

We always appreciate Mr. Friedel's appearance before the committee, in the committee, and on the floor, the friendly gentleman that he is who is so concerned about the problems of the public.

Mr. ROGERS. I join in that statement. We are always delighted to have our colleague give us advice on legislation before the subcommittee. I might say in looking over the statement this certainly lets us see more clearly the explanation of this legislation.

Thank you.

Mr. JARMAN. Thank you very much for being with us.

Mr. FRIEDEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JARMAN. Our next witness this morning is our colleague on the committee, Congressman Fred B. Rooney, of Pennsylvania.

It is a pleasure to have you with us.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRED B. ROONEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Chairman, members of this very distinguished subcommittee, I am delighted to be appearing before you today and I want to begin by thanking you for permitting me to take your valuable time to appear before the committee this morning to testify on behalf of my bill to create a separate institute.

It was nearly 2 years ago when I first introduced this legislation in the 89th Congress. And so it was with a great deal of satisfaction that I learned of these hearings and the opportunity for me to testify.

However, I would be remiss at this time, if I did not pay tribute to a colleague and close friend of mine, the late John Fogarty of Rhode Island, to whom I turned for guidance and support in those early days when I first introduced the bill.

The bill before this committee provides for creation within the National Institutes of Health of a separate and distinct institute to deal with what has aptly been called one of the most catastrophic, yet most neglected, of all human afflictions—the loss of sight.

This is a serious problem here in the United States where the blind population is 1 million, and it is a worldwide problem as well. There are more than 10 million totally blind throughout the world.

But the subject of eye diseases has far greater impact when we consider the fact that some 90 million Americans—nearly one-half of our entire population—suffer from some form of eye disorder or impaired vision.

Over 500,000 Americans will become blind in the next 10 years if the present trend continues. This year alone more than 30,000 men, women, and children may be expected to lose their sight.

Fear of blindness ranks second only to fear of cancer as "the worst thing that can happen," as indicated by a Gallup poll.

Contrary to popular opinion, accidents account for only 5 percent of vision loss. More than 80 percent of all blindness is the result of diseases whose causes are unknown to science.

While it is possible to rehabilitate a small percentage of those who are blind, this obviously is not the long-term solution.

Caring for the blind, while it is absolutely necessary, also is not the long-term solution.