

***“Technology has replaced a number of occupations, but never will it replace the nurse”.***

By Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson

I began my career in nursing almost 50 years ago. Although I gave up practicing nursing to enter public office, I want you to know that once a nurse always a nurse. Every day, I still work to make sure that Americans receive the health care they deserve; I just do it in a different way. As a Member of Congress, I fight to make sure that all Americans have access to basic health care, that their long term care needs are met, and that we are able to provide mental health care services for people who need them.

May 12, 2005 marks the 185<sup>th</sup> birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. Please join me and the rest of our nation as we celebrate National Nurses Week which serves to honor those men and women who give of themselves and their time for the well being of others.

Well educated health professionals are the cornerstone of the nation’s complex health system. Registered nurses ( RNs) represent the largest single component of the health care profession, with an estimated 2.7 million RNs in the United States. Nurses have a mandate to serve those in need, to try to ease the suffering of those in pain. Nurses share common core values, standards of practice and a commitment to improving the health and well-being of our patients and serving our communities.

Nurses and other health care practitioners are among the most sought after professionals. What was once a limited vocation, the nursing field is now growing and changing everyday. The burgeoning and emerging new roles include fields such as forensic nursing, nursing informatics and genetics. In addition, nurses increasingly are becoming involved in health education, research, business and public policy.

However, cutting-edge technologies are useless without a staff of trained professionals to implement them. One of the biggest challenges facing the nursing industry today is the nurse shortage. A report released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, states that the United States currently has a shortage of nearly 150,000 RNs and will be in need of more than 800,000 RNs by the year 2020.

I have always been a strong proponent of legislation that would provide more funding for nursing education and promote recruitment. I recently introduced a resolution on the House floor in recognition of National Nurses Week along with two of my esteemed colleagues, Rep. Lois Capps and Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, both of whom are also nurses.

This resolution, H. Res. 254, honors the selfless and compassionate acts performed daily by nurses across this nation and around the world.

Florence Nightingale once said “Nursing is an art... it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work.... the finest of Fine Arts.”

Recognition is long overdue for these great “artists”. Thank a nurse today!

U.S. Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson is third highest-ranking Democratic Member on the House Science Committee and the highest-ranking Texan on the House Committee on Transportation. She represents Texas Congressional District 30, which comprises downtown Dallas, DeSoto, North East Dallas, Cedar Hill, Glen Heights , Lancaster, Wilmur, Hutchins, Balch Springs.