

terror, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and our coalition efforts in Iraq.

Why did the administration do this? Poland cooperates closely with American diplomacy on such issues as democratization, nuclear proliferation, human rights, regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, and U.N. reform. Now is definitely the moment for this Congress and the administration to restore a level of credible relationship with Poland in order to continue an abiding friendship that should not be smeared by this really tactless decision to announce this consequential defense decision on September 17, a date which harkens back to some of the worst memories that Poland has as part of her history.

I besiege this Congress and the administration to correct a great mistake.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MORE VETERINARIANS ARE NEEDED IN RURAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue not at the forefront of debate here in Washington but which will impact many areas of our country and many aspects of our lives. I am referring to the need for skilled veterinarians in many communities across America. This may not be a topic which makes its way to the House floor very often, but I assure you, it is an issue for many areas of our country.

Our food animal veterinary workforce is on the front lines of food safety, public health and animal health. This vital profession, however, is facing a critical shortage in the public, private, industrial and academic sectors. To make matters worse, the problem is on the rise. Large animal veterinarians, in particular, are integral to small rural communities. But in many of these communities, communities with few people but large numbers of animals, we are seeing a very distressing trend.

Let me show you. This map is a geographic display of total food animals by county in the United States. The dark gold areas have particularly high concentrations of animals per county, more than 250,000. As you can see, States such as Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas and California all have extremely high concentrations of counties with 250,000 or more food animals.

Now let's take a look at a map showing total food animal veterinarians by

county. The areas of dark green indicate counties with 35 or more food animal veterinarians by county, certainly quite a difference.

Finally, let's take a look at a map showing food animal concentration per veterinarian. I want to draw your attention to the red flags that dot the map. We all know that red flags mean danger or a hazard ahead. The red flags on this map indicate counties without one single food animal veterinarian but which have more than 25,000 food animals, several counties across the country.

According to the most recent data from the USDA, Cherry County, one county in my district, has 145,000 food animals per veterinarian. Fillmore County, also in Nebraska, has 112,000 food animals but not one food animal veterinarian. It's absolutely necessary for the farmers, ranchers, hobbyists—not lobbyists but hobbyists—and even animal lovers to have access to qualified local veterinary clinics.

To this end, Mr. Speaker, I have introduced H.R. 3519, the Veterinarian Services Investment Act. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to award competitive grants to help develop, implement and sustain veterinary services, especially in underserved areas. These grants may be used to support a wide array of activities based on the needs of an area, such as veterinarian and veterinary technician recruitment; expanding and establishing practices in high-need areas; surveillance of food animal disease and the utilization of veterinary services; establishing mobile/portable clinics and tele-vet services; and accredited veterinary education programs, including continuing education, distance education and faculty recruitment.

Under my bill, eligible applicants must carry out programs or activities which will substantially relieve the veterinary shortages throughout our country, as indicated on a geographical basis. These include entities such as veterinary clinics located in underserved or rural areas; veterinary practices which meet food animal protection needs; State, national, allied or regional veterinary organizations and specialty boards; colleges or schools of veterinary medicine; and State, local or tribal veterinary agencies.

I am proud to say that more than 30 of my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, have joined me as cosponsors of H.R. 3519. It has been endorsed by, among others, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, Nebraska and Minnesota as well, the Farm Bureau, the Animal Health Institute, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

Veterinarians make a difference every day. They understand animals and are integral parts of our rural communities. Unfortunately, too many rural communities don't have this nec-

essary support. The Veterinary Services Investment Act will go a long way in this direction.

SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS NEED A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT NEXT YEAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the House passed a bill that will give relief to about a quarter of the Nation's seniors on Social Security by not having them experience a Medicare premium increase this year. That's all well and good and meritorious. Times are tough. But it doesn't go to the other three-quarters of the Nation's Social Security recipients, and it doesn't get to the bottom line that there is, for the first time since we had a regularly adjusted Social Security COLA—it used to be into the fifties and early sixties before we put in place a regular COLA, a cost of living adjustment for seniors on Social Security. They would get one in election years, strangely enough. The Congress would wake up, notice that seniors were out there and give them some sort of an increase.

We fixed that problem many years ago by saying, Well, Social Security benefits would be automatically adjusted. But the measure that is used is incredibly flawed, and it was not only flawed to begin with. The cost of living index is calculated on a lot of things that seniors don't buy, things that have gotten cheaper in this bad economy, actually, like giant flat screen televisions, computers and cell phones and other things that are not consumed to any great extent by our Nation's seniors.

But if anybody has checked the price of pharmaceuticals or medical care or basic utilities or many other must-have expenses, they haven't gone down. In fact, they've gone up. But seniors, some of whom are living only on a Social Security check, many who are principally dependent upon a Social Security check, are not going to get a cost of living adjustment this year because the formula that is used is faulty. It's not only faulty; it was actually tampered with by the Republicans and Alan Greenspan, that great guru, the guy who helped almost destroy the world's economy recently through his deregulationist philosophy which became so embedded that Wall Street ran wild.

Alan Greenspan has always hated Social Security since he was on a commission many years ago and tried to find ways to go after it. A number of years ago he convinced a Republican Congress that the cost of living index actually overestimated inflation and that you should take away one point before you give a COLA to seniors on Social Security. The Republican Congress did that.