Americans keep their jobs in this global battle for market share. Yet some in Congress would ignore this reality and abolish some or all of these programs. They think these programs are unnecessary or corporate welfare. But just as unilateral disarmament did not work against the Soviet Union during the cold war, efforts to cut or eliminate U.S. government export promotion programs will not stop foreign government subsidies of exports.

Who do you think would win if the U.S. withdraws support for the Export-Import Bank or OPIC? Only our vigorous competitors in Europe, Japan, and Canada would be the winners.

Japan supports more than 32 percent of its exports with some form of export credit. France finances 18.6 percent. Yet the U.S. supports only 2 percent of its own exports, and some in Congress would do away even with this.

No one particularly likes Government support for exports. I wish I could waive a magic wand and everyone, completely based solely on quality and price, would be able to compete. But, unfortunately, that is not reality in the global arena.

Let me give you one specific example that impacted the district I am privileged to represent. Beloit Corp., with operations in Beloit, WI and Rockton, IL is a manufacturer of paper-making machines. There are only two other companies in the world that make similar equipment, one located in Finland, the other in Germany. Beloit wished to sell two machines to Asia Pulp and Pacific worth $330 million. This sale represents 40 percent of total sales for Beloit, translating into 2 years of steady work for 2,000 high wage, highly skilled union employees.

Obviously a sale of this magnitude takes several months and lots of hard work to compete. At every step of the way, Beloit's competitors from Finland and Germany were waiting outside the door of Asia Pulp and Pacific to take advantage of any opportunity. These foreign companies had already lined up support of their home government's export credit finance agency for their machines. Recently Ex-Im Bank came through with a $270 million loan that provided the winning edge for Beloit to finalize the contract.

If Ex-Im was not there, Finland or Germany certainly would have filled the gap, and hundreds of forgotten Americans in Beloit, WI, and Rockton, IL would have been out of work. Ex-Im's actions were vital in solidifying America's position and in the global marketplace in the paper-making industry.

It is because of examples like Beloit Corp. that inspire me to fight for these export promotion programs. They are vital strategic weapons, not frivolous. In 1995, Ex-Im helped generate $13.5 billion in exports for the U.S. economy, which directly supported about 200,000 high-wage U.S. jobs. Last year OPIC backed projects generated nearly $10 billion in U.S. exports. The Trade Development Agency has helped generate $9 billion in exports since its creation in 1981.

These are not faceless statistics; they are backed by hundreds of examples all across America, like Beloit, where a little help from these U.S. agencies and the Commerce Department proved to be the winning edge in securing a foreign contract.

Until all countries do away with all government export subsidies in a multilateral framework, these programs deserve our full support.

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

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MARCH 1997 NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH PROCLAMATION

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, since 1983, Congress has joined with the Eye Bank Association of America in proclaiming March as National Eye Donor Month. March is a time to encourage all Americans to register their eyes for donation. Throughout the country, the miracle of transplant surgery is drastically improving people's lives.

Today I rise to request that my colleagues take a few minutes to focus on eye donations. Some of you may not realize that a person's vision can be restored through corneal transplantation. Every year, thousands of corneal transplants are performed across the country, restoring precious sight to both the young and old. In 1995, over 44,000 corneas were made available by our Nation's eye banks for transplantation procedures.

While figures for 1996 are still being tallied, even greater totals are expected.

In fact, just outside my district, the Lions Club of Tampa, FL, operates one of the largest eye banks in the world. The Central Florida Eye and Tissue Bank restores sight to over 2,000 people every year. Nevertheless, the need for corneal transplants continues.

The benefits of sight-restoring transplant surgeries extend well beyond the people who receive the transplants. The benefits also extend to the transplant recipients' families, friends and communities.

In recent years, the public education campaigns launched by Congress, educators, and the media have had a positive impact on the success of eye donation programs.

Since 1961, when the Eye Bank Association of America was founded, member eye banks have made over a half million corneal transplants possible. The success rate of these transplants, Mr. Speaker, exceeds 95 percent.

Let me stress an important point. Anyone can be an eye donor. It does not matter if people have cataracts, poor eyesight, or other eye ailments. They can still contribute to improving the life of fellow human being, regardless of age or health status.

Another area that is somewhat confusing is how one becomes an organ donor. Many States have potential organ donors declare their intentions on their driving licenses. However, in order to guarantee that an organ donation will occur, a person must share, and I repeat, must share these intentions with his or her next of kin and other family members.

In some cases, the deceased person's next of kin may object to their loved one becoming an organ donor because the matter was never discussed. If an individual's next of kin objects to their loved one becoming an organ donor, those wishes are usually respected. It is extremely important that potential organ donors make their intentions clear with family members before it is too late.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a tremendous opportunity to educate our fellow Americans about eye donations. We must take this occasion to encourage all Americans to give the gift of sight.

What better legacy to leave than to have our eyes become someone else's miracle?

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CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member comes to the floor to raise concerns about the Conservation Reserve Program signup which began on March 3.

Over the past decade, the Conservation Reserve Program, the CRP, has proven to be enormously successful. It is a national investment which provides dividends to farmers, environmentalists, sportsmen, conservationists, the general public, and wildlife. The CRP is a voluntary program established by Congress in 1985 that provides incentives for farmers to convert land poorly suited for row crops into grasslands and tree cover. Grasslands and trees in turn prevent topsoil erosion, improve water quality, and provide critical wildlife habitat.

The CRP has now reached a critical point as previous contracts expire and new land is enrolled in the program. This September, the contracts on more than 60 percent of existing CRP acres will expire. That is 60 percent. Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued its long-delayed rules to govern the enrollment of new land into the program. The new rules make two-thirds of all existing U.S. farmland eligible for the program. It is possible