

Congressman Henry A. Waxman's *Washington Reporter*

Washington Office
2418 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

District Office
8425 W. Third St.
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Long-Term Care: Nation's Number One Problem



The Late Rep. Claude Pepper and Rep. Henry Waxman
In a tribute to Rep. Pepper, Waxman said, "No Member of Congress cared more passionately for the average American. Claude Pepper cannot be replaced."

THE ABORTION DECISION: DISASTER FOR THE NATION

The decision by the United States Supreme Court in the case of Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services has thrown our country into an unprecedented state of confusion and fear. From a purely legal standpoint, the Court could not have done worse. It failed to affirm the fundamental right to abortion declared in Roe vs. Wade. It also failed to replace the Roe decision with a workable alternative.

Abortion: A Basic Human Right

I believe the right to an abortion is even more than a Constitutional right. I believe it is a universal human right.

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*The fear of every senior citizen:
"What will happen to me when
I can't take care of myself?"*

Many Elderly People Need Help At Home

Today, over one and a half million frail elderly Americans struggle to cope with the everyday activities of life such as eating, dressing, and bathing. They need help to remain at home, but neither Medicare nor private insurance offers much assistance. These people are "too well" for Medicare to allow them to stay in an expensive acute-care hospital. They do not need the constant attention of doctors or nurses. Their health problem has been diagnosed; they have no need for elaborate tests or x-rays.

Families Cannot Manage On Their Own

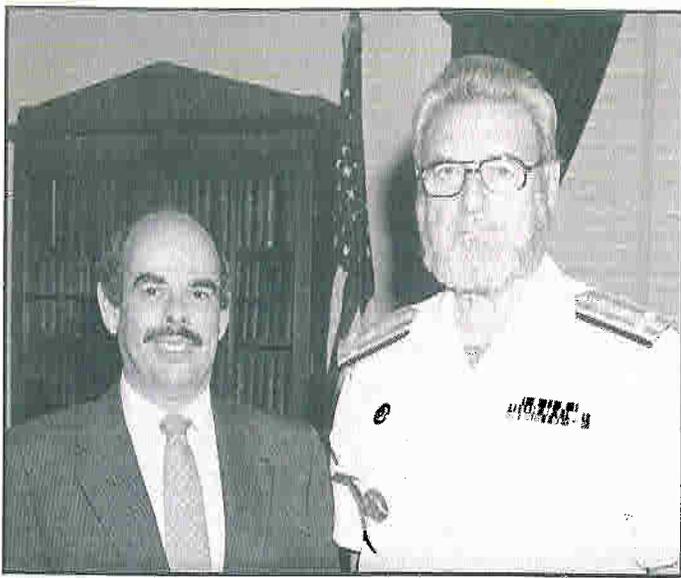
These one and a half million older Americans often suffer from severe arthritis, heart disease, or diabetes. Some struggle with the tragedy of Alzheimer's disease. These individuals want to stay at home and remain independent for as long as possible. Their families want them at home as well. Yet, they cannot manage on their own. They could, however, manage better with the assistance of a trained aide to help with dressing, eating, cleaning, or cooking. Such help could make the difference between the elderly spending time with their family and friends and spending time in an expensive, unfamiliar nursing home.

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BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR CLEAN AIR

For the past eight years, I have sponsored legislation that would have brought healthy air to our cities, ended the scourge of acid rain, and reduced the staggering amount of toxic air pollutants spewed into our neighborhoods.

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Former Surgeon General Koop with Waxman
Rep. Henry A. Waxman and Surgeon General C. Everett Koop. Koop is presenting the Congressman with the prestigious Surgeon General's Medallion For Advancing Public Health.

In accepting the Medallion, Rep. Waxman said, "No Surgeon General in American history has had such an enormous impact on our lives as Dr. Koop. The Koop Era will go down in history as a period of courageous and effective efforts to combat the AIDS epidemic and visionary work to eliminate sickness and death caused by smoking."

NEW DRUGS FOR AIDS

Medical researchers seeking a cure or treatment for AIDS are cautiously optimistic about a number of drugs now being tested.

Speedy Approval Sought

Everyone concerned with AIDS wants safe and effective new drugs available at the earliest possible moment. I have been working closely with the National Institutes of Health, the FDA, university researchers, drug companies, and AIDS groups to speed up the drug approval process.

Wider Availability

In the past, people not eligible for formal drug trials were unable to obtain new drugs. Under the new "parallel track" program, people excluded from experiments will still be able to get new drugs free of charge. They will be warned of any potential negative effects of the research drug.

Protection Essential

We must resist calls for abandoning the drug approval system in favor of a free-for-all under which drugs are sold just because there is a profit in them. People must be protected from worthless or dangerous drugs.

People with AIDS Living Longer

Many people with AIDS and AIDS-related complex live for a long time after their illness is first diagnosed. No one should assume that a person with AIDS will die quickly.

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THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL DISASTER

In March of 1989, the huge oil tanker Valdez, owned by Exxon, ran aground spilling more than 11 million gallons of oil along Alaska's south coast.

