

laws. Unlike the King Cove Health & Safety Act, which is subject to national environmental laws, the King Cove Access Project is "notwithstanding any other provision of law." It is inappropriate to exempt the Izembek refuge from federal environmental laws in this manner.

The Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, on the Alaska Peninsula, is internationally recognized as one of the most important wetland reserves in the Northern Hemisphere. Home to threatened and endangered species, as well as millions of migratory birds, the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Izembek Wilderness are keys in the fight to conserve the natural diversity of wildlife populations and habitats. A road through the refuge will inevitably damage the refuge's critically important habitat.

The King Cove Access Project ignores environmental laws, threatens important wildlife habitat and sets a dangerous anti-wilderness precedent. The 17-mile road proposal is not compatible with the purposes of the refuge, as established by ANILCA, or with the Wilderness Act. The King Cove Access Project rider is terrible policy and terrible process.

FAIRNESS TO CONTACT LENS CONSUMERS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3140, "The Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act of 2003," which provides contact lens wearers with important new rights. This bill ensures that unscrupulous eye doctors will no longer be able hold consumers' contact lens prescriptions hostage, forcing them to purchase lenses solely from their doctor's office. In addition, this legislation will make shopping for lenses simpler and cheaper.

Currently, eye doctors are only required to give patients their prescriptions for eyeglasses. Eyeglass wearers have had this right since 1978, when the Federal Trade Commission issued a regulation granting eyeglass wearers the right to automatically receive a copy of their prescription following an exam. Contact lenses were understandably not included in this regulation because, at the time, most contacts were hard lenses, which were custom-made to fit each patient. Today, most contact lenses are mass produced, soft lenses that do not require manipulation by eye doctors. As a result of this improvement, today's contact lens wearers should have the same right as eyeglass wearers to obtain their prescription, at no additional charge. That is why I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act.

Approximately 36 million Americans wear contact lenses. Each year, these Americans spend an estimated \$3.5 billion on contact lenses. Providing consumers with an automatic right to their prescriptions will allow them to shop around for contact lenses based on price, service, and convenience. It is estimated that H.R. 3140 could save consumers approximately \$350 million annually, thanks in large part to increased competition. Competition among contact lens companies will result

in lower prices, a greater choice of lens providers, and more convenient ways to fill contact lens prescriptions.

H.R. 3140 is bipartisan legislation supported by both optometrists and retailers. I have been working on this issue for a number of years, and am pleased to "see" it pass the House in a bipartisan manner. I encourage the Senate to take up this bill and help contact lens wearers receive this right.

HONORING MR. SARGENT SHRIVER

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 17, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues in support of H. Con. Res. 299, a resolution honoring Mr. Sargent Shriver for his dedication and service to the United States of America, for his service in the United States Navy, and for his lifetime of work as an ambassador for the poor and powerless citizens of the United States of America. Growing up with a role model like my uncle, Sargent Shriver, doesn't allow much room for failure. He has served our nation in countless ways and on multiple fronts. When he retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander, he could have ended his public service career then, and been proud of his accomplishments. But he chose to continue to serve our nation when President Kennedy appointed him the first Director of the Peace Corps. Sargent Shriver exceeded expectations for the initiative by developing volunteer programs in more than 50 countries around the world.

Sargent Shriver and his wife, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, went on to establish the Special Olympics during the 1960's, when those with mental retardation were often institutionalized because of a lack of understanding of their needs and abilities. The Shrivens recognized the importance of challenging these individuals with physical activities, when others simply cast them aside. The Special Olympics brought courage to their lives and taught them the value of teamwork, and proved that people with mental retardation were strong and caring individuals who could be successful and independent. The Special Olympics has grown exponentially under the Shrivens direction. When given the position of president of the Board of Directors of the Special Olympics, Sargent Shriver, again, reached out to other nations to bring together people of all nationalities to compete in the games. In 1985, athletes from 14 countries were represented at the Special Olympics Winter Games in Utah, and today, more than 1 million athletes participate in the Special Olympics in over 150 countries.

I hesitate to end my remarks with this short list of what Sargent Shriver has accomplished in his life. Unfortunately, I am not sure if there is anyway to accurately reflect the number of lives he has touched as our nation's ambassador, through Head Start and the Special Olympics, to name a few. But I am sure that even at the age of 88, he will continue to add accomplishments to this list of public service, and he will continue to touch the lives of people around the world.

OXYCONTIN CONTINUES TO DESTROY LIVES

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 21, 2003

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, over the past year I have been writing to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and Food and Drug Commissioner Mark McClellan urging their action to curb the continuing abuse of the powerful prescription painkiller, OxyContin. In many of those letters I have enclosed newspaper articles about another life destroyed by this drug.

Their inaction is perplexing. The death toll continues to rise and thousands of lives continue to be ruined because of the abuse of this drug. When will they do something to stop this tragedy?

I want to submit the letters I have been sending to Secretary Thompson and Commissioner McClellan over the past six months.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,

Washington, DC, March 28, 2003.

Hon. TOMMY THOMPSON,

Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY THOMPSON: In December 2001, the Commerce-Justice-State and the Judiciary appropriations subcommittee held a hearing on the illegal diversion of the prescription drug OxyContin, a pain-killing Schedule II narcotic manufactured by Purdue Pharma L.P. One of the witnesses, the father of recovering OxyContin addict, told a gripping story of the devastating impact the drug has had on his family and his son, who was in his early 20s. He proudly told the committee how his son had just finished rehab and had kicked his addiction. Sadly, a few months after appearing before the subcommittee, the son died as a result of abusing the drug.

When used properly, OxyContin is considered a wonder drug, especially for the terminally ill cancer patients. I know what it is like to see people suffer from cancer. Both my mother and father died of cancer. I can remember my mother constantly asking the nurses for more morphine but being told she couldn't have any more. My mother was in a great deal of pain. OxyContin, if it had been available when she was dying, probably would have made her a lot more comfortable at the end.

When used illegally, however, OxyContin destroys families and communities. It also can lead to death. This powerful painkiller has increasingly become a drug of choice for people who choose to abuse it by chewing it or grinding it up. By disabling the time release mechanism in OxyContin, abusers get a heroin-like high.

Initially, cases of abuse and illegal diversion occurred primarily in poor, rural communities in Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio. Abuse is no longer limited to Appalachia. The drug has found its way to urban areas and there are now reports of widespread abuse as far away as Arizona. Florida, I am told, has been hit extremely hard.

Several pharmacies in my congressional District have been robbed at gun point in recent months for OxyContin. No money was taken; the robbers only demanded the drug. Earlier this month, a prominent defense lawyer in northern Virginia who twice served as a local prosecutor in Prince William County