



## **Congressman Griffith's Weekly E-Newsletter 5.24.13**

**Friday, May 24, 2013 –**

### **Memorial Day: A Day of Remembrance**

This week we celebrate Memorial Day. For many, Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer. But most importantly, it is a day when we remember and honor the men and women who have died while serving our country in the United States Armed Forces. Paying the ultimate price, they gave their lives to defend the freedoms we hold dear. Whether we lay wreaths at their final resting places, proudly fly flags, or participate in parades, these tributes are made in remembrance of their bravery and selfless sacrifice.

May we also remember the men and women in uniform who are currently serving, both here and abroad, and their families. They, too, give much to preserve and protect this great country. Whether it is on Memorial Day, the week of Memorial Day, or throughout the year, we should remember that their contributions help keep us free and our nation strong. We thank them all.

### **Increasing Patient Choice and Control**

Our great nation boasts an array of companies that are working hard to end human suffering and develop new treatments for terminal and life-threatening diseases.

Currently, it takes approximately 15 years and \$1 billion to bring a new drug to market in America.

I believe very strongly that, when battling deadly diseases, patients and their physicians need more options.

While serving in Congress, former Congressman Brian Bilbray (R-CA) introduced legislation to help address the issues outlined above. Though Mr. Bilbray is no longer serving in the “people’s House,” I am of the belief that these issues remain relevant and that a solution is needed.

Congressman Scott Peters (D-CA), Congressman Michael McCaul (R-TX), and I recently introduced H.R. 2090, the Patient Choice Act, to carry on Mr. Bilbray’s concept. This

legislation would speed up the FDA approval of drugs for patients, and would also give patients with terminal diseases the option to purchase these new, innovative therapies at their own expense. This will give patients access to potentially life-saving medicines much sooner, and is a common-sense and responsible way with which to provide patients the freedom to battle deadly diseases.

For patients whose doctors have exhausted current medical options and have been told that the end of life is nearing, why should the federal government interfere if the patient wishes to spend their own money on an experimental treatment plan that may not yet have made it through the FDA's lengthy approval process? The Patient Choice Act would empower patients facing difficult situations to have more control over their own medical decisions nearing the end of their lives and to help all people by moving the ball down the field in the area of medical science and medical knowledge.

In rare cases, the individual may be cured or the patient's life lengthened. But even when that doesn't occur, the individual will have the satisfaction of knowing that they helped save someone in the future.

Advancing the bipartisan Patient Choice Act through Congress will be an uphill battle, but it is a worthy concept that I will continue working to promote. For more information on the Patient Choice Act, please visit my website, [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](http://www.morgangriffith.house.gov).

### **Congratulations, Graduates!**

It is once again the time of year that families and friends gather to celebrate the graduations of students of all ages. Congratulations to all graduates – my family and I wish you the very best in the next chapter of life.

As always, if you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to call my Abingdon office at [276-525-1405](tel:276-525-1405) or my Christiansburg office at [540-381-5671](tel:540-381-5671). To reach my office by email, please visit my website at [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](http://www.morgangriffith.house.gov).

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