

have serious concerns about several of its provisions, particularly the inclusion of a tobacco bailout. This bill ended a decades old government quota and price support system for tobacco—and that alone is a very good thing. The federal government should not purposefully manipulate markets to try to fix prices. However, I find it highly objectionable that the American taxpayer is asked to foot the bill for buying out tobacco quota owners and tobacco growers. As a former board member of the American Cancer Society in Dallas, I am well aware of the harmful and often fatal affects of tobacco use. While the government has absolutely no business setting up quotas for any product and affecting the market price, I find it abhorrent that Congress would force taxpayers to cough up billions in order to subsidize tobacco. This quota system can and should be ended without the use of taxpayer money.

Unfortunately, rather than decreasing corporate tax rates across the board, this bill also included numerous corporate pork provisions through special tax shelters. Special breaks and exclusions for certain industries, companies and products should not be a policy of the U.S. Congress. This bill includes special treatment for the cruise ship industry, former car dealers, makers of bows and arrows, and others industries. I have nothing against any of these industries, but Congress should not be promoting one product, company or industry over another. All American companies, taxpayers and consumers deserve lower taxes, not a chosen few.

TRIBUTE TO TRI-COUNTY CO-OP  
WORKERS

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a group of South Carolina workers who are dedicated to serving all of their customers, even in times of crisis. The 67 employees of Tri-County Electric Cooperative serve 17,000 customers in six counties in rural South Carolina, most of which are in the Sixth Congressional District which I am proud to serve in this body. These committed workers were the true heroes of a crushing ice storm that devastated a number of rural areas in January of this year.

The worst ice storm to hit South Carolina in three decades swept through the Midlands area January 26–30, causing enough destruction for the President to declare 17 counties a major disaster area. At the heart of this devastation were an estimated 15,000 Tri-County Co-op customers, who lost power in the midst of freezing temperatures and impassible roads. Within a few days the co-op, under the leadership of Robert G. Wannamaker, had mobilized a massive team effort to repair 250 broken poles and 200 cross arms restoring power to all but ten houses in their service area. They diligently worked in those remote areas to have full service restored to all their customers within a week.

This achievement of the Tri-County Co-op employees is indicative of their willingness to go beyond the call of duty to provide and maintain a better quality of life for rural communities in South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and my colleagues to join me in thanking the brave and dedicated employees of Tri-County Co-op who jeopardized their own safety to insure their customers made it safely through the terrors of this year's winter storm. Their perseverance and dedication are greatly appreciated.

BOUNTIFUL BIRTHDAY BOX AT  
BEVERLY FARMS ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday June 18, 2004

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to recognize my constituents at Beverly Farms Elementary School in Potomac, Maryland.

For two years, teachers and students at Beverly Farms have been participating in the Birthday Box Program which allows children to donate duplicate toys and gifts to homeless shelters and other community schools and organizations in Montgomery County. I am proud to note that another school in my congressional district, DuFief Elementary School in Gaithersburg, initiated the concept of the Birthday Box.

Students, parents, and teachers at Beverly Farms also participate in numerous service projects which include walks for the homeless and volunteering at the Stepping Stones Shelter.

Mr. Speaker, Beverly Farms Elementary School is putting smiles on children's faces and lifting spirits throughout our community. It is my honor to submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article published in *The Gazette* by Amy Reardon on the inspirational work done by the students at Beverly Farms and the great goodwill they are achieving.

GIFT BOX ENSURES THAT MORE CHILDREN  
HAVE A HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
(By Amy Reardon)

Ten-year-old Christine Antonsen has so many toys she hasn't had the chance to play with all of them.

Last year when her mother asked her to clean her room, Antonsen found birthday and holiday gifts, still wrapped in plastic, crammed in her closet and under her bed. She had never opened the stained glass art kit, flower printing kit or sand art kit stashed beneath her clothes and toys, so she decided to donate them to Beverly Farms Elementary School's Bountiful Birthday Box.

Antonsen is one of more than 50 students who have contributed to the birthday box program, which has students deliver duplicate gifts for donation to county shelters, community organizations and Beverly Farms' sister school Maryvale Elementary School in Rockville.

Antonsen's mother, Tracy Toppings, the PTA's community service committee chair, was inspired to start the program by the number of toys her daughter had but did not use. It is a concept the school borrowed from DuFief Elementary School in Gaithersburg.

For the past two years, students at Beverly Farms have chosen to donate duplicate birthday, holiday and bar/bat mitzvah gifts to the school's Bountiful Birthday Box instead of returning the items for more loot.

"If you get a present that you already have on your birthday, Christmas, Hanukkah or any of those holidays, you can return it,"

said 7-year-old Nicholas Muscarella. "But if you put it in the birthday box, it goes to families that don't have enough money to buy presents."

Each month students are reminded to bring in duplicate gifts instead of returning them. Big presents, such as board games and dolls, go to Stepping Stones Shelter in Rockville and the National Center for Children and Families in Bethesda. Small donations, such as decks of cards, go to Beverly Farms' sister-school Maryvale for its school store.

"If kids don't get any birthday presents they won't feel very happy, so we're donating to them," said 7-year-old Rachel Rabinovitz.

The birthday box allows Stepping Stones Shelter—a 90-day homeless shelter for families in need—to throw birthday parties for children living there, said Tina McKendree, executive director.

"The children in the shelter often don't get new things," McKendree said. "If they can open something that is brand new, it makes it that much more special."

"They also know there are other children out there, who care about them. It helps keep their spirits up during a difficult time."

Toppings said the box is only a small part of the school's community service program. Beverly Farms PTA formed its community service committee three years ago after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and directs most of its service projects to Stepping Stones Shelter and Maryvale Elementary.

The committee's biggest annual event is the Fannie Mae Foundation's Help the Homeless walk, which raises money for Stepping Stones Shelter.

Tying itself to two organizations has made the program easy to maintain and allows the group to address needs as they arise, according to Toppings.

The partnership with Stepping Stones Shelter began when the school first hosted a homeless walk in 2000.

Over the years, the school's service to the shelter has spawned independent volunteerism from the Beverly Farms community. Students have donated their allowances while families and scouting troops have gone to the shelter to volunteer: cooking dinner, reading to children or throwing holiday parties, McKendree said.

"Through the partnership the kids learn more about the homeless and how they can get involved," McKendree said.

The sister-school concept, which links schools through resources and activities, is not unique to Maryvale and Beverly Farms. Compared to the 3 percent of students who receive free and reduced-price meals at Beverly Farms, 40 percent of students at Maryvale participate in the program.

"The idea behind the program is to be aware of differences in the community both ethnically and economically," Toppings said.

Laura Marantz, school guidance counselor at Beverly Farms who collects donations to the birthday box, said the emphasis on community service and donations teaches the children empathy and generosity at a young age.

"[The birthday box program] helps them have perspective and realize how fortunate they are," Marantz said.

SHAN THÉVER

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 2004

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, a person greatly deserving of recognition from my community is Shane K.