

are that much progress is being made in strengthening relations of the two countries.

I fully acknowledge and support the United States' foreign policy principle of opposing nuclear proliferation, but I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize that exceptions to that principle may occasionally be warranted. Such exceptions should be based on the security needs of a nation, the entirety of that nation's relationship—economic, cultural, and diplomatic—with the United States, and the nation's willingness to participate in international arms control efforts.

Based on such criteria, I assert that India is a good candidate for such an exception to United States non-proliferation policy and would like to voice my hope that Mr. Talbot is working hard to lift remaining multilateral sanctions against India, especially the remaining World Bank lending sanctions. Again, I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Talbot and Mr. Singh for their hard work in this vital arena, congratulate them on their success thus far, and wish them the best in the future negotiations.

SUPPORT FOR THE DISASTER
MITIGATION COORDINATION ACT

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am joining with Chairman TALENT, Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ and the Small Business Committee in support of the Disaster Mitigation Coordination Act. This legislation is a sensible, smart addition to the disaster loan program.

The Disaster Mitigation Coordination Act will add a valuable pro-active measure to the Small Business Association's Disaster Loan program. If enacted, this legislation will save money for taxpayers, communities and small businesses.

By adding the availability of pre-disaster mitigation loans to small businesses located in FEMA's "Project Impact" zones, we will be allowing small businesses to avoid or at least reduce the damages they suffer from unpredictable natural disasters. By helping these businesses to prepare for and react to disasters better, we are also ensuring they are able to continue providing needed goods and services to the communities that depend on them.

Given the unpredictability of their frequency and the severity of natural disasters, this approach seems more than reasonable. A 5 year pilot program authorizing up to \$15 million a year in mitigation loans will permit the Small Business Administration to evaluate this approach to see if it is a less costly way of mitigating disasters than other fully subsidized federal disaster relief.

This legislation makes sense. By making available low interest, long term pre-disaster mitigation loans that will be paid back to the treasury, we will be reducing the amount of emergency grants necessary to respond to disasters. Furthermore, by offering pre-disaster assistance, we will be supporting the efforts of small businesses that want to act responsibly and pro-actively. Pre-disaster assist-

ance means saving taxpayer money, secure small business communities and a healthy economy.

Mr. Speaker, this will surely be a welcome alternative to small businesses in our state of Illinois which has received the fifth highest amount of disaster loan money nation wide since 1989. I thank my colleagues for their consideration and urge them to support this valuable piece of legislation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CHARLES
C. BUTT, 1999 BORDER TEXAN OF
THE YEAR

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise today to recognize an accomplished individual who is the deserving recipient of this year's Border Texan of the Year Award, Mr. Charles C. Butt, Chairman & CEO of the H.E.B. Grocery Company.

This award is given to individuals whose efforts have improved the quality of life for residents in South Texas. Recipients of this award serve as role models for all Texans. They are an inspiration to others, and they exhibit character as well as display a high standard of ethics.

Charles Butt has been selected by the BorderFest Border Texan of the Year Committee because his contributions to South Texas in the area of employment and economic development are unsurpassed. HEB today stands as one of the nation's largest independently owned food retailing companies. It is the largest private employer in the state of Texas with 45,000 employees, or "partners," and operates 250 stores across Texas, Louisiana, and Mexico. HEB generated sales of approximately \$7 billion in 1998. In 1971, Mr. Butt became HEB's Chairman and CEO. At that time 4,500 individuals were employed, and revenues were approximately \$250 million.

These facts and figures merit mention because they reflect the strengths of someone who is a true leader, someone whose vision and work ethic has made a successful company even more dynamic.

Moreover, HEB has always had a practice of reaching out to the community. Never just a policy, but always a tradition, the practice of helping those in need has only become stronger under the leadership of Charles Butt. Time and time again, he has been there to help communities in need. When flood-waters ravaged the small city of Del Rio, Texas in August, HEB was there. Within hours of this tragedy, HEB tankers carrying 5,500 gallons of water were stationed at the Del Rio stores around the clock, and construction experts with the company were on site helping this city to rebuild. Charles Butt personally was on the scene to assist in whatever way he could.

The spirit of HEB can be seen not only in times of crises, but in everyday programs that reflect the company's desire to feed the hungry. HEB has revolutionized the food banking efforts with its support of twenty food banks—

eighteen in Texas and two in Mexico. Since 1983 HEB supported food banks have shared more than 150 million pounds of donated food and merchandise with some 6,000 organizations. The list of charitable works goes on and on.

Again, I want to say how delighted I am that Charles C. Butt has been selected to receive this recognition. He is a man who represents the best in our country—a personal devotion to service, a professional commitment to excellence, and a visionary grasp of the opportunities open to all Americans.

Thank you for all your contributions, and I am glad to have this opportunity to add my accolades to this well-deserved honor. Congratulations, Mr. Border Texan!

THE GIFT OF LIFE CONGRES-
SIONAL MEDAL ACT OF 1999

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are proud to introduce the "Gift of Life Congressional Medal Act of 1999." This legislation creates a commemorative medal to honor organ donors and their survivors.

There is a serious shortage of available and suitable organ donors. Over 50,000 people are currently waiting for an organ transplant. Because of low donor rates, over 4,000 people die each year for lack of a suitable organ. Some patients also wait significantly longer for a transplant depending on where they live. In some parts of the country, the typical wait for an organ transplant is close to 100 days. In other parts of the country, the wait is closer to 1,000 days. We need to use every possible option to increase the number of donated organs for all Americans. The Gift of Life Congressional Medal Act draws attention to this life-saving issue, and sends a clear message that donating one's organs is a self-less act that should receive the profound respect of the Nation.

The legislation allows the Health and Human Service's Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network to establish a non-profit fund to design, produce, and distribute the medals. Funding would come solely from charitable donations. The donor or family member would have the option of receiving the Congressional Gift of Life Medal. Families would also request that a Member of Congress, state or local official, or community leader award the medal to the donor or donor's survivors.

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), an average of 5300 donations per year were made between 1994 and 1996. Research points to a clear need for incentive programs and public education on organ donation. These efforts can increase the number of organ donations by more than 80 percent.

Physicians can now transplant kidneys, lungs, pancreas, liver, and heart with considerable success. The demand for organs will continue to grow with the improvement of medical