

Health Subcommittee Completes Markup of Critical Public Health Legislation

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NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Health Subcommittee Completes Markup of Critical Public Health Legislation Approved Bills Seek to Alleviate Suffering Among Women, Children and the Chronically Ill

Washington, DC — Today the Subcommittee on Health completed a markup of three significant pieces of legislation: H.R. 20, the "Melanie Blocker-Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act," H.R. 2295, the "ALS Registry Act," and H.R. 507, the "Vision Care for Kids Act of 2007." The bills and related amendments were approved by voice vote.

"With the legislation approved today, we are making significant headway in our efforts to bring hope to those who need it most," said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee. "I applaud the Subcommittee Members for their work to ensure that more children, women and chronically ill patients have access to the support and healthcare services they need, and I look forward to bringing these bills to the full Committee for consideration."

The "Melanie Blocker-Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act" addresses the common disorder of postpartum depression. The legislation would intensify and expand current research and education activities by requiring the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Director of the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH), and the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to coordinate efforts.

"Today, the Health Subcommittee approved three important bills that will help us better combat postpartum depression and ALS, and ensure more children have access to eye care," said Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Subcommittee Chairman. "As we search for better treatments and cures, information is critically important. The Subcommittee's support of bills that put more information into the hands of researchers for both postpartum depression and ALS is extremely encouraging as the search for cures continues."

The "ALS Registry Act" would significantly enhance national efforts to find a treatment and cure for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, by creating a national patient registry to collect and store information on the prevalence and incidence of ALS in the United States. Little is known about the disease's causes and there is currently no cure. The final piece of legislation, the "Vision Care for Kids Act of 2007," would create a grant program through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to fund comprehensive eye examinations and treatments for children under the age of nine.

Text of the bills and approved amendments can be accessed via the committee website at:
<http://energycommerce.house.gov>

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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