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MAR 8 2000

Laid Over Under Rule 25

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.  
BY FALLON

A House Resolution honoring Melvin and Phyllis Yates.

WHEREAS, throughout history, people with different abilities and disabilities have been mistreated and misunderstood; and

WHEREAS, the humanity and dignity of all people should be respected, regardless of their apparent abilities or disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Melvin and Phyllis Yates, brother and sister, spent the majority of their youth in Glenwood State Hospital for the Retarded, even though they were not disabled, but rather were the victims of an abusive and negligent home life that inhibited their mental growth; and

WHEREAS, as children, Melvin, 5, and Phyllis, 4, after living in a hostile household environment, were taken by authorities and sent to Glenwood in 1943 after intelligence tests identified them as feebleminded; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Melvin and Phyllis, as teenagers in the Glenwood institution, underwent sterilization without their fully informed knowledge and consent; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, a new Glenwood superintendent, Alfred Sasser, discovered that 178 patients, including Melvin and Phyllis, were being wrongfully held at Glenwood, which Iowa Governor Herschel Loveless called "a shame on humanity"; and

WHEREAS, in the next few years following the

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1 discovery of the wrongful insitutionalization, about  
2 90 people were released from Glenwood, including  
3 Melvin in 1958 and Phyllis in 1960; and

4 WHEREAS, Melvin married in 1966 and moved to  
5 Carrier Mills, Illinois, and, after working in a  
6 variety of jobs, started a cleaning business with his  
7 wife in 1989; and

8 WHEREAS, Phyllis, for job training with Goodwill  
9 Industries, moved to Omaha, Nebraska, in 1960, and  
10 married in 1968; and

11 WHEREAS, Melvin and Phyllis managed to overcome the  
12 adversity of their past and lead fruitful and  
13 rewarding lives; and

14 WHEREAS, Melvin and Phyllis deserve compassion for  
15 the mistreatment they suffered many years ago that  
16 drastically altered their lives; NOW THEREFORE,

17 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
18 That the House of Representatives honor Melvin and  
19 Phyllis Yates for their perseverance and courage in  
20 overcoming the adversity of their past mistreatment,  
21 and recognize that all people, regardless of their  
22 apparent abilities or disabilities, should be treated  
23 with equal respect and dignity.

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