, and helped prepare the Subcommittee’s 2020 report entitled “Investigation of Competition in Digital Markets: Majority Staff Report and Recommendations.” This report released findings and recommendations following a 16-month bipartisan investigation into the state of competition in the digital economy, with a focus on the challenges presented by the dominance of Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google. The Committee on the Judiciary held a markup and formally adopted the Report in April 2021.

Throughout all of his work, Joe brought his passion for public policy, commitment to justice and equity, and good humor. Our Committee, Congress, and the American people greatly benefited from his service.

While we are sad to see Joe go and he will certainly be missed, we are happy that he will continue to serve the public interest in his new non-profit role advocating for a fair, inclusive, and competitive food and agriculture system.

We thank Joe Van Wye for his service to the Committee and wish him the best of luck with this new chapter.

RECOGNIZING SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, each October we recognize National Spina Bifida Month and pay tribute to the nearly 166,000 Americans living with Spina Bifida—the most common permanently disabling birth defect compatible with life.

Literally translated as “split spine,” Spina Bifida is a condition that occurs when a baby’s neural tube fails to develop or close properly. Typically occurring within the first 28 days of pregnancy while the neural tube is forming, Spina Bifida often develops before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

Sponsored by the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), National Spina Bifida Awareness Month is a time to highlight the needs of the community and recognize the importance of the work done year-round to advance research, programs, and policies aimed at meeting those needs.

As co-chair of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus, I've had the honor to work alongside SBA to advance Spina Bifida awareness, research, and public health efforts in Congress. Founded in 1973, SBA is the Nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating for and assisting those living with and affected by this debilitating birth defect.

Through its nearly 60 chapters in more than 125 communities, the SBA brings expectant parents together with those who have a child with Spina Bifida. This interaction helps to answer questions and concerns, but most importantly it lends much needed support, solidarity, inspiration, and hope.

Madam Speaker, Spina Bifida is a birth defect that can happen to anyone. Every day, an average of eight babies are affected by Spina Bifida and approximately 3,000 pregnancies are affected by this birth defect each year.

We do not know the exact cause of this condition, but research has found that if a woman takes 400 mcg of folic acid every day before she becomes pregnant, she reduces her risk of having a baby with Spina Bifida or another neural tube defect by as much as 70 percent.

No two cases of Spina Bifida are ever the same and so this birth defect is commonly referred to as the "snowflake condition." Children born with Spina Bifida typically undergo dozens of surgeries before they reach the age of 18. And during their lifetime, someone with Spina Bifida will face at least \$1 million in medical expenses, including multiple surgeries, and most can expect to spend much of their lives in a wheelchair or walking with braces.

Despite these challenges—and thanks to advances in research and medicine, along with policies supportive of children with disabilities—nearly two-thirds of Americans currently living with Spina Bifida have made it to adulthood. And while these strides are certainly worth celebrating, people with Spina Bifida—particularly adults—continue to face a crisis of care that could be largely prevented with the right resources and policies.

There are number of concrete steps we could take that would make dramatic improvements in the ability of adults with Spina Bifida to access quality care. One is to increase funding of the CDC's National Spina Bifida Program—the sole federal program tasked with improving the care and outcomes for people with Spina Bifida.

In 2008, the Spina Bifida Program created a National Spina Bifida Patient Registry to collect the scientific data needed to evaluate existing medical services for Spina Bifida patients, and to provide clinicians, researchers, patients, and families a window into what care models are effective and what treatments are not making a measurable difference.

Building on this in 2014, the Spina Bifida Program funded the development of a Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network to identify and to disseminate best practices for the care of people with Spina Bifida at all ages. However, with only \$7.5 million in annual funding, there are only 11,000 patients in the national

registry, limiting the ability of medical professionals to glean knowledge that would advance research in areas critical to improving quality of life.

Even modest increases to this funding would make an enormous difference. Spina Bifida research needs dedicated funding to ensure a better future for Americans with Spina Bifida.

This past summer, Christopher Rosati—a young man living with Spina Bifida—worked as an intern in my Washington, D.C. office.

