

AB733 orders the California Department of Health Services to adopt regulations that require the fluoridation of the water of any public water system in California that has at least 10,000 service connections (approximately 25,000 population). This legislation is truly a significant health and political achievement. California, the nation's largest state in terms of population size, ranks as one of the lowest states in percent of population on public water systems consuming optimally fluoridated water. Only eight other states have mandated statewide fluoridation laws. Each state varies somewhat on minimum population and funding requirements. The list of states and the year that mandated legislation was passed is as follows: Connecticut, 1965; Illinois and Minnesota, 1967; Michigan, 1968; Ohio and South Dakota, 1969; and Nebraska and Georgia, 1973. It took 22 years to add the ninth state, California. That would not have been possible without Jackie Speier's legislative efforts.

Two Republican governors have signed into law 162 bills by Democrat State Assemblywoman Jackie Speier during her nine years of service in the state assembly. Her legislative success rate is "Ruthian," according to a 1993 *Los Angeles Times* article noting that her bills were considered "significant changes in the law."

Jackie, first elected to the California State Assembly in November 1986, has championed laws that have significantly increased collection of delinquent child support payments, set up statewide early AIDS intervention programs, curtailed workers' compensation fraud, banned smoking in state buildings, and raised millions of



Jackie Speier

dollars for breast cancer research and child abuse prevention programs.

For five years Jackie chaired the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection, where her investigations uncovered acts of waste and fraud. The bills she has introduced cover a wide range and protect Californians from travel fraud, telemarketing scams, unfair funeral practices, illegal stock transactions, inaccurate credit reports, and gender discrimination in pricing of services and the resale of vehicles. In January 1996, she released a 30-page primer on how consumers can avoid the common causes of fraud. This government best seller is on the Internet as "Top Ten Consumer Complaints."

Jackie, who represents the 19th Assembly District (San Mateo County), is serving her fifth and final term in the assembly, having been nominated by both Republicans and Democrats in the 1994 primary. This dual party nomination is a tribute to her popular-

ity.

Her tenacious approach to representing her constituents and legislating stems from a brush with death in 1978. At that time, Speier, legal counsel to Congressman Leo J. Ryan, accompanied Ryan to Jonestown, Guyana, to investigate rumors that people (many with families in the Bay Area) were being held hostage by cult leader the Rev. Jim Jones. On November 18, cult followers shot and killed Congressman Ryan—Jackie was struck by five bullets. Later that day, 911 cult members died. Speier has said the Jonestown tragedy is a daily reminder that "no one is guaranteed tomorrow ... and this has absolutely molded my philosophy and my zest for work and life."

Two years after the Jonestown shootings, Jackie won her first election by defeating a 20-year incumbent for a seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. She was reelected and named chair of the board in 1985.

Jackie has been named "Consumer Advocate of the Year" by Consumer Action and "Legislator of the Year" by numerous organizations—including the California State Bar Association, the California National Organization for Women, and the Girl Scouts of America. *Focus* magazine put her on its list of the Bay Area's "Best and Brightest." She is the first member of the California legislature to give birth while in office. Born in San Francisco, Jackie earned a BA from the University of California at Davis and graduated from UC's Hastings College of Law in 1976.

At this time, will Dr. Isman please come forward to accept the award for Jackie Speier.

Remarks on Receiving the Public Service Award

Jackie Speier

I am delighted to receive the Public Service Award from the American Association of Public Health Dentistry and regret that I am unable to attend your fine event this year.

When I first introduced my proposal to fluoridate California's drinking water, Assembly Bill 733, I was

astonished that the subject of fluoridation could still be the subject of such heated debate as we enter the third millennium.

Given the controversial nature of this issue, it was a pleasant surprise to discover that the support for fluoridating California's drinking water finally

outmatched the ferocity of the opposition and that ultimately medical science triumphed over the sensationalism of the antifluoridationists. Since AB 733 became law last year, things are finally back to normal in our office. While we still have our share of angry individuals who write to me and say

they will not pay their water bills any longer, or because of me they are going to have to buy a water filter—all in all, the response has been pretty positive.

With the governor's signature on the fluoridation bill, I am optimistic that we can finally put the fluoridation issue to rest. When the measure became law, a *Los Angeles Times* editorial stated that "the governor's signature hopefully marks the end of a long and loony debate" and the *Sacramento Bee* echoed those sentiments and stated that the new law "closes one of the silliest chapters in California's history."

I'd like to add that one of the most important lessons I learned from spon-

soring the fluoridation measure was that many of my colleagues in the legislature never considered the problem of oral health a significant one and that, in fact, tooth decay is often overlooked in many public health dialogues. The reason for oral health being separated from the total public health picture is not clear. Perhaps it is because most people have separate dental and general health insurance, so they consider them as two different needs. They often think of dental care as secondary, because in many instances, they consider dental problems non-life threatening.

All of you here today know that good oral health is an important message we need to reiterate to lawmakers

and policymakers. Tooth decay is a major economic health problem in California and it affects 90 percent of our population. Two-thirds of the \$650 million dollar Denti-Cal program is spent on restorative dentistry that can be largely avoided through water fluoridation.

We hope, now that the state of California has approved fluoridation of its drinking water, that we will have a renewed spotlight on oral health in our state, and more leverage in promoting oral health programs through future budget and legislative policy negotiations.

Thank you for this important award.

1996 Special Merit Award: Hermine McLeran, BS, MPH

Presented by Rhys Jones, DDS, MS, Immediate Past-president

The Special Merit Award is given to an individual for special meritorious service to dental public health. Our 1996 award is presented to Hermine McLeran, associate professor, Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry, and director of the Aging Studies Program, University of Iowa. A qualifier for this award is that it helps to have put in hours and hours and days and days of work as a representative of AAPHD toward improving the oral health of the public. Hermine is well qualified for the Special Merit Award.

I was finally able to get her to sit down in the lobby yesterday and recall her history of service to AAPHD. She began attending AAPHD meetings prior to 1976. She could not recall her first meeting. Her original introduction to AAPHD came through dental hygienist consulting for Indian Health Service Head Start. As a consultant, she happened to meet a guy by the name of Bob Mecklenburg and he suggested she attend an AAPHD national meeting. Hermine was one of the so called "charter" dental hygienist members who was given full membership and voting privileges to AAPHD in 1976, the year Bob Mecklenburg was president. In 1985, she was elected

to the Executive Council. She has chaired the legislative and oral health committees, served as secretary/treasurer beginning in 1988, was elected vice-president in 1992, then served as president-elect, and president in 1994. She continues to serve as chair of the Continuing Education Committee.

The real work by Hermine, however, has been done for the oral health of the nation. In response to the "Future of Dental Public Health Report," Hermine organized and initiated the process for the Strategic Plan for Dental Public Health and helped to form the Coalition for Oral Health, a coalition of 26 national organizations that rallied around health care reform efforts. She is AAPHD representative on the coalition and was elected vice-president of the group. During the health care reform movement, no one made more effective visits to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, than Hermine and Marty Liggett of the American Association of Dental Schools.

These two individuals almost single-handedly organized and coordinated dental public health's fight for oral health in health care reform, pushing for a solution to the problem of untreated dental disease and lack of access for vulnerable populations. The

coalition's solution to the problem is that it is essential that oral health care be considered no differently than any other form of health care. A basic package of preventive and primary care benefits, including oral health benefits, should be required to be provided to all Americans as a part of a public or private insurance program and delivered in both community and individual settings. If health care reform would have happened, oral health would have made it—thanks in large measure to Hermine's efforts.

Hermine received her dental hygiene and MPH degrees from the University of Michigan. She has had a varied career: as a consultant with the Michigan Department of Health; as a dental health educator in Alameda County, California; as a dental hygiene instructor in California and the University of Iowa; and for the past 16 years as coordinator of the Aging Studies Program at the University of Iowa. She has a number of publications and grant activities and has received numerous awards, the latest being the University of Michigan Outstanding Dental Hygiene Alumni Award.

Congratulations, Hermine, on receiving the AAPHD Special Merit Award.