

vital to saving the lives of women and their children around the world. This bill funds UNFPA (the United Nations Population Fund) strictly for the prevention, treatment, and repair of obstetric fistula.

More than two million women worldwide have obstetric fistula, which results from prolonged labor without medical attention. During delivery, the infant's head presses against the woman's pelvis for so long that the tissue dies and a hole develops between the woman's vagina and rectum, leaving the woman without control of her bladder or bowels and often resulting in the death of the infant. In addition, many women who have the condition are abandoned by their husbands and families because they are considered "unclean" and the women are often forced to beg or turn to prostitution to survive. The condition was once common throughout the world, but over the last century has been eradicated in Europe and North America through improved medical care. For example, New York's hospital for fistula patients, now the site of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, closed in 1895 because of diminishing cases.

Fortunately, UNFPA is working with partners on a global campaign to prevent and treat fistula, with the goal of making the condition as rare in Africa and Asia as it is in the developed world. In fact, UNFPA works in 56 countries, more than the U.S. currently does, countries with the severest of problems. Many of the nations where there is no USAID presence suffer under political turmoil and poor living conditions and serve as breeding grounds for terrorists.

I believe that this legislation would help to provide a concrete way to show that the U.S.

cares about women and children around the world. Now is the time to allow the U.S. to recommit to the maternal health of women and children around the world.

APPLAUDING THE TEXAS STATE
LEGISLATURE

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to applaud the Texas State legislature for passing House Bill 1098, which prevents mandatory human-papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination for middle school girls in the State of Texas until at least 2011.

This legislation was a necessary response to the ill-advised executive order signed by Governor Perry in February of this year, which requires every girl in the state of Texas to receive a vaccine against HPV. I stand tonight to encourage the Governor of Texas to quickly sign H.B. 1098 into law and return important healthcare choices to parents and physicians—not the state or Federal government.

Madam Speaker, HPV is a sexually transmitted disease of which two strains, types 16 and 18, are associated with about 70 percent of cervical cancers. In June of 2006, the Food and Drug Administration approved the first vaccine that protects against 4 types of HPV. As an OB/GYN physician, I applaud this achievement in modern medicine. However, I am greatly concerned with the trend in many states to introduce legislation or sign executive

orders mandating young girls—6th graders—receive the HPV vaccine in order to attend school.

States have historically established and enforced their own vaccine and immunization practices that dictate their school admittance policies.

Requiring school-aged children to receive certain vaccines in order to attend school started as a public health concern so as to avoid widespread outbreaks of communicable diseases. However, Madam Speaker, since HPV can only be spread through sexual contact, mandating this vaccine is unprecedented, and I believe it is an egregious intrusion by government into what should be a parent-physician-patient decision.

Accordingly, I have introduced legislation, the Parental Right to Decide Protection Act, which would prohibit federal funds from being used to implement any type of mandatory HPV vaccine program. We need to stand up against this government interference into the lives of our children, which side-steps parental rights and responsibilities.

This is why I am so encouraged by the action of the Texas State legislature to stand up for the rights of our children, protect the role of parents and preserve the physician-patient relationship.

Madam Speaker, our government should not insert itself into this conversation—and I want to join the many medical groups, patient groups and parental rights groups—to call on the Governor of Texas to sign this very important piece of legislation.