

moves into retirement and into a new phase of his career. We are sorry he is leaving but we wish him very, very well.

#### THE ILLINOIS LAND CONSERVATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. WELLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed H.R. 714, the Illinois Land Conservation Act, with overwhelming bipartisan support. While a similar bill passed the House last session, time was short and the Senate did not have time to act on the bill. I am pleased we were able to move the bill through the House and I am working with my Senators to ensure that the legislation moves quickly through the other body with bipartisan support.

I would like to take a minute to speak briefly about the importance of this legislation. This bipartisan measure is supported by virtually the entire Illinois delegation, the Governor of Illinois Jim Edgar, a large number of veterans, environment and conservation organizations, business and labor, private citizens and a broad coalition of groups interested in making this project a reality. H.R. 714 serves as a model for communities looking at future use for closed and surplus military facilities.

In April 1993, the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant was declared excess Federal property. Congressman George Sangmeister appointed a citizens planning commission that developed a reuse plan, which is encompassed in my legislation. This innovative land use plan could very well be seen as a model for converting base closures into peacetime uses. It will create the largest national tallgrass prairie east of the Mississippi, and will have enormous environmental, economic, and educational benefits to offer for many years to come. In our increasingly urbanized society, it is important to take note of the opportunity we have to preserve such a large tract of land for wildlife habitat and prairieland preservation, and also to incorporate a national cemetery to honor those veterans who have served their country, and to improve the economy and create jobs.

The largest portion of the arsenal property, 19,000 acres, will be transferred to the National Forest Service for creation of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. This is very crucial to a State that once had more than 43,000 square miles of prairieland, most of which has now been developed into towns and cities. Over 6 million people live within 45 miles of the land. Trails, camping, wildlife watching and other recreational activities are planned. The proposed prairieland is home to many species of birds and animals that are on both Federal and State endangered and threatened lists. Among these are the Upland Sandpiper, the

Marsh Yellow Crest, and numerous species of fish, insects and plant life.

The plan also includes a veterans cemetery which will occupy close to 1,000 acres on the arsenal property. This cemetery, which will be one of the largest in the United States, will serve more than a million veterans and their families within a 75-mile radius. The site of the cemetery, known as Hoff Woods, is a beautiful and tranquil setting of forests and rolling hills; a perfect location for a nation for a national cemetery.

The plan also includes two sites, a total of 3,000 acres, to be used for economic development. These two sites are seen as ideal for job creation, and many manufacturing companies would find sites like these well suited to their needs. Not only is the land equipped for economic development, but there are a series of water wells and pumping stations with the capacity to pump up to 77 million gallons of water each day. This portion of the redevelopment plan is very important to the surrounding communities. This use of the land will put many local men and women to work and stimulate the economy. The Illinois General Assembly has already created the Joliet Arsenal Economic Development Authority to effectively implement this plan.

This bill will also benefit the American taxpayer. Upon receiving the land, the USDA plans to sell surplus assets such as railway equipment and steel from the arsenal property. The Congressional Budget Office estimates a result of asset sale receipts totaling \$3.5 million over fiscal years 1996 and 1997. Agricultural leases on the property currently bring in about \$1.1 million in receipts annually. Also, USDA expects to collect annual user fees of about \$3 million from visitors to the new Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. In sum, CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 714 would decrease outlays by about \$1 million in 1996, \$1 million in 1997, and \$2 million in 1998 for a total savings of \$4 million over the next 3 years.

The hard work and commitment of many people went into the success of this bill. Of course, I would like to thank former Congressman George Sangmeister, who initiated this process. I would also like to thank the Governor of Illinois Jim Edgar, and my fellow Illinois colleagues who have supported this concept plan. Special thanks go out to Fran Harty and Brent Manning of the Illinois Department of Conservation, Jerry Adelman and the Openlands Project, John Turner of the Conservation Fund, Ruth Fitzgerald of the Will County Center for Economic Development, Don Walden the head of my veterans advisory committee, and Lt. Col. Alan Kruse former Commander of the Joliet Arsenal. Of course, I also extend my gratitude to Chairmen PAT ROBERTS, BUD SHUSTER, TOM BLILEY, and FLOYD SPENCE; and to the majority whip TOM DELAY, and majority leader DICK ARMEY for their assistance in

moving this bill through the House in a timely fashion.

