

PRESS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

27 Feb. 64

Representative John E. Fogarty, (D-R.I.) today introduced into the House a proposal to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit the immigration victims of mental retardation.

"I believe that this change should be made"; Mr. Fogarty said, "because the exclusion of these persons from our shores solely on the basis of their illness not only ignores the realities of the Nation's progress in health and rehabilitation, it strikes at the basic unit of our society -- the family."

The proposed modification would allow immigration of aliens afflicted with mental retardation, contingent upon controls established by the Attorney General, at his discretion, after consultation with the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service.

As a member of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations for health education and welfare for nearly twenty years, and deeply concerned with health matters, Mr. Fogarty pointed out that 5 million of the Nation's 5.4 million mentally retarded are capable of becoming useful citizens.

"To continue the restrictions now imposed," he said, "is to deny ourselves the creative energies and talents of individuals--and their families--unfortunate enough to be afflicted with a disease which can, by reason of our research accomplishments, now be interrupted and controlled."

The selective admission of individuals with this affliction, Mr. Fogarty believes, is the only "just and equitable and civilized course of action which, for this Nation, would be an act of humanitarianism to be applauded by the rest of the world."