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**Statement for the Record Prepared by Congresswoman Kathleen M. Rice
House Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health**

October 20, 2021

Chair Eshoo, Ranking Member Guthrie, and members of the Health Subcommittee, I thank you for holding this important hearing titled, “Enhancing Public Health: Legislation to Protect Children and Families,” and for including H.R. 1193, the *Cardiovascular Advances in Research and Opportunities Legacy Act*, introduced by my friend and colleague, Representative Andy Barr of Kentucky.

Heart valve disease occurs when one or more of the heart’s four valves, which open and close when the heart beats and move blood through the heart, do not function properly. Poorly functioning heart valves make the heart work harder, and – if left untreated – can lead to heart failure, stroke, blood clots, and sudden cardiac arrest, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Individuals can be born with a valvular heart condition or acquire it during their lifetime. Many of those individuals go their entire lives without a serious issue or incident caused by their condition, but tragically, over 25,000 people die each year in the United States from heart valve disease.

Though the overwhelming majority of Americans with valve disease go undiagnosed and untreated without incident or complication, the rare instances where severe complications emerge can be devastating. Medical research has established a connection between valve disease and life-threatening problems like sudden cardiac arrest, but the relationship and indicators of high risk for severe complications are poorly understood. It is critical that our federal researchers focus on heart research so we can understand these potentially deadly conditions and determine best practices for care.

H.R. 1193 would help close this knowledge gap by authorizing a grant program within NHLBI to support valve disease research, including research into the development of new technologies to better image and generate data on individuals with valve disease and understand what patients are most at risk of fatal incidents. The bill will also help the federal government establish best practices for treating valve disease patients and launch a public awareness campaign of valve disease symptoms.

It is my great honor to help lead this bill to fund breakthroughs and honor Andy’s wife, Carol. Once again, thank you to Chair Eshoo, Ranking Member Guthrie, and my Energy and Commerce Committee colleagues for supporting this critical bill and effort.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress