

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. FRANK RIGGS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from the House of Representatives on Monday, July 20, 1998, pursuant to a leave of absence. During my absence, I missed a number of votes.

Had I been present, the following is how I would have voted:

Rollcall No. 297 (H.R. 3874): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 298 (H. Con. Res. 208): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 299 (H. Res. 392): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 300 (H. Con Res. 301): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 301 (Wicker amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 302 (Stearns amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 303 (Pickering amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 304 (Delay amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 305 (McInnis amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 306 (Paxon amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 307 (Hefley amendment): "Aye."

Rollcall No. 308 (Northrup amendment): "Aye."

CHILD NUTRITION AND WIC REAUTHORIZATION AMENDMENTS OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 1998

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3874, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Bill, which makes changes to the federal child nutrition programs and the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Feeding Program, known as WIC.

The WIC program is a key part of our efforts to reduce infant mortality rates and assure that children in this nation are born healthy and are fed a nutritionally sound diet in the early formative years. This is accomplished through the provision of special food packages to approximately 7.5 million low-income women, infants and children each month. In my home state of Hawaii the WIC program serves over 35,000 individuals.

H.R. 3874 makes some important changes to the WIC program by providing more flexibility to States in administering the program and including provisions designed to protect the integrity of the WIC program.

H.R. 3874 continues to encourage the breast-feeding program under WIC and provides additional incentives by allowing WIC agencies to use their nutrition account, rather than administrative account, to purchase breast pumps for breast-feeding women.

I am pleased that it also includes my amendment which is designed to assure that working parents on WIC and their children are able to continue services. The bill includes a new requirement that children participating in

WIC be physically present during recertification. WIC participants are required to be recertified every six months.

My amendment included in the bill provides authority to local agencies to waive the physical presence requirement for children of working parents, if the children were present at the initial certification, and if their presence at recertification would be a barrier to participation.

Requiring working mothers to bring in all of their children could pose a severe hardship on the mother and children. It would mean extra transportation time for working mothers, for example a mother with 2 or more children may have to pick up her children at different locations, one at day care the other at school. This may require mothers to take an entire day off of work as opposed to half a day or a couple of hours if they can go by themselves.

The amendment does not exempt all children with working parents from the requirement, but those that have such difficult circumstances that the requirement may actually serve as a barrier to participation in the program, such as a working mother with transportation problems.

Currently about 28% of WIC eligible mothers work during the first two months following the birth of their children, increasing to roughly 30% when the child turned one (Mathematica Research).

The flexibility provided in my amendment will become increasingly important as more and more mothers on welfare (TANF) will be required to work under the 1996 Welfare Law. With 30% of WIC eligible women also receiving welfare the number of working mothers on WIC is likely to increase as a result of the 1996 law. We must assure that these working mothers have every opportunity to continue their jobs and retain WIC eligibility.

I also am pleased that the Committee concurs with my support of the Department of Agriculture's efforts to provide guidelines to local WIC agencies regarding cultural and ethnic foods. This support was expressed in the Committee Report. Participation in WIC can be greatly enhanced by the use of appropriate cultural foods. I know in Hawaii we have many nutritious foods that are a part of our local diet which are not included in the WIC food package such as tofu and poi. These guidelines will make it easier for our State WIC agency to incorporate such foods into the WIC package.

The Committee also included language in its report which I suggested on the coordination of WIC blood work requirements with the other periodicity schedules such as those by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control. Conforming with these schedules will help to improve enrollment, recertification and testing efficiencies in the WIC program.

On the child nutrition programs also included in this bill, I strongly support the expansion of the after-school nutrition programs through the Child and Adult Care Food program and raising the age limit for children eligible for the after-school snacks and meals from 12 to 18.

Provisions in this bill will also help streamline the administrative process for schools who serve after-school meals under the Child and Adult Care Food program. This will make it easier for schools to apply for the after-school funds.

The bill makes an important change in the Summer Food Program that will raise reim-

bursement rates for Hawaii, Alaska and the Territories. All other child nutrition programs allow the Department of Agriculture to increase the reimbursement rate for these States and Territories to account for the higher cost of food. However, the Summer Food program had no such authority. I am pleased that this bill will allow the increase in reimbursement rates to more accurately reflect the cost of food in my State.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3974 includes a provision that is very critical to my home State of Hawaii and the farmers who are struggling under our current economy. H.R. 3974 includes an amendment I offered at subcommittee which makes changes to the "Buy American" provision to assure that Hawaii would be required to buy American products if they are made in Hawaii.

Under current law, Hawaii has been exempt from the requirement that only U.S. products be used in the school lunch and breakfast program, except that Hawaii schools are required to purchase U.S. (Hawaii) grown pineapples. The amendment I included in H.R. 3874 revises this provision to require Hawaii to buy American where food products are produced in Hawaii in quantities sufficient to serve the Hawaii school lunch and breakfast program.

This provision will assure that the Hawaii school lunch program purchases such food products as bananas, pineapples and papayas that are grown here in Hawaii, but still has the flexibility to purchase other foods made outside of the U.S. if necessary. Federal programs should support our local economy. What better way to help Hawaii agriculture than to assure that our school lunch and breakfast programs purchase local grown food. The children will be getting better quality foods that are produced in their own state.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3874 will ensure that our important child nutrition programs continue, that they are more efficient, and that more children and families are served by these important programs. I urge the passage of this bill.

TRIBUTE TO JIRAIR S. HOVNANIAN

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my constituent, Jirair S. (Jerry) Hovnanian, President of J. S. Hovnanian & Sons, Inc. as he celebrates 50 years in this great nation.

Arriving in the United States in 1948 to attend the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration, he was then, and continues to be, a creative and inspirational individual who is widely respected, personally and professionally.

As Past President of the Home Builders League of South Jersey and a Life Director of the National Association of Home Builders, he was instrumental in the Uniform Building Code and the Municipal Land Use Law being enacted.

Jerry pioneered the concept of using state pension funds for home mortgages to maintain a healthy economy in our home state.