

E&C MEMBER DAY REMARKS – Rep. Wasserman Schultz
Friday, December 12 | 5 min.

<INTRO>

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for this chance to present two critical bills that will keep young people safer from two major public health threats – breast cancer and drowning.

<EARLY ACT/VGB>

First, I'd like to discuss H.R. 4541, the bipartisan EARLY Act, because the timing is urgent.

Right now, securing quality affordable healthcare may soon be priced out of reach for millions of Americans.

And for women, that access is vital, especially because breast cancer – more than any other form of this deadly disease – always lurks as a threat in our lives.

One in eight of us will get it, and 42,000 will likely lose their lives from it this year.

But the earlier it's caught, the more women will survive.

I and millions of other women have heard those devastating words no one wants to hear: 'you have breast cancer.'

My journey to survivorship inspired me to write a more hopeful chapter for the millions of us who will hear those chilling words. And we know what works.

In 2010, the Early Act became law and has helped thousands of young women since to pay attention to their breast health and to catch breast cancer early.

We know that early detection and treatment saves lives and that starts with education and awareness.

This especially is true for younger women and ethnic and racial populations, who more often face aggressive forms of breast cancer or are more likely to catch it later.

For instance, Black women are 40% more likely to die from this than white women. But breast cancer has a 99% survival rate if it's caught in its early, localized stages.

Yet that number dips to 31% when the cancer spreads to our lungs, liver, or bones. And this is where the EARLY Act plays such a critical role.

My own journey speaks to this early detection urgency. I was diagnosed with breast cancer and the BRCA2 gene mutation at age 41.

After 15 months of surgery, I've been cancer free for 18 years now. And finding it early saved my life.

Discovering our family's BRCA2 mutation may also prove to be life saving for my daughters, too.

But millions of young women need those early detection and awareness tools, and reauthorizing the Breast Cancer Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act, or (EARLY) Act delivers that.

And it's central to a larger strategy to save lives. One is to ensure all of us can access quality affordable care.

We are waging that fight right now. But we also need to ensure all women know the threats, warning signs and available resources they have to battle breast cancer.

That's what the EARLY Act does. It centers around vital programs handled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC.

One component is the Bring Your Brave campaign, which amplifies stories that raise awareness of breast cancer in young women between the ages 18-44, and encourages them to understand their risk and the signs and symptoms.

The EARLY Act also funds the Young Breast Cancer Survivors Program, which provides grants to non-profits aimed at delivering supportive services and resources to increase patients' survival and improve their quality of life.

So, I would love this committee's support to reauthorize the EARLY Act, to help ensure those resources continue because breast cancer in young women has been rising and this law is needed now more than ever.

<<VGB>>

Next, I'd appreciate the committee's help on H.R. 4751, my bipartisan Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Reauthorization Act.

Drownings and near-drownings in pools and spas pose a significant public health risk, and they remain *the* leading cause of unintentional death for children ages one to four.

In my home state of Florida, we're on pace to set a tragic record for drownings in 2025. But with education and added layers of protection we can reverse that, and keep more innocent children safe.

This law does that by helping decrease drowning through sensible outreach, education, and prudent precautions.

And it's done through three principal elements, carried out by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC):

First, it requires every public pool to install safe drain covers that prevent suction entrapment.

Second, it initiates a grant program to incentivize states, municipalities, and Indian Tribes to adopt their own pool and spa safety laws and education efforts.

Third, it launches "Pool Safely," a national education campaign to raise awareness about drowning prevention.

Working together, all these efforts prevent families from ever suffering one of the worst tragedies imaginable.

And that's what both bills do: add layers of education and prevention to keep all our families safer and cancer free.

I hope you'll join me in making that possible. Thank you again for the committee's time and consideration.