I originally met Chris during an advocacy day nearly 18 years ago when he was just 4 years old. After those early days, Chris and I met again when he worked as an intern in my NJ office. Based on his good works, we offered him an internship in my office on Capitol Hill. At each location, during each internship, Chris proved to be a smart, hardworking, reliable member of the team.

Undeterred by physical challenges inherent in a commute and in some workspaces, Chris has set his sights on public policy and making a difference. This fall he returned to school as a senior at The College of New Jersey. My entire staff and I have been truly inspired by Chris' determination, dedication, good nature, and success. I am grateful for his contributions in my office, and we all look forward with enthusiasm and anticipation to the positive impact he will bring and the advances he will help achieve—for himself and the populations he will act on behalf of—in any career he pursues.

Madam Speaker, with added federal support, more people living with Spina Bifida could receive assistance they need along their life's journey. I invite my colleagues to join me in this mission and join me in the Spina Bifida Caucus to broaden our efforts and advance the goal of a better future for people living with Spina Bifida.

HONORING AARON LINDSAY

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Aaron Lindsay, who served the people of Florida's 24th Congressional District. Aaron has proven to be an outstanding addition to my office and shows great passion for everything he does.

Aaron has assisted my office in communications, constituent and community engagement, and policy research. He has shown a great understanding of the legislative process, a passion for learning, and a willingness to go above and beyond on assignments.

The son of Jeanelle and Tyrone Lindsay, Aaron is a proud Bison enrolled in Howard University's School of Business as a Marketing major. During his time as a Howard University Bison, Aaron has served as a member with the American Marketing Association for the School of Business along with being a Fellow, Panelist Host, and Ambassador for the Warner Music Blavatnik Business Fellowship Program at Howard University.

Upon transitioning from his internship, Aaron will proceed to complete his fellowship program with the Warner Music Blavatnik Business Center while also continuing to intern

with his marketing background, leading to a Leadership Development role upon graduation.

On behalf of Florida's 24th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Aaron Lindsay for his present and future accomplishments.

HONORING THE 2022 TENNESSEE AVIATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE RICHARD A. BLEVINS

HON. DIANA HARSHBARGER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Northeast State Community College's Richard A. Blevins, Director of the Northeast State Community College Aviation Technology Program with 43 years of service in aviation, who will be inducted into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame.

Ret. USAF Chief Master Sergeant Richard A. Blevins, a native of Kingsport, entered the Air Force in March 1979 as a Systems Analyst on Nuclear Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Space Lift Launch Systems. Chief Blevins held numerous positions during his 27-plus-year career culminating as the 30th Launch Group Superintendent, Vandenberg AFB, CA. He led three diverse launch squadrons of 181 USAF and 121 contractor personnel there.

Richard provided oversight and mission assurance on Delta IV/Atlas V Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) programs, Titan IV/Delta II space launch systems, Ground-Based Mid-Course Defense (GMD) system build, integration, and deployment. He was responsible for implementing \$660 million test launches, \$65 million modernization, and \$2 billion space lift certification programs. In addition, he directed maintenance activities on five launch complexes and ten missile processing facilities valued at over \$500 million.

During his career, he was selected to attend the ICBM Technical Engineering School, one of the youngest ranking sergeants ever chosen for the position. His leadership was demonstrated when he was awarded as the top Strategic Air Command Non-Commissioned Officer Academy graduate. Upon retiring from the Air Force, Richard was hired as the Training Manager for Bell Helicopter. His responsibility encompasses the training and qualification of over 500 personnel to meet Federal Aviation Regulations and ISO AS9100 requirements.

Richard is a graduate of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and holds a Masters Degree in Aeronautics. Richard is also a certified FAA Private Pilot, FAA Part 107 Unmanned Aircraft Systems, and FAA Airframe Certified Mechanic.

Each day, Richard helps ensure Northeast State's students are trained at the highest levels of reliability for employment in the aviation maintenance industry. The success of this program will benefit our region for many years to come.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Richard A. Blevins on his 43 years of service to the aviation industry and being inducted into the Tennessee Aviation Hall of Fame.