be self-sufficient through charitable donations. The donor or family member would have the option of receiving the Congressional Gift of Life Medal. Families would also be able to request that a Member of Congress, state or local official, or community leader award the medal to the donor or donor's survivors.

Physicians can now transplant kidneys, lungs, pancreas, liver, and heart with considerable success. The demand for organs will continue to grow with the improvement of medical technologies. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), an average of 9,600 donations was made per year between 1995 and 1999. Without expanded efforts to increase the supply of organ donation, the supply of suitable organs will continue to lag behind the need.

This is non-controversial, non-partisan legislation to increase organ donation. I ask my colleagues to help bring an end to transplant waiting lists and recognize the enormous faith and courage displayed by organ donors and their families. This bill honors these brave acts, while publicizing the critical need for increased organ donations.

HONORING LONNELL COOPER

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lonnell Cooper, a retired sergeant with the Fort Worth Police Department and tremendous public servant who has served our community for half a century.

Throughout his life and career, Sgt. Cooper has been a stellar law enforcement officer and a trailblazer. He was a leader in breaking down the color barrier as one of the first six African Americans accepted to the Fort Worth Police Department. He also organized the department's first Explorer post.

Among the many honors bestowed on Sgt. Cooper throughout his distinguished career are Fort Worth Officer of the Year of the department's Service Division, he was designated an Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer by the State of Texas and a Pioneer in Criminal Justice by the U.S. Congress. The Mayor of Fort Worth even designated a ''Sgt. Lonnell E. Cooper Day'' in the city.

This Sunday, February 18, the New Rising Star Baptist Church is paying much deserved tribute to Sgt. Cooper for his lifetime of service to our community. I want to join with his family and many friends in thanking Sgt. Lonnell E. Cooper for all that he has done to make our community safer and a better place to live.

INTRODUCTION OF THE McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ACT OF 2001

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the ''McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001.'' This legislation builds upon legislation I introduced during the last Congress, numbered H.R. 2888, to improve educational opportunities for homeless children.

As my colleagues will recall, a majority of H.R. 2888 was incorporated into H.R. 2, the Students Results Act, which overwhelmingly passed the House in October of 1999. 1 am hopeful that this year's version of the legislation will garner the same kind of bipartisan support as did the last bill and ultimately will find its way into law.

Mr. Speaker, I think you would agree that being homeless should not mean foregoing an education. Yet, that is what homelessness means for far too many of America's children and youth today.

Even with our healthy economy, estimates are that one million kids will experience homelessness this year. Due to red tape, lack of information, and bureaucratic delays, some homeless children are missing school or are being turned away at the schoolhouse door and, as a result, losing out on the chance for a better life.

Studies show that as a result of these problems, some 45 percent of homeless children do not attend school on a regular basis. In addition, homeless children are twice as likely to repeat a grade and have four times the rate of delayed development.

Congress recognized the importance of school to homeless children by establishing the Stewart B. McKinney Education of Homeless Children and Youth program. This program is designed to remove barriers that prevent or make it hard for homeless youth to enroll, attend and succeed in school. And, for many homeless children, it may make the difference between success in the classroom and failure in life.

Yet today, more than a decade after the passage of that important program, inadequacies in the federal law inadvertently are acting as barriers to the education of homeless children. We must act to strengthen these weak areas, and we must act now.

This Congress has the rare chance to review, redefine, and improve our federal education policies. Not since 1994, when programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) were last authorized, has Congress had a similar opportunity to examine K through 12 education in total.

I believe it is incumbent for Members from both sides of the aisle and in both chambers to take advantage of this unique opportunity to renew our commitment to homeless children. As the 107th Congress rushes forward to reauthorize our federal K–12 education programs, we must pause long enough to ensure that all homeless children are guaranteed access to a public education, so that they acquire the skills needed to escape poverty and lead productive lives. In doing so, we will be meeting America's commitment to, as President Bush has clearly stated, leaving no child behind.

Mr. Speaker, the following is what the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act does. The bill:

One: ensures that homeless children are immediately enrolled in school. This means that no homeless child will be prevented for days or weeks from walking through the school doors because of delayed paperwork or other bureaucracy;

Two: limits the disruption of education by requiring schools to make every effort to keep homeless children in the school they attended before becoming homeless, unless it is against their parents wishes. This provision ensures that homeless children are not unwillingly ripped away from their friends and environments where they are comfortable learning;

Three: keeps homeless students in school while disputes are being resolved. Homeless children often spend weeks or even months out of school while enrollment disputes remain unresolved. This legislation address this serious problem by creating a mechanism to quickly and fairly resolve such disputes, ensuring that the enrollment process burdens neither the school nor the child's education;

Four: requires local school districts to select a contact person to identify, enroll and provide resource information and resolve disputes relating to homeless students. Because many schools don't currently have a point of contact for homeless students, these children frequently go unseen and unserved;

Five: strengthens the quality and collection of data on homeless students at the federal level. This is particularly crucial, as the lack of a uniform method of data collection has resulted in unreliable information and the likely underreporting of the numbers of homeless students;

Six: prohibits federal funding from being used to segregate homeless students. Despite McKinney Act requirements to remove enrollment barriers and to integrate homeless students into the mainstream school environment, some school districts continue to segregate these children into separate schools or classrooms. By explicitly prohibiting McKinney money from being used for such a purpose, this provision will better define and put teeth into the current federal statute governing this issue;

Seven: increases accountability by providing States with greater flexibility to use authorized funds to provide technical support to local school districts in order to bring them into compliance with the Act;

Eight And finally: assists overlooked and underserved homeless children and youth by raising the program's authorized funding level to $90 million in FY2002 and reauthorizing the program for another five years.

Mr. Speaker, a majority of these provisions are derived from the Illinois Education for Homeless Children State Act, which many consider to be a model for the rest of the Nation. These provisions also are a reflection of the best ideas of some of America's most dedicated people—homeless advocates, educators, and experts at the US Department of Education.

Like many of my colleagues here in the House, I am a strong supporter of local control of education. I believe the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001 meets this principle while making the best use of limited federal resources.

Regrettably, homelessness is and will likely be for the immediate future a part of our society. However, being homeless should not limit a homeless child's opportunity to receive what every child in America is entitled—a free and quality public education. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this much-needed and timely bill.

In closing, let me take a moment to thank Illinois State Representative Mary Lou Cowlishaw, as well Sister Rose Marie