

time when exports now account for 30% of U.S. farm cash receipts and nearly 40% of all agricultural production. It is abundantly clear, that in addition to free trade, America must guarantee fair trade.

The 1996 Freedom to Farm Act returned control of farming operations to producers in exchange for sharp restrictions on the level of government support. The goal was to provide U.S. farmers with the flexibility to run their operations according to the marketplace. But in exchange, the U.S. government has a clear responsibility to ensure that our farmers and ranchers have the ability to compete fairly against other exporters, not against foreign governments. I will continue my efforts in Congress to compel the executive branch to vigorously fight foreign trade barriers and utilize available tools such as the Export Enhancement Program and the Market Access Program to promote U.S. products abroad.

Furthermore, the State Department and the current administration must be forced to understand the economic consequences of utilizing food as a diplomatic weapon. Our farmers and ranchers cannot continue to bear the overwhelming burden of ineffective unilateral sanctions. The federal government should be required to identify funding sources to reimburse farmers for the reduction in prices caused by our government's actions, and this must occur before such actions are permitted to take place.

Agriculture is the bedrock of the American economy, and our agricultural productivity is the envy of the world. Assuring Colorado's farmers keep this edge in the global economy is one of my highest priorities in Congress.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION  
ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

**HON. DAVID E. BONIOR**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 820) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 for the Coast Guard, and for other purposes:

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Chairman, the U.S. Coast Guard provides many valuable services to our country. Among them are ice rescues. As many of us along the Great Lakes know, the Coast Guard has saved countless lives and provided invaluable services to our communities.

In the district which I represent, Macomb and St. Clair Counties, recreational uses of Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, and Lake Huron are not just limited to summer activities. Ice fishing is a growing and popular recreational activity, but from time to time wayward fishermen find themselves in need of help.

Our communities do a great job in rescuing individuals from critical circumstances, but their rescue capacity could be greatly aided by a Husky Airboat stationed at the St. Clair Shores Coast Guard Station. As we consider the Coast Guard authorization bill, I hope the

Coast Guard and committee authorizers will consider the import role the Coast Guard plays in ice rescues and will work toward providing adequate resources to satellite stations, like the one in St. Clair Shores, to fulfill their mission. I look forward to working with the Coast Guard and the committees of jurisdiction in this important matter.

THE WORK INCENTIVES  
IMPROVEMENT ACT

**HON. RICK LAZIO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 18, 1999*

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that has one goal and one goal only—enabling individuals with disabilities to pursue their desire to work. In today's workplace, less than one-half of one percent of disabled Americans successfully move from disability benefits to employment and self-sufficiency. A recent Harris Survey, however, found that 72 percent of Americans with disabilities want to work but nearly 75 percent of persons with disabilities are unemployed. What is the problem, here?

Let me tell you about a man from my district. He is a 39-year-old Navy Veteran from Bay Shore, NY. Several years ago, he worked on Wall Street with the