

PRESS RELEASE

From Cong. John E. Fogarty, D-R.I.
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FOR RELEASE IN P.M. PAPERS, FEBRUARY 25, 1964

Representative John E. Fogarty, (D-R.I.) today introduced into the House a proposal (H.R. 7976) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit the immigration of epileptics, and, under certain conditions, victims of tuberculosis and of mental retardation.

"It is inconsistent," Mr. Fogarty said, "for us to continue to carry on our law books provisions which our victories against disease have made obsolete. In so doing, we fail to recognize our great progress in health fields."

The proposed modifications provide for the unrestricted immigration of epileptics, and would allow immigration of aliens afflicted with tuberculosis and 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 80 to 90 percent of the Nation's epileptics are capable of normal employment; that the mortality rate from tuberculosis has decreased over 97 percent since 1900; and that 5 million of the Nation's 5.4 million mentally retarded are capable of becoming useful citizens.

(more)

"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 diseases which can, by reason of our research accomplishments, now be interrupted and controlled."

The selective admission of individuals with these afflictions, 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."

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