I am very pleased with the success of everyone's bipartisan efforts. The hard work and commitment by all involved demonstrates what can happen when people work together to make a difference.

The plan approved by the House yesterday is a win-win-win for taxpayers, veterans, conservation, and working families.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a Chicago Tribune article regarding the legislation to convert the former Joliet Arsenal.

[From the Chicago Tribune, July 16, 1995]

#### A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR JOLIET ARSENAL

Legislation to convert the former Joliet Arsenal to peacetime uses is a congressman's dream: It offers so much good in so many ways—for generations to come—that it is almost impossible to oppose.

That's why it has enjoyed such broad-based and remarkably bipartisan support so far, from citizens, business people, preservation groups and local officials to the Illinois General Assembly, Gov. Jim Edgar, the Clinton administration and U.S. representatives and senators on both sides of the aisle.

It has been moving efficiently through Congress, but now it faces another critical hurdle with the House Agriculture Committee—which holds lead jurisdiction on the legislation—about to take it up for recommendation to the full House. If the committee approves—and it is strongly urged to do so—the plan could have final approval by the August break.

The legislation almost made it through the last Congress, until last-minute technical mischief by U.S. Sen. John Glenn (D-Ohio) stalled it. It was a blow to retired U.S. Rep. George Sangmeister (D-Ill.), who spearheaded the arsenal-conversion movement. His successor, U.S. Rep. Jerry Weller (R-Ill.), resurrected it with the pledge to make it his top legislative priority.

That he has done, and the new version of the legislation may be even better than the old, clearing potential stumbling blocks, providing a more detailed transfer procedure and adding some additional benefits—including tapping the arsenal's vast water supply for development and for nearby communities.

A less comprehensive Senate version would have to be reconciled, but U.S. Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) is leading cooperation toward that end.

The genius of the concept is its provision for mixed use, a model for this type of conversion.

Of the 23,500 acres, almost 1,000 would be set aside for a new veterans' cemetery, the largest in the system and one desperately needed in the Midwest.

Will County would get more than 400 acres for a landfill, with provision to give the Army space for non-hazardous waste from its arsenal cleanup.

Some 3,000 acres would be set aside for industrial development under a state authority, generating both jobs and new tax revenue for local communities.

And the centerpiece, of course, would be the transfer of 19,000 acres to the U.S. Forest Service to create the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, the largest of its kind east of the Mississippi—an oasis for human recreation and wildlife prosperity in reach of some 8 million people in a 60-mile radius.

For all this, the Congressional Budget Office also estimates that transfer of the arsenal could save the federal government \$4 million over 3 years.

Too good to be true? Certainly too good to delay.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WELLER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I wanted to say I was walking by the floor when I saw the gentleman making his presentation, and those of us on the Committee on National Security were very impressed with your plan for the Joliet Arsenal. We have waived jurisdiction so it can go on down an expedited process to come to fruition.

When the people of your congressional district have this great asset, and this program is completed, they will have one person to thank for it, and that is JERRY WELLER. We appreciate your work on this, and anything that we can do in the Committee on National Security to expedite it, we are there, and I thank the gentleman.

□ 1730

#### NLRB CUTS AND THE CASE OF OVERNIGHT TRANSPORTATION COMPANY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the debate we are having on the Labor HHS Appropriations bill is about people, not government programs. It is about the extremes to which Republicans will go to protect special interests.

There is a very striking, specific example of how this bill sacrifices working families for the ignoble cause of catering to special interest. This bill punishes an independent agency on behalf of an unscrupulous employer, the Overnight Transportation Co.

Let's be clear about one thing, this has nothing to do with reducing the budget deficit. It has everything to do with eliminating the independence and impartiality of the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB is a judicial body. It is not supposed to respond to thinly-veiled threats from Members of this Congress.

But certain Members have written to the judges of the NLRB that if they did not decide an issue in favor of the Overnight Co., the agency will be targeted for severe cuts. And when the judges used their independent judgment, Republicans went looking for blood. The cuts in this bill for NLRB are severe: 30 percent, while most other agencies were cut only 7.5 percent.

Indeed, the Wall Street Journal reported recently that an Overnight lobbyist worked closely with a Republican congressman to insure that NLRB be issued a dramatic cut and that its judicial procedures be tied up.

This unprecedented interference by Republicans in the duties of judges was

not on behalf of the workers. Let me repeat, Republicans are going to extremes not on behalf of workers, but on behalf of an unscrupulous employer, the Overnight Co.

The management of Overnight, from the CEO on down, has been violating the rights of employees all across this Nation.

Since 1994, Overnight has mounted an illegal national campaign to prevent employees from exercising their right to come together for better wages and working conditions. Overnight's actions have resulted in literally hundreds of employee complaints. These complaints include all of the gross violations of worker protections law: firing employee leaders; threatening to close facilities if employees unionize; withholding pay increases for employees that vote to organize, while granting pay increases to others; and promising better benefits if employees do not exercise their right to unionize.

The people who were subject to this treatment are just like you and me—they have families, they are struggling to make ends meet, and they are trying to play by the rules. Yet, Overnight, with the support it seems of Republicans, is denying those people their rights.

Obviously, Overnight believed it was above the law. Under the laws of this Nation, it is illegal for an employer "to dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization \* \* \*"

After NLRB authorized the request of an injunction against the flagrant violations of Overnight, Republicans sprang into action to prevent the injunction from actually being sought and to influence the settlement. But Republicans are not stopping there. They hope to exact punishment and revenge on a judicial body that decided cases against Republican special interest.

Even some Members on the other side of the aisle were shocked by the catering to special interest. Republican Representative JOHN PORTER was quoted as saying "To my way of thinking, you don't cut judicial bodies because they make decisions you don't like."

I could not agree with my colleague more. To my way of thinking, Mr. Speaker, we were not elected to disregard the interest of the people in favor of special interest. This bill is extreme and will hurt working families only to help special interests. This bill should be resoundingly rejected.

#### OSHA REFORM NEEDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. NORWOOD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, by now it is no secret that I want to change the way OSHA does business. I have come to the floor many times to talk about the excesses of OSHA. But our OSHA reform bill is not simply about

curbing the regulatory excesses of OSHA; our bill seeks to restore the freedoms OSHA has taken away.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to quote from the sixth amendment to the Constitution. "the accused shall enjoy the right \* \* \* to be confronted with the witnesses against him." Mr. Speaker, under current OSHA policy that right does not exist. If OSHA shows up on your doorstep today to investigate an alleged violation, you as an employer have no right to know who reported a violation. That policy encourages OSHA to be used as a tool of disgruntled employees and labor negotiators. Our bill will require that employees work with employers to correct safety problems. I have heard critics complain that employees will be afraid to question workplace safety for fear that an employer may take action against them. Maybe these people have forgotten about bureaucracies like the National Labor Relations Board or the labor lawyers salivating over a case like that. Anyone who believes that an employee does not have recourse against an employer probably thinks Medicare isn't going bankrupt.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of testifying before the Small Business Committee last week on OSHA reform. It reminded me why OSHA reform is so important. OSHA regulations strangle small businesses. OSHA threatens the livelihood of small business men and women all over America. It is just that simple.

When OSHA sends out a 6-inch thick document on Air Quality, a small business owner doesn't say to himself "Wow! Here's a way for me to make my workplace safer for my employees." Instead, he says "How am I ever going to figure out what is in here? Will I have to hire someone just to figure it out? Is it going to force me to lay-off a worker or raise my prices?" Mr. Speaker, I ask you, is it any wonder that small businesses are terrified of OSHA?

In my opinion, here lies OSHA's basic flaw \* \* \* OSHA acts as though the only people who care about workplace safety live here in Washington, DC. Nothing could be further from the truth. Small business men and women throughout America are deeply concerned about workplace safety. Their employees are often family. Employers want safe workplaces. They need help from OSHA. A 6-inch stack of regulations and the threat of a costly fine do little to improve workplace safety. A new improved OSHA will work with employees to teach them how to make the workplaces safer. We must have a carrot to go with the stick OSHA has grown so addicted to. OSHA should spend as much of the taxpayers money trying to educate employers as they do trying to collect fines.

Mr. Speaker, I am not convinced that OSHA can ever be reformed. However, if it is ever to be reformed, the steps taken in H.R. 1834, the OSHA Reform Act, will make a real difference. I strongly encourage my colleagues to