

individuals are going to live that long, because what we are faced with is a declining number of workers paying their tax in that immediately is spent out in benefits.

I mean Social Security has been a pay-as-you-go program ever since it started in 1935. In other words, current workers pay in their taxes to pay the benefits of current retirees. When we started in 1935 and up through the 1940s, we had about 41 people working, paying in their taxes, for every one retiree. Today there is three people working paying in their taxes for every one retiree. By 2030 we are expecting that there is only going to be two people working. That means that those two people have to earn enough to provide for their families plus one retiree.

Huge challenges. Let us be careful. Let us rededicate ourselves not to spend the Social Security surplus. It is a good start.

#### STATE OF THE FARM ECONOMY IN AMERICA

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

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to talk for a few minutes today about the state of the farm economy in America. I have listened with interest over the last hour or so to a number of Members come to the floor and speak passionately about the problems that exist in our agriculture sector of our economy across this Nation.

I am proud to hail from the east side of the State of Washington, a location which grows abundant crops, lots of grains, wheat, oats, peas and lentils and other commodities, most of which are exported overseas. When the farm bill policy of our country was adopted back in 1996, it was met, I think, with general acceptance in my part of the country, that this is a good policy change for our farmers, that they would farm for the market and not just for the Government, and the continual subsidies that had been in existence for many, many years under long-term farm policy in this country would see a change.

There would be a reduction over a period of time in the subsidies that had been provided, a marked transition payment assistance program that ultimately would get our farmers into a world market condition where the market would meet the needs, the income needs, of the farmer and not to have the farmer necessarily turn to the Government repeatedly year after year.

This was a good change. I think it was a positive change. For those of us in Congress who feel that the free market is the best way to go, a free market economy is the best, it in many re-

spects caused some problems for our farmers because while on the one hand the Federal Government would say we are going to adopt a free market economy in agriculture, but yet we are not going to provide markets overseas for our farmers to market to, which brings me to the point that I want to make this evening:

That is that in order for our farmers to survive, those in eastern Washington as well as other parts of the country, we must have open markets. Currently our country has a policy of putting embargoes on countries with whom we disagree government to government. I happen to be proudly a member of the Committee on Appropriations, the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, which now has before it an issue regarding sanctions relief as part of the evolving policy to assist our farmers across this country.

I think our policy as a general proposition ought to be that we lift sanctions on food and medicine to countries around the world, not providing assistance government to government, but providing assistance to the people of the countries with whom we disagree and their leadership with whom we disagree, providing assistance to those countries in a market-oriented system that allows them to buy our farm products, to purchase them, not to give them, not for us to assist terrorist governments. That is not the intent of anybody in my judgment who supports lifting of sanctions, but to provide assistance to American farmers who are shut out of markets around the world that other countries are not shut out of.

So what happens is that a farmer, the government of Australia or Canada or the European Union has the ability to go into markets that we are frozen out of, American farmers are frozen out of, and underbid prices to sell products, commodities, to those countries; and then in those countries with which they can compete with us, they will undercut us even more. They will raise the prices in the sanctioned countries to get the sale, they will lower the prices in the competing countries in order to beat us out of a sale.

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Iran is a prime example. I disagree absolutely with the government of Iran and their policies of terrorism around the world and oppression, but they are buying wheat from Canada, Australia, and the European Union. Americans are getting nothing from nor realizing any sales to this country.

So my argument is that before the Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, we have the issue of sanctions relief. I think we ought to have sanctions relief in this bill. It is an opportunity for us to say

we are not going to use food and medicine as a weapon of foreign policy.

Iran cannot shoot grain back at us, but they can sure buy our grain and help our agriculture community in eastern Washington and around the country that want to sell to this country.

I know there is a problem with Cuba, and I understand that issue. And I am willing as one Member of the House to address that issue and discuss it and try to come to some reasonable solution about it, given the political consequences of some Members of the House. But I think as a general proposition, Mr. Speaker, we ought to raise sanctions, lift them, so that our agriculture community can survive in a free market system in the years ahead.

#### TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR OFFENSIVE ART

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

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many Members have been keeping track of what is going on in New York City, but I think the repercussions of what is going on in New York City really sweep across the entire country, especially when it pertains to two different groups, one, the taxpayers, and, two, the art community.

Let me start at the beginning of my comments to let you know that I have supported the art community. I have in the past voted for the NEA to support their art with taxpayer dollars. I have, however, on a number of occasions cautioned the arts community, do not go spending this money on careless or offensive art. If you have careless or offensive art, what you need to do to fund that is to go out and raise the money privately or have the individuals do it on their own in a display somewhere else.

That is not a violation of the Constitution or a violation of freedom of speech, to go to an individual who is an artist and say, look, your piece of work is too offensive. We are not going to pay for it with taxpayer dollars. That is not to say that you are banned in the United States from displaying your art. You do have freedom of speech; you may display your art. It is just that the taxpayers are not going to pay for it.

So what happens in New York City? Do you think the art community, especially some of the prima donnas in the art community, listen to that kind of advice? Of course they do not. They decide to draw the line in the sand.

Do you know what kind of line they are drawing? They say, look, we have a picture, a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and it has elephant dung, in my country it is known as crap, elephant crap,