

collection is essential if we are going to improve our citizens' trust and confidence in election results. EAC develops and fosters the training and organization of our nation's more than 8,000 election administrators.

Terminating EAC is not only an invitation to repeat the embarrassment of the 2000 presidential election, but it breaks faith with those who labored long and risked much to secure the right to vote for all Americans, particularly African Americans and other minority groups.

Mr. Speaker, if you believe every vote counts—and every vote should be counted—then we must preserve the EAC and oppose this legislation.

It is also important to note that abolishing the EAC would simply shift costs to the Federal Election Commission and local governments, not save taxpayer money. The FEC is not an agency that can make decisions in a timely and responsive fashion due to its partisan divisions. Consequently, transferring the functions performed by the EAC to the FEC is inconsistent with the national interest in ensuring election integrity, improving voter access to the polls, and enhancing the quality of election systems.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose H.R. 672 and I would urge my colleagues to join me in defeating this misguided and reckless legislation that puts the integrity of our election systems—public confidence in election outcomes—at risk.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 24, 2011*

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote No. 478. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

#### HIGHWAYS BETTERING THE ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT ACT OF 2011

### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 24, 2011*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Highways Bettering the Economy and Environment Act with my Co-Chairman of the Congressional Pollinator Protection Caucus, Representative TIM JOHNSON. This bi-partisan bill provides much-needed aid for the birds, bats, bees and butterflies that pollinate our food.

The Highways BEE Act seeks no new monies and involves a limited federal role. It has received widespread endorsement from a diverse group of scientists, researchers and members of the business and environmental communities including the National Audubon Society, Lafarge Construction, National Farmers Union, the Isaac Walton League, American Farmland Trust, Waste Management, and Defenders of Wildlife.

This bill provides for existing authorities and funding sources to incorporate integrated vegetation management practices along America's highways, which includes things like re-

duced mowing and replacing invasive plant species with native forbs and grasses. This kind of roadside vegetation management provides much-needed habitat for pollinators and other small nesting animals.

The Association of American State Highway and Transportation Officials Vegetation Management Guidelines released in March advances integrated vegetation management principles and recommendations consistent with the objectives of this legislation. A number of states, including Minnesota, are already doing this and reporting maintenance cost savings of 20 to 25 percent from reduced mowing alone.

Mr. Speaker, there are around 17 million acres of land where significant reductions in mowing and maintenance can reduce costs for cash-strapped states. The millions of acres of agriculture and wildlife ecosystems adjacent to these roadways will benefit from the increased pollinator habitat resulting from integrated vegetation management practices.

To understand how worried we should be about declining pollinator populations, consider that rising global food prices are the primary topic of discussion at the G-20 meetings in Paris right now. This is the first time that agriculture has had the top spot at a meeting and is indicative of how serious the issue is. Food prices have already led to global riots overseas and a declining pollinator population will only make the situation worse. Seventy-five percent of all flowering plant species rely on creatures like birds, bats, bees and butterflies for fertilization. One out of every three bites of food that we eat, as well as \$20 billion of products in the United States alone, derive from pollinators.

If we don't solve these problems soon, we won't have any bees. Without bees, we won't have any food. The benefit to cost balance in the case of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is an easy choice.

#### HONORING DANIEL RODRIGUEZ

### HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, June 24, 2011*

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Daniel Rodriguez on the occasion of his retirement after 26 years of service as executive director for the University of Oregon Alumni Association.

The University of Oregon is a world class institution renowned for its groundbreaking research, and is an important keystone that unites Oregonians both at home and throughout the world.

Since coming to the University of Oregon in 1988, Dan Rodriguez has played a pivotal role in the rebirth of the alumni association. He created the alumni membership program that has topped 20,000 members worldwide and worked diligently to put the association on sound financial footing. He also led the effort to increase the number of active alumni chapters to 22 across the country.

But perhaps Dan's greatest accomplishment is the construction of the new Ford Alumni Center. While Dan will be the first to say this Center came about due to the tireless effort of many committed individuals, there is no question he has been a driving force for the project since its inception.

Dan grew up in Sunnyvale, CA, and is a graduate of Arizona State University. While he is a Sun Devil by pedigree, it is difficult to think of a more devoted and true Oregon Duck than Dan. He has spent untold hours promoting the University and the alumni association. He has also dedicated himself to the University's hometown community of Eugene, Oregon, where he has served on the Eugene Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Rotary Club, and in several capacities with the American Lung Association of Oregon.

Dan has served four University presidents, seven athletic directors, and acted as a mentor to hundreds of UO students teaching the importance of leadership and volunteerism as part of campus life. He leaves a team of 12 employees and a board of directors who will miss his devotion and dedication to the association and the university it serves.

On the occasion of his last day at the University of Oregon, I wish to personally thank Mr. Rodriguez for his service. He will certainly be missed. Go Ducks!

#### AMERICA INVENTS ACT

SPEECH OF

### HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 22, 2011*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1249) to amend title 35, United States Code, to provide for patent reform:

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 1249, which will help America maintain its distinction as the most innovative country in the world. For too long, independent inventors, small businesses, and America's leading universities and technology companies have been mired in a convoluted patent process that has stifled innovation and job creation. H.R. 1249 streamlines and clarifies the patent process, giving inventors and investors the certainty they need to expand their businesses and grow the economy.

This legislation also gives the United States Patent and Trademark Office the tools it needs to process the hundreds of thousands of applications it receives every year, increasing their ability to adjust its fees to reflect the actual costs of the services it provides, to fast-track patent applications, and to expand opportunities for post-grant review of patents. I remain deeply concerned that, under the manager's amendment, the Patent and Trademark Office will have fewer resources to pursue these objectives, a change which risks squandering the very opportunities created by the remainder of the legislation.

Innovative stakeholders in my district have voiced concerns that the legislation's expansion of the defense of "prior user rights" will weaken their ability to protect their patentable innovations and give rise to widespread trade secret litigation, particularly for those areas of research the blend federal investment and private investment. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure these concerns are addressed, so that America's finest universities and research centers can continue their role as global leaders of innovation.

H.R. 1249 is a strong step toward protecting the administration of our system of intellectual