

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 1188—THE PSORIASIS AND PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS RESEARCH, CURE, AND CARE ACT OF 2007

**HON. DAVID WU**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 31, 2008*

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I would like to bring attention to the serious, debilitating, chronic diseases of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, and to urge you to support H.R. 1188, the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research, Cure, and Care Act for 2007—important bipartisan legislation that I have introduced with my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. GERLACH.

This legislation would be the first ever legislative action to fill important gaps in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis data collection and research, and is an important step in providing relief to the as many as 7.5 million Americans that the National Institutes of Health estimates suffer from these non-contagious, genetic auto-immune diseases.

Psoriasis is widely misunderstood, minimized, and under-treated. In addition to the pain, itching, and bleeding caused by psoriasis, many affected individuals also experience social discrimination and stigma. Of serious concern is that people with psoriasis are at elevated risk for myriad co-morbidities, including but not limited to, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and mental health conditions. As such, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis impose significant burdens on individuals and society; psoriasis alone is estimated to cost the nation 56 million hours of lost work and between \$2 billion and \$3 billion annually.

Also, I wish to take a moment to recognize that August is National Psoriasis Awareness Month and commend the National Psoriasis Foundation, headquartered in my district, for its annual efforts surrounding National Psoriasis Awareness Month. Moreover, I thank the Foundation leaders and staff for working tirelessly each day to help our nation make progress toward a cure and to ensure that people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis have access to the care they need and deserve.

On average, each of us has 17,000 constituents with psoriasis. As most of us will be at-home frequently this fall, I encourage my colleagues to meet with affected constituents, learn more about psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, and work to reduce the misconceptions surrounding these conditions. I further urge you to join with me and the other 82 cosponsors in supporting people living with psoriasis by cosponsoring H.R. 1188.

TRIBUTE TO ERICK JOHNSON

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 31, 2008*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Erick Johnson of Jefferson Iowa, on his retirement from the board of directors of the Hemophilia Federation of America.

The Hemophilia Federation of America is a national nonprofit organization that assists and

advocates for the bleeding disorders community and advocates for the removal of all barriers to both choice of treatment and quality of life. Erick and his wife Jill became involved with Hemophilia of Iowa in 1997 after their son Skylar was diagnosed with hemophilia. Erick became an independent member of the HFA board in 2000. He worked with the organization to start new programs and increase communication with the FDA, CDC and MASAC in order to bring HFA's concerns to the forefront.

I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress will join me in commending Erick Johnson for his leadership and dedication to representing the Hemophilia Federation of America. I consider it an honor to represent Erick, his wife Jill, and his son Skylar in the United States Congress, and I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

**MICHELLE'S LAW**

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 30, 2008*

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for H.R. 2851, Michelle's Law. This important legislation amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code to prohibit a group health plan from terminating coverage of a dependent child due to a medically necessary leave of absence from a post-secondary education institution.

Madam Speaker, few Americans can simply write a check to cover the cost of attending college. The average college student graduates with alarming amounts of debt, in fact, most undergraduate students graduate with close to \$20,000 in student loan debt. I find it unconscionable that, in a time of worsening financial burdens, we would also place the burden of costs associated with unexpected illness on the lives of our young students.

According to Harvard Medical School, the leading cause of bankruptcy in the United States is due to unpaid medical bills, most of which were filed while the individual or family had health insurance. My bill, H.R. 676, the United States National Health Insurance Act, creates a health care system where there is no such thing as medical debt, problems with credit, or filing for bankruptcy because of unpaid medical bills. Under H.R. 676, financial insecurity from fear of indebtedness from medical expenses will cease to exist.

Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that every human being requires four things to lead a happy and productive life: shelter, employment, education, and health. When a person has access to the aforementioned four requirements, a fifth, justice, holds them all together. When a student loses full-time status because of an illness and access to healthcare, a home and education become more difficult to maintain. However, with Michelle's Law, we can provide justice to college students and help them retain access to care so they can work towards the American dream.

Madam Speaker, instead of making it more difficult for the young men and women of our nation to achieve higher education, we should

be doing everything in our power to facilitate completion of their courses of study, especially when faced with hardships such as debilitating physical or mental illness. Please pass Michelle's Law, and help ensure that there is one less impediment to education and healthcare for our nation's hardworking college students.

IN HONOR OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEGASKILLS PROGRAM

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 31, 2008*

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize the MegaSkills program on its program's 20th anniversary. The MegaSkills program helps parents and guardians assist their children in reaching their academic potential by providing a clear road map and guidelines to success.

The MegaSkills program was created in the 1988 by Dorothy Rich, a resident of Sussex County, DE. The program was started with the goal of teaching families how to help their children succeed. Based on the idea that family involvement is fundamental to learning, the program is designed to instruct families on how to instill habits and behaviors in their children that make up the "Never-ending Report Card" which includes confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, caring, teamwork, and others.

When I served as Delaware's Governor, I had the privilege of visiting the town of Seaford to honor the teachers, students, and families who participated in one of the first MegaSkills programs. It was clear even then that MegaSkills had tapped into one of the secrets of early education: parents and guardians who are involved in their child's education at home ensure that they get the best education possible in the schools.

Over the years, the program has proven to be highly successful in early childhood education and is now used in over 4,000 rural and urban schools across the nation. Recently MegaSkills completed a new MegaSkills for Babies and Toddlers book to help parents ensure their children receive the best education possible. Furthermore, the program has been applied in various different languages to accommodate our diverse population.

MegaSkills has demonstrated its success in increasing time students spend with their parents, their motivation on homework, and performance on standardized tests and I acknowledge and commend the MegaSkills Program for 20 years of successful dedication to improving education throughout the United States. The creators and administrators of this program understand what we all need to understand in order to improve our education system: strong families yield strong students with a passion for academic excellence. I am confident the MegaSkills program will continue to expand and benefit educating families nationwide.