

ular belief, only about 5 percent of visual defects will be due to accidents. Eighty percent of all blindness is the direct result of diseases whose causes are still unknown to science.

The need for eye-disease research is paramount. The importance assigned to research is indicated in the authorizing clause of this legislation. The clause establishes in the Public Health Service an Institute for the conduct and support of research for new treatment and cures and training relating to blinding eye disease and visual disorders. The bill would also authorize the Surgeon General to plan for research and training, especially against the main causes of blindness and loss of visual functions.

This year, in the United States, we will spend close to \$20 billion in scientific research and development, yet only a tiny fraction of this amount, or about \$10 million, will be spent for research in eye disease. Compare this with the scope of the problem and the inadequacy of the present research effort becomes painfully evident.

Compare it further with the economic consequences of caring for those citizens visually incapacitated. It has been estimated that we will spend \$1 billion this year caring for the blind. Such services will include the cost of providing public assistance, of building and maintaining special educational facilities, of hiring and training teachers and constructing special teaching aids, and the cost of vocational rehabilitation programs.

It is clear to me that more can and must be done to mobilize public and private resources to seek out preventive measures, to research for cures, and to provide necessary treatment.

Since the founding of our Republic, medical advances have doubled the life expectancy of our citizens. It falls upon our generation to see to it that our citizens can use these years to the fullest in a life relatively free from limiting physical disorders.

As elected representatives of the people, we have a responsibility to provide the organization framework for action, to combat diseases which would take from our citizens one of their most precious senses, the ability to see.

In my judgment, this bill represents legislation which every Member of the Congress can in good conscience support, for eye disorders do not discriminate but afflict citizens from all races, religions, and economic classes.

I urge the members of this distinguished Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce to support this legislation. I commend Committee Chairman Staggers and the other committee members for conducting these timely hearings and for focusing public concern on this major health problem.

Mr. JARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Farbstein.

At this time we shall hear from the Honorable James Corman, of California. Mr. Corman.

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES C. CORMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. CORMAN. Mr. Chairman, I speak today on H.R. 5252, which I introduced early this session.

A successful campaign of research and training to prevent and cure blinding eye diseases has yet to be waged in America, in spite of great