

# Stop Alzheimer's crisis from escalating

I would like to commend 1st District Congressman Bruce Braley (D-Waterloo) for co-sponsoring the Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2009 (H.R. 3286).

## GUEST COLUMN



**Kathleen Good**

For the more than 5 million people nationwide living with Alzheimer's, and the 67,000 living

here in Iowa, it is a tremendous step in the fight against the disease and offers great promise for some day having a world without Alzheimer's.

With an aging baby boomer population soon to be at the epicenter of an escalating Alzheimer crisis, the disease is quickly becoming the country's biggest, broadest and most expensive problem — to individuals, families, and the health care system.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, total health care costs are more than three times higher for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias than for other people the same age without the disease. For the last six years, federal funding for Alzheimer research has declined in real terms. In fact, for every dollar the government spends on the costs of Alzheimer care, it invests less than a penny in research to find a cure. This is all while the loss of lives and costs to Medicare and Medicaid continue to soar.

The legislation authorizes a significant increase in funding for Alzheimer research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to \$2 billion to restore momentum to the pursuit of better diagnosis, prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. By supporting the Alzheimer Breakthrough Act, Braley has signaled his understanding of the grave threat

Alzheimer's poses to the residents of Iowa and the nation.

In addition to the increase in research funding, this legislation provides much-needed support for the nearly 10 million caregivers nationwide, including more than 96,000 Alzheimer's caregivers who live in Iowa. Every day these individuals, myself included, grapple with the emotional, physical, and financial challenges of caring for someone with Alzheimer's or a related dementia. The bill provides vital resources and tools to assist caregivers in their demanding role.

It also calls for a national summit on Alzheimer's to look at promising research possibilities and programs that are important in fighting this disease and supporting those who are struggling with it.

I became a caregiver on June 23, 2003, the eventful day when Dave, my spouse, was diagnosed with the Visual Variant of

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Alzheimer's. At the time, Dave was an Iowa District Court judge.

As the disease has progressed, robbing Dave of more and more of his abilities, I have assumed more and more responsibility not only for the tasks we used to share (bill paying, financial planning, car and home maintenance, and our social calendar, to name a few) but also for the tasks Dave did independently (eating, toileting, shaving, bathing, dressing). Needless to say, it has been challenging to learn to do more each day than ever would have seemed possible, and to learn to do it all by myself, without the aide and support of the person on whom I'd always relied.

I never dreamed that I would be a person impacted by Alzheimer's disease and you probably haven't thought about it either. But the statistics are staggering and the possibility of you becoming one of us increases daily.

Alzheimer's disease poses tremendous human, social and economic burdens on the nation and its effects are and will continue to be a challenge to us all. The Alzheimer Breakthrough Act is a significant step forward in the fight against this disease.

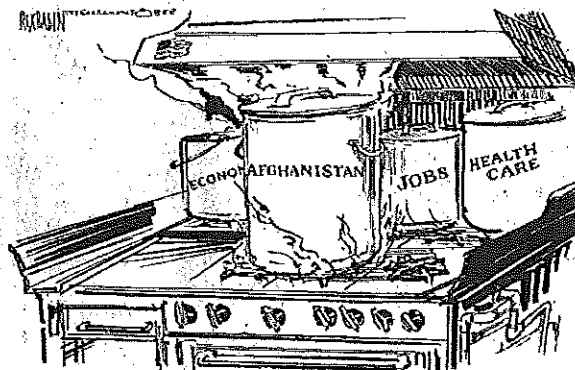
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## A need to re-envision downtown C.R.'s needs

Parking in the downtown will never get better because Cedar Rapids is no longer a small town next to the rapids. The rapids are gone and so is the need for a downtown for shopping and government buildings.

The flood of 2008 pointed this out dramatically. Many government offices were moved to the Westdale Mall and the residents approved overwhelmingly. Some remain and people love it.

As I canvass my district, the parking issue is most often brought up.



THE FRONT BURNER...

tion. Bananas and water were supplied by Hy-Vee.

The enthusiastic support and excellent turnout indicates strong sup-

county lawmakers' proposed construction labor policy discussions. Both levels of government are discussing requirements

Folks, it is not about their personal traits. It is about their left-wing agenda. Each of these politicians keeps desperately trying to rush into socialism with a gigantic, over-reaching government. That is why well over 100,000 American citizens marched on Washington D.C. on Sept. 12.

Do you suppose those citizens are just the tip of a conservative iceberg? I think so.

Did they appear to be professionally organized by some union? Do you think they were paid? I think not. Do think about the time, energy and money each of these people spent to send a powerful

AIDS is so strongly associated with school attendance that education has been called a social vaccine against the virus.

President Obama should heed the call of the moral leaders he has just honored and make good on his campaign commitment to create a global fund for education.

Judy McDowell  
Cedar Rapids

## New C.R. library should be on First Avenue

As a former chair of the State Library Commission and an architect responsible for the design of many libraries in the Midwest, including those