The tanker's captain, Joseph Hazelwood, was found to have a blood-alcohol level well-above the legal limit.

Exxon's clean up efforts were late and only moderately successful. Environmentalists agree that much of the damage to fish and wildlife cannot be reversed.

Congressman Waxman called for extensive new legislation to prevent future oil disasters.

"We in California are especially sensitive to the harm that can be done from both offshore oil drilling and improper transportation of oil by tanker. We need

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Long-Term Care (continued from page 1)

Legislation To Rescue Those Now Stranded

I have authored legislation — called the ELDER-CARE program — to extend Medicare coverage to help provide home care to these one and a half million frail elderly Americans who can and want to remain at home. Covered services would include homemaker, personal aide, and adult day health care, as well as skilled nursing services. Individuals receiving these benefits would be expected to pay 20 percent of the cost of their care; Medicare would cover the remaining 80 percent. For the poor, Medi-Cal would pay all cost-sharing obligations.

Nursing Home Coverage

ELDER-CARE also provides assistance with nursing home care. As with the home health benefit, eligible individuals would have to share in the cost of nursing home coverage. The amount of this cost-sharing requirement would decrease over time so that no one would have to pay more than 10 percent of a specified rate after two years in a nursing home. Medicaid would cover those too poor to pay.

Majority Support

I believe the ELDER-CARE program will eventually become law. Every poll shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans support this kind of comprehensive long-term care program and are willing to pay for it.

Compassion Over 'Bottom Line' Mentality

We are basically a compassionate people. When we grumble about waste in government, we are not talking about the cost of helping an elderly person with Parkinson's disease eat or the price of keeping victims of Alzheimer's disease from hurting themselves.

When the ELDER-CARE legislation comes to the Floor of the House, I will do everything possible to demonstrate that the program is moral, practical, and absolutely necessary.

Abortion Rights (continued from page 1)

To me, the right to privacy — the right to make decisions about whether and when to have a family — is as fundamental to democracy as the right to freedom of speech and the right to freedom of religious expression.

There Will Always Be Abortions

Nothing the Supreme Court may do will stop women from having abortions. The questions are, then, who will decide when an abortion is appropriate and will abortion be equally available to women, whether rich or poor.

Right now, the decision to have an abortion is a private one, made primarily by the pregnant woman and other close family members in consultation with doctors. If the woman wishes, ministers, priests, or rabbis are always available to present a religious perspective.

Low-Income Women Must Be Protected

It is morally repugnant to restrict the right to an abortion to women of means who can travel if necessary and pay from their pockets for the procedure. In the Webster case, the Court flatly ruled that women who depend on public health services such as those provided under Medicaid (Medi-Cal) may be denied abortion services simply because they are poor.

Legislation Would Intimidate Women

In many states, bills have already been drafted which would follow the Missouri example of prohibiting the use of public funds, public property, or public employees to provide abortions. Other bills would put the woman through the ordeal of an extensive interview and a mandatory waiting period.

Some bills even go so far as to prohibit a doctor from informing a patient that an abortion is possible or necessary for the woman's health!

Freedom of Conscience at Stake

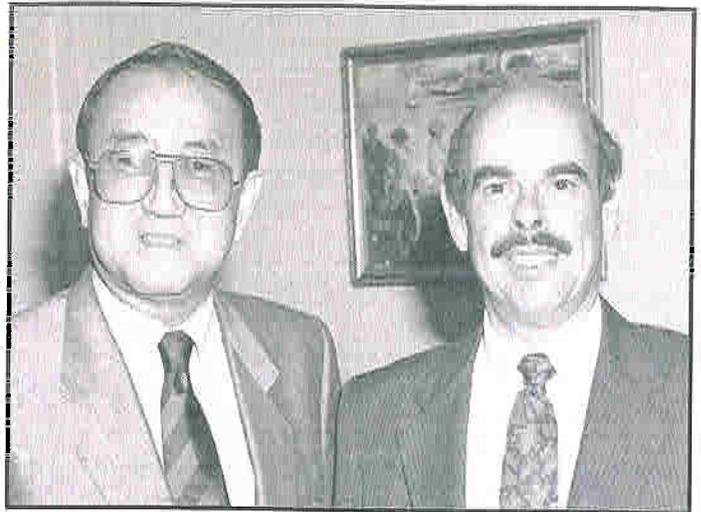
Pro-choice is *not* pro-abortion; it is *not* pro-death. Pro-choice respects those who have religious or moral objections to abortions. It does not force an abortion on any woman under any circumstances. Pro-choice provides the same tolerance for those women who, following their own consciences and familiar with their own circumstances, choose abortion.

Exxon Valdez (continued from page 2)

tough new laws and vigorous enforcement to prevent future disasters.

"It is impossible to place a monetary value on our coastline and the magnificent treasure of pristine water, sparkling beaches, and incredibly varied plant, fish, and animal life," Waxman said.

Waxman, Chairman of the key House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, pledged to work energetically to fulfill the desire of the vast majority of Americans for preservation of the nation's natural resources.



Hiroshi Nakajima Confers on P.L.O.

