

might say for the record that he has been interested in it for a long time and has been after me as chairman of the full committee to have hearings on this bill. He has told me many times how important he thought it was to the Nation.

One of the reasons the bill is being heard today is because of the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. JARMAN. We appreciate your being here.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JARMAN. At this point, the committee will hear a statement from the Honorable Richard Fulton, of Tennessee.

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD FULTON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

Mr. FULTON. Mr. Chairman, may I first thank you and the members of the Subcommittee on Public Health and Welfare, for extending to me this opportunity to speak in behalf of legislation which would provide for the establishment of a National Eye Institute under the National Institutes of Health.

More than 38 Members of the House of Representatives have submitted bills which would amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of a National Eye Institute. It is my privilege to be among those Members who have submitted such legislation before the Congress.

Fear is one of the most powerful motivating forces known.

One of our national research organizations has reported that a survey of the public revealed that fear of blindness ranks second only to fear of cancer as what was termed "the worst thing that can happen to a person."

Fear of the unknown is truly a terrifying fear. There is really very little that we really know about eye disease and the extent to which millions of Americans suffer from some degree of eye disease.

For example, the causes of 80 percent of all loss of vision suffered by persons in this Nation results from diseases unknown to science.

In our Nation, there are more than 1 million persons who are classified as "functionally blind"; that is, they are unable to read ordinary newspaper type even with the aid of glasses.

Nearly 90 million Americans—almost half our total population—have some form of eye trouble.

About 75 million Americans must wear glasses full or part time.

Last year our Nation spent nearly \$20 billion in scientific research and development. In that same year, both public and private spending for research in eye disease and disorders totaled no more than \$10 million.

Within the Public Health Service, there are National Institutes of Health for research and treatment of cancer, heart, allergy and infectious diseases, arthritis and metabolic diseases, dental research, mental health, neurological diseases and blindness, child health and human development, and general medical sciences.

There is a need that a National Eye Institute, devoted solely to diseases of the visual system, be established. Such an Institute would be the most important step we have taken to seek ways to combat eye disease.