

Press Release

BIPARTISAN CHAMPIONS FOR EATING DISORDERS – REP. LEONARD LANCE AND REP. DORIS MATSUI- CHAMPION EATING DISORDERS AMENDMENT IN THE HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Rep. Leonard Lance [R-NJ-7] and Rep. Doris Matsui [D-CA-6] offer Anna Westin Act amendment during Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Markup

Washington, D.C. - November 4, 2015 – Today, Congressman Leonard Lance [R-NJ-7] and Congresswoman Doris Matsui [D-CA-6] championed a bipartisan amendment to provide training to doctors and educators to provide earlier diagnosis and treatment of eating disorders and clarify mental health parity rules to improve access to residential treatment. The proposal included provisions of the Anna Westin Act of 2015 (HR 2515) as an amendment during the Subcommittee on Health’s markup of Congressman Tim Murphy’s [R-PA] comprehensive mental health reform bill, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis (HR 2646). The amendment was subsequently withdrawn to allow members of the committee to fully review these issues as the Energy and Commerce Committee continues to consider Congressman Murphy’s legislation.

“Working together we will find new solutions to fight eating disorders and give patients the tools and support they need in recovery. I am proud to join in a bipartisan fashion in working to combat eating disorders and I am pleased to join a passionate advocacy corp who champion the cause on behalf of friends and loved ones,” said Congressman Lance.

“It is tragic that out of the 30 million Americans who suffer from an eating disorder at some point in their lives, only 1 in 10 ever receives treatment,” said Congresswoman Doris Matsui. “We need to train doctors and teachers to recognize at-risk behaviors in patients, so that individuals can have access to life-saving help as soon as possible. Today’s bipartisan amendment brings us closer to this goal by preparing those who are in a position to recognize the signs and symptoms of eating disorders to help in the best way possible. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to improve the treatment of eating disorders, and I thank Representatives Lance, Deutch, and Ros-Lehtinen for their leadership on this issue.”

The Anna Westin Act of 2015 was introduced on May 21, 2015 by Congressman Ted Deutch [D-FL] and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen [R-FL] to the House of Representative. The bill improves training for prevention, clarifies treatment coverage, and addresses false and unfair digitally altered advertisement images of humans through an FTC study, while not increasing the federal budget deficit.

“Today was an important step toward saving lives of Americans who are facing eating disorders. I thank Reps. Lance and Matsui for their leadership, and their commitment to all Americans with mental illness,” said Congressman Deutch. “I look forward to working with all of the bipartisan cosponsors of the Anna Westin Act to fight for access to residential treatment, the fulfillment of the promise of parity, and the joy of recovery.”

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen noted, “It was important for the Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee to see all of the support that the bipartisan Anna Westin Act has in Congress and across the nation. I will continue to work with my fellow cosponsors to make sure that the residential treatment parity,

eating disorder education, and truth in advertising provisions of the Anna Westin Act become a reality for the benefit of millions of Americans suffering from eating disorders and their families.”

As of November 3, 2015, the Anna Westin Act has a solid bipartisan group of 32 Congressional supporters, including Reps. Kathy Castor and Joseph P. Kennedy, III, also members of the Health Subcommittee. In total, 12 Republicans and 20 Democrats have cosponsored the legislation since its introduction in late May 2015.

The Eating Disorders Coalition is a Washington, D.C.-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of treatment providers, advocacy organizations and entities, parents of children with eating disorders, and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. For more information regarding the Anna Westin Act of 2015, contact Katrina Velasquez at kvelasquez@eatingdisorderscoalition.org or 202-241-6617. Additional resources can also be found at www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org.