

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTHY WORKFORCE ACT OF 2009, WHICH WOULD AMEND THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986 TO PROVIDE A TAX CREDIT TO EMPLOYERS FOR THE COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING WELLNESS PROGRAMS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to introduce the Healthy Workforce Act of 2009. In order to alleviate our public health crisis, we must make it easier for Americans to make small, easy choices that improve their overall health. With many Americans spending more than half of their day at work, it makes sense to encourage our places of employment to offer the information, opportunities and support they need to make healthy choices.

The Healthy Workforce Act provides companies with an up to fifty percent tax credit for implementing employee wellness programs. These programs can include, but are not limited to, health education or health risk assessments, behavioral change programs that encourage healthy lifestyles, such as classes on nutrition or smoking cessation, and to support environment changes to encourage employee participation. Programs like this have a myriad of positive benefits for personal health, employee productivity, workplace environment and the economy.

There can be no doubt that America is facing a public health crisis: 63 percent of Americans are overweight and 31 percent are obese. Even more alarming, according to the Surgeon General, obesity is responsible for 300,000 deaths per year. This crisis not only impacts the daily lives of many Americans, but the bottom line for American companies. Average employer medical costs increased 72 percent between 2000 and 2006, with some companies spending more than fifty percent of their profits on employee health care expenses. Employers are increasingly bearing the costs of diet-related chronic disease and obesity through employer-provided health care plans and indirectly through higher rates of absenteeism, decreased productivity and higher health care costs. Obesity related health conditions cost employers approximately \$33 billion in health care and other indirect costs.

The Healthy Workforce Act of 2009 will make it easier for companies to encourage their employees to make healthy decisions and in turn, decrease health care costs for employers, employees, and taxpayers.

BIG GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, yesterday, The Post and Courier, of Charleston, S.C., reviewed the intervention of government in the management of General Motors. I share the editorial opinion that dismissal of business executives is not a proper function of government personnel.

EDITORIAL

President Obama fired General Motors Chief Executive Officer Rick Wagoner over the weekend, ostensibly due to his failure to come up with a "plan" acceptable to the administration. If he hadn't cleaned out his desk and surrendered his key to the executive washroom, he was told there would be no more taxpayer dollars to keep GM afloat.

CEOs of other corporations taking federal bailout money surely have taken note. The stock market certainly did when the news hit.

If you are not worried by the Obama administration's audacious grab for the commanding heights of the U.S. economy—the banks, the insurance industry, the giant too-big-to-fail manufacturers—you should be. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner even suggests that government takeover of private corporations that have not accepted federal loans would be warranted, if considered necessary to rescue the overall economy.

The question boils down to this: Would it have been better to let well-established bankruptcy law apply to GM (and other failing corporate giants) rather than suffer Washington's continued exertions on its behalf.

Or, to put it another way, would you like your next car designed in Washington rather than in Detroit?

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Mr. WALDEN. Madam Speaker, consistent with the House Republican Leadership's policy on earmarks, to the best of my knowledge the requests I have detailed below (1) are not directed to an entity or program that will be named after a sitting Member of Congress; and (2) are not intended to be used by an entity to secure funds for other entities unless the use of funding is consistent with the specified purpose of the earmark. As required by earmark standards adopted by the House Republican Conference, I submit the following information on projects I requested and were included in H.R. 1105, The Omnibus Appropriations Act, FY 2009.

Account: USDA—Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service

Project Title: Grass Seed Cropping Systems for Sustainable Agriculture (OR, ID, WA)

Legal Name and Address of Requesting Entity:

Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences, 138 Strand Hall, Corvallis, OR 97731

Project Location: Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

Description of Project: H.R. 1105 appropriates \$313,000 for the Grass Seed Cropping Systems for Sustainable Agriculture project in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Oregon State University has confirmed in their justification that the appropriated funds for this project will be used cooperatively between research and extension faculty from the three states, scientists from the USDA's National Forage Seed Production Research Center, and USDA's Agriculture Research Service to maintain a sustainable grass seed cropping industry in the Pacific Northwest at a time when the grass seed industry faces some critical environ-

mental and economic challenges including public pressure to phase out open-field burning.

Account: USDA—Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service

Project Title: Northwest Multi-commodity Marketing Special Research Grant

Legal Name and Address of Requesting Entity:

Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences, 138 Strand Hall, Corvallis, OR 97731

Project Location: Oregon

Description of Project: H.R. 1105 appropriates \$244,000 for a special research grant program that enhances competitiveness and expands the economic value-added component in Oregon agricultural products through research and outreach in food processing, product development, business strategy, marketing, and consumer testing. Oregon State University has confirmed in their justification that the appropriated funds for this project will be used to conduct research to support food processing and food product development, investigate consumer perceptions of product quality and value, and evaluate marketing and food industry strategies.

Account: USDA—Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service

Project Title: Organic Cropping Research for the Northwest

Legal Name and Address of Requesting Entity:

Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences, 138 Strand Hall, Corvallis, OR 97731

Project Location: Oregon and Washington

Description of Project: H.R. 1105 appropriates \$140,000 to Organic Cropping Research for the Northwest. Oregon State University has confirmed in their justification that the appropriated funds for this project will be help expand the research, education, and extension activities at Oregon State University with a primary focus on the development and implementation of sustainable organic farming systems for higher rainfall locations in the Cascadia bioregion in the states of Oregon and Washington. Oregon's organic agriculture industry will benefit from research directed at problems facing organic commodities and, ultimately, enhance competitiveness of Oregon's organic agriculture products. In Oregon, 357 certified organic farms generate more than \$52.1 million in organic products from approximately 59,200 certified acres. Oregon's strong agricultural infrastructure and unique climate make Oregon's agriculture uniquely positioned to grow dramatically in its market share of organic dairy and meat, tree fruits, specialty seed, berry crops, and processed and fresh market vegetables.

Account: USDA—Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service

Project Title: Potato Research (OR, ID, WA, and other states)

Legal Name and Address of Requesting Entity:

Oregon State University, College of Agricultural Sciences, 138 Strand Hall, Corvallis, OR 97731

Project Location: Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and other states

Description of Project: H.R. 1105 appropriates \$1,037,000 for a research program which is operated jointly by an entity known as Tri-State, which includes: USDA-ARS, Washington State University, Oregon State University, and the University of Idaho. Oregon State