

4443 Wieuca Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
June 21, 2010

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr., Chairman
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: In Support of HR 5503, The SPILL Act

Dear Congressman Conyers,

I have been pursuing an amendment to the Death on the High Seas Act (DOHSA) since 2001, when I managed to survive an international maritime accident that killed my mother and two other women, and injured me and 13 other cruise line passengers. The Death on the High Seas Act (DOHSA) of 1920 governed this accident and the legal proceedings that ensued for negligence resulting in my mother's drowning did not require the cruise line to compensate my family for:

- The conscious pain and suffering that my mother endured prior to drowning after our small craft capsized from rough waves in the Pacific Ocean.
- The non-economic losses my family suffers from grief and the loss of her contributions to her five children and society as a bilingual, special education elementary school teacher.

My mother's life is no less valuable than an oil rig worker's or airline passenger's and my family's grief is no less painful than the grief of their families! I urge you to FINALLY hold the cruise lines ACCOUNTABLE FOR DEATHS CAUSED BY THEIR NEGLIGENCE!

In 2006, U.S. Congressman John Lewis introduced H.R. 4921 to amend the Death on the High Seas Act for me. In 2007, Congressman Lewis re-introduced this bill as H.R. 2989. Both of these bills were referred to the House Judiciary Committee. In 2008 and 2009, this amendment was added to the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act for the numerous families who have lost family members, like me, in international waters. Paid, commercial lobbyists were successful in having the Death on the High Seas Act amendment removed from the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act complaining that it would provide remedies on all other remedies including "...commercial ships, fishing vessels, cruise lines and ferries, offshore drilling..."

Sincerely,

Lynda D. Sanford