Rep. Waxman congratulates Hiroshi Nakajima, Director General of the World Health Organization, on his success in defeating efforts by the P.L.O. to gain nation status in the prestigious organization.

W.H.O. rejected the P.L.O. bid by a vote of 83 to 47 following a strong plea by Secretary of State James A. Baker III that the P.L.O. be denied further evidence for its claim of nationhood.

AIDS (continued from page 2)

Drugs that are not tested may actually *shorten* the life of a person with AIDS. An unproven drug may cause a person with AIDS tremendous suffering.

Funding for Research

If research is adequately supported, we can guarantee that drugs are proven *safe and effective before sale*. We can, at the same time, take every prudent step possible to give people access to experimental drugs and to *speed up the development and approval process*.

Some New Drugs: AZT-Pentamidine-DDI

AZT is still the only approved drug for AIDS itself. Recent research showed that AZT was most effective during the first year. Survival rates for the second and third years dropped sharply.

PENTAMIDINE has long been *injected* to treat pneumonia. (*Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia is the major killer of people with AIDS.) The use of pentamidine by *inhalation* has recently been approved by the FDA to treat this pneumonia.

DIDEOXYINOSINE ("DDI") seems to be the most promising new drug. DDI is in trials now and may be the first drug to enter the "parallel track" for research.

Education and Prevention Still Vital

The Public Health Service AIDS treatment hotline number is 1-800-874-2572. It provides information on approved and experimental treatments.

AIDS Treatment Hotline

There is no cure for AIDS. There is no vaccine for AIDS. The disease can usually be prevented by practicing safer sex and by drug users avoiding the sharing of needles.

37 Million Americans Have No Health Insurance

Q. Why are there so many people without at least minimal health insurance?

A. Many employers offer no health insurance or offer insurance only to their permanent employees. Self-employed people and sporadically employed people often cannot afford private insurance outside the framework of an employer-sponsored group plan.

Q. Doesn't the government take care of the health needs of the unemployed?

A. The 37 million uninsured Americans are not covered by *any* government insurance program. Most of them are what are called "the working poor." They have low-paid jobs with no health protection but earn too much money to qualify for Medi-Cal (Medicaid). These unfortunate people also are neither sick enough or old enough to be eligible for the Federal Medicare program. They belong exactly nowhere.

Q. What do the uninsured do when they get sick?

A. Mostly nothing. They rely on over-the-counter drugs and wait for the illness to take its natural course. They lose badly needed pay. They suffer unnecessarily.

Q. What happens if they are seriously sick?

A. One of the tragedies of being uninsured is that people neglect easily treatable illnesses until they become major medical emergencies: a ne-

glected facial laceration becomes a permanent disfigurement, an unattended sore throat becomes rheumatic fever. Then, their only option is to go to one of our nation's understaffed, underfunded, and overcrowded public hospitals where they can often wait days before they are treated.

Q. Why doesn't someone do something about the uninsured?

A. Senator Kennedy and I have introduced "The Basic Health Benefits for All Americans Act" (H.R. 1845) to address the problem. It would require employers to extend health benefits to more employees and would expand Medi-Cal to cover low-income people. By requiring employers to take responsibility for their employees, this plan would keep government expenditures low and targeted at those who are truly needy.

Q. Is the solution for the uninsured on the horizon?

A. I believe that this plan is a reasonable proposal that will extend health protection to the majority of the uninsured. It does face obstacles, particularly from a business-oriented Bush Administration and from the Chamber of Commerce, but there is a growing consensus around the country that the problem of the uninsured needs to be addressed.

Clean Air *continued from page 1*

Unfortunately, the Reagan Administration and a powerful array of special interests viewed this concern as "environmental alarmism" and opposed my efforts.

Environmental and Health Crisis Deepens

Automobile emissions and industrial pollutants poison the air of Los Angeles and most other big cities. Infants, the sick, and the elderly literally suffocate to death. People who work or exercise outdoors are at particular risk.

Most of us know from firsthand experience that air pollution can cause coughing, nausea, throat irritation, chest pain, and shortness of breath. New medical research links air pollution to emphysema, cancer, and heart attacks; fetal research indicates that high levels of carbon monoxide may endanger the unborn.

Children Especially in Danger

It is a sad truth that one of the biggest dangers facing our children is the air they breathe. Philip

Landrigan, M.D., a nationally recognized pediatrician, has warned parents that they should follow pollution reports closely and limit their children's outdoor play.

What Can Be Done

Few of us will accept a world where we cannot send our children out to play. Fortunately, practical and relatively inexpensive solutions are at hand and can be required by Congress.

Republican Congressman Jerry Lewis (Redlands) and I have introduced a bipartisan bill (H.R. 2323) that would bring effective relief to cities all around our nation. Over 150 House members now support our bill. Passing this bill would mean cleaner-running cars, trucks, and buses and will result in innovative techniques to cut smog.

To pass the Waxman-Lewis bill, as well as legislation to curb acid rain, toxic air pollution, ozone depletion, and global warming, we will need full White House cooperation. President Bush appears to be unwilling to go all out on this life or death issue.