

states. Let us leave local environmental issues to the locals.

Sustainability is a goal best realized with local initiative. This Nation needs more flexible, market-oriented regulations that allow businesses more options for controlling pollution but that retain limitations on overall discharges. Concern and cooperation has bred environmental self-reliant activism.

Communities have just now been able to achieve the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and air quality is improving. According to the EPA, air pollutants have greatly decreased since the first Earth Day. Let's let communities continue to improve, rather than impose strict and costly new air quality standards before we know that they are based in sound science. We should be proud that we are reaping the benefits of our current standards.

The working people of this country appreciate and have a healthy respect for nature. People who live on the land are closer to nature. Coming from New Mexico, I see the interdependence and cooperation of agricultural, timber, native American, urban and environmental interests. Congress has funded such programs as my initiative to preserve one of the largest areas of riparian cottonwood in the world, the Rio Grande Bosque. In the middle of a growing city like Albuquerque, citizens can walk among the native trees and animals. At the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, rare migratory birds coexist with agricultural development. We all strive to maintain a delicate balance in our society and on our planet.

We all have to live on this planet, at least for now. Some might say progress is a curse. I say we are blessed in this Nation to be leaders in environmental protection and to also enjoy modern conveniences. Continuing progress is a blessing to all our families; we must just proceed to take care of our planet as we learn to live better in it.

This Congress will continue to work to improve environmental quality, and we will build on the experiences and successes of the past. We must promise to better our lives, our Nation, and our world. Earth Day should be every day.●

#### CINCINNATI TEACHER AT THE TOP

●Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, I rise with a great deal of pleasure and pride to inform my colleagues that the 1997 National Teacher of the Year is Sharon Draper, an English and language arts teacher at Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati, OH.

Ms. Draper won the 1997 Ohio Teacher of the Year Award and was selected from four finalists to the receive the Nation's top teacher award. President Clinton presented this award at a White House ceremony.

In addition to her talents as a teacher, Ms. Draper is an accomplished award-winning author. Her novel "Tears of a Tiger" won the 1995

Corretta Scott King Genesis Award. Her second novel, "Forged By Fire," has been recently published.

Ms. Draper's dedication and outstanding commitment to education as well as her efforts to improve education are the envy of every school system and Ohio is justifiably proud of her accomplishment.

At a time when our education is under a great deal of scrutiny and in need of much improvement, it is important to remember that there are many examples of educational excellence. Certainly one outstanding example is Sharon Draper.

I had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Draper and it was an honor. I was at the White House to participate in the ceremony where she received the Teacher of the Year Award.

Ms. Draper's 25-year teaching career has been filled with creativity and enthusiasm. I understand that she requires a research paper in her senior level classes. When her students turn in their paper the day before the prom she gives them a T-shirt that proclaims "I survived the Draper paper." She says that she was probably born to be a teacher.

I am pleased that the Council of Chief State School Officers and Scholastic, Inc., have selected Ms. Draper as Teacher of the Year. I know that her students, school, the city of Cincinnati, and our State are very proud. I congratulate Sharon, her husband Larry, and children Cory and Crystal for the contribution they have made to public education.●

#### TRIBUTE TO CHUCK CONNER

●Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, for 17 years Chuck Conner has been my top agriculture and nutrition advisor, and for the last 10 years has been Republican staff director of the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. Chuck is departing the Senate to become president of the Corn Refiners Association.

Chuck has ushered four farm bills through the Senate, including last year's historic FAIR Act that ended 60 years of Federal production controls. Chuck's work can be seen in moving American agriculture to the free market, thoughtfully downsizing the Department of Agriculture, reforming hundreds of USDA field offices, making food safer through pesticide regulations, saving and then reforming the farm credit system, updating commodity futures legislation, and landmark reform of the nutrition sections in last year's welfare reform bill.

Chuck was with me on my Indiana farm June 28, 1985, when then Secretary of Agriculture Jack Block and I announced the first Conservation Reserve Program. Today that program is still a vital cornerstone of soil and water conservation in America, and the extension of the program last year was part of the most significant environmental legislation in the 104th Con-

gress. Chuck has been involved every step of the way.

He has combined a strong academic background, with an agricultural economics degree from the Purdue University School of Agriculture, and practical knowledge of how programs are implemented. His family continues to operate an 1100-acre corn and soybean farm in Benton County, IN. Chuck and his wife Dru maintain a herd of 100 registered Angus cows in Whitley County, IN.

Chuck and Dru met in the early 1980's while working in my office. My wife, Char, and I have enjoyed watching the growth of their four children: Katie, Ben, Andrew, and Emily.

I will miss Chuck's counsel, which Agriculture Committee members have trusted and respected. He now takes his leadership skills to agribusiness. On the committee he has hired, trained, and developed a talented staff that will be led by his longtime deputy Randy Green, maintaining continuity in service.

I speak for majority and minority members of the Agriculture Committee in wishing Chuck Conner, an extraordinarily talented and loyal friend, the very best.●

#### CONGRESS HAS 100 DAYS TO RESTORE IMMIGRANT BENEFITS

●Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Congress has 100 days to restore urgently needed assistance to legal immigrants and refugees.

On August 1, 100 days from today, legal immigrants who have worked hard, but were injured on the job, will lose their Federal benefits under last year's so-called welfare reform law.

Refugees will lose their safety net. These are men and women who fled persecution in their own countries, only to find persecution now in America.

They are people who fought with us in Southeast Asia, and this is the thanks they get from hawks who kept the war going long after it should have stopped.

The Vietnam war and the cold war are finally over. But in the rush to forget, we cannot forget these brave families and their sacrifices, and treat them unfairly, because they are old or disabled.

In recent weeks, some needy immigrants have taken their own lives, rather than burden their families.

We must say enough is enough—100 days is long enough for Congress to undo the thoughtless damage an unthinking Congress did last year. I ask that a few recent news articles on this issue may be printed in the RECORD.

The articles follow:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 22, 1997]  
CONFUSED BY LAW, NURSING HOMES BAR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS—FEAR OVER LOST BENEFITS

(By Rachel L. Swarns)

As the health care industry braces for Federal cuts that will leave thousands of immigrants without Medicaid this fall, nursing