

into the 21st century, it will set the tone for a future in which our oceans remain vital components of our economy, our communities, and our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close with a quote from the U.S. Commission Report that encapsulates my thoughts on the urgency of considering OCEANS 21 this session:

"The responsibility of our generation is to reclaim and renew the oceans for ourselves, for our children, and—if we do the job right—for those whose footprints will mark the sands of beaches from Maine to Hawaii long after ours have washed away."

HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of Hendrick Motorsports.

Hendrick Motorsports was started by my good friend Rick Hendrick in 1984 for the purpose of entering a single car into a single stock car race. Over the next twenty years, Hendrick Motorsports grew into the racing empire it is today, supporting four entries in NASCAR's Nextel Cup Series and one entry in the Busch Series every week. Since its inception, Hendrick Motorsports teams have secured five NASCAR Winston Cup now Nextel Cup Championships, three NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series titles, and one NASCAR Busch Series crown, totaling more than 100 victories in twenty years of racing.

All Hendrick race cars are completely constructed at a 62-acre complex in my home of Cabarrus County, North Carolina. Hendrick Motorsports provides employment to more than 400 Cabarrus County residents. They work not only in the production of racing cars and engines at the main complex but also in the many other daily operation activities of Hendrick Motorsports, such as managing HendrickMotorsports.com, maintaining the 15,000 square-foot Hendrick museum, marketing, public relations, sponsor services, licensing, and merchandising.

The success of Hendrick Motorsports on the race track has led to the opening of the Hendrick Automotive Group, which consists of nearly 60 car dealerships across the country. These dealerships contribute both to their local communities, through donations to local charities, and to the Nation as a whole by participating in The Hendrick Marrow Program.

Created in 1997, the Hendrick Marrow Program seeks to recruit donors to the National Marrow Donor Program and provides financial assistance to the patients who receive these life-saving transplants. As a direct result of the Hendrick Marrow Program's efforts, more than 60,000 potential volunteer donors have joined the National Marrow Donor Program Registry and more than \$500,000 have been used to assist patients with transplant-related costs, such as lodging and post-transplant prescriptions.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to thank Hendrick Motorsports for making Cabarrus County "The Center of American Motorsports" and to congratulate them for twenty years of achievement both on and off the track.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GATEWAY TO DEMOCRACY ACT

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Gateway to Democracy Act, a bill designed to increase young voter registration and participation. As we enter another presidential election season we are once again reminded that in order for our democracy to function properly, people need to exercise their right to vote. Unfortunately, young people consistently fail to turn out to the polls on voting day. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the 2000 general election only 45.4 percent of 18 to 24 year olds were registered to vote and only 32.3 percent voted. The statistics for the 1998 general election were even more dismal, as 39.2 percent of such individuals were registered and a mere 16.6 percent actually went to the polls.

Studies have shown that people establish their voting behavior early in life. People who start voting between the ages of 18-24 are more likely to consistently participate in the election process for the rest of their lives. Thus it is in the best interest of the country to make it as easy as possible for the youth of our nation to go to the polls for the first time.

Young adults often fail to turn out on their first Election Day simply because, for the first time, they realize they have not registered to vote. Most states require registration prior to the election itself, so that it is too late to establish voter eligibility on Election Day. The Gateway to Democracy Act seeks to increase the number of young people who are eligible to vote as soon as they reach voting age.

In 1993, we passed The National Voter Registration Act so that people could register to vote when they applied for their motor vehicle driver's licenses. This law has increased voter registration and according to studies appears to increase youth voting. However, many states allow individuals to get their licenses years before they meet the age requirement for registration, but few states allow registration at that time if the person is not eighteen years old. Since 53.7 percent of seventeen year olds already had their motor vehicle licenses in 2002, we missed a valuable opportunity to register more than half of the people in that age group.

The Gateway to Democracy is a very simple idea. If you're 18 or older and you apply for a driver's license, you can also register to vote. But in most states, if you are under 18, you do not have the same opportunity to register to vote at the same time that you apply for a drivers license. Thus, a 16 or 17 year old typically must make a second trip to register after that person reaches the eligible age to vote. Often these young people don't bother to make this second trip until it is too late for them to participate in the first election for which they are eligible. This bill will allow people who are too young to vote to fill out all the paperwork necessary to register to vote when they get their drivers license. However, they won't be eligible to go to the polls until they reach the legal minimum voting age.

Some states already have successful pre-registration programs. For example, Connecticut, Florida and Maine allow people to

pre-register to vote at age 17, Georgia, Missouri, and Iowa allow people to pre-register at age 17 and a half and Hawaii allows people to preregister at age 16. These programs prove that pre-registration programs are simple and effective.

The Gateway to Democracy is a common-sense solution to the problem of getting young people registered in time for their first election. It allows young people to take care of the paperwork ahead of time so that they don't have anything standing in their way on Election Day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ESRD MODERNIZATION ACT

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Modernization Act, which is designed to improve the quality of care and quality of life for the more than 3,000,000 Americans living with ESRD.

Patients with irreversible kidney failure, also known as ESRD, will die unless they receive a kidney transplant or undergo dialysis. Sadly, transplantation is limited due to the shortage of donor organs, so the vast majority of those with ESRD must undergo dialysis, three times a week, in dialysis centers or their homes.

Since Congress first agreed to provide Medicare benefits to patients with kidney disease, the number of Americans in need of dialysis treatments has increased exponentially. Today, the most common cause of kidney failure is diabetes. As rates of obesity and Type II diabetes increase, we face an even greater number of Americans at risk for kidney failure.

Because of Medicare, these patients are able to live longer and healthier lives. As important as the ESRD program is, it has not kept pace with the rest of Medicare. Last year we worked to modernize the Medicare program, yet we did not address some of the most pressing issues within the ESRD Program. The comprehensive bill that we introduce today seeks to resolve those problems.

The ESRD Modernization Act would establish educational programs to improve patient care and quality of life. Under this Act, patients with chronic kidney disease (the precursor to ESRD) would have access to new educational programs to learn more the factors that lead to kidney failure and how to prevent them. ESRD patients would have the opportunity to develop skills to help them manage their disease more effectively. The bill also seeks to help those patients able to continue working while receiving dialysis do so by improving the home dialysis benefit.

Additionally, the ESRD Modernization Act would ensure the financial stability of the Medicare ESRD program by providing a mechanism for annual updates to the composite rate. Currently, the ESRD Program is the only Medicare Prospective Payment System program that does not have a mechanism to update its payment rates. This Act will provide such a mechanism, consistent with MedPAC's recommendation in its 2000 Report to Congress.

It is time we fix this life-saving program. I urge my colleagues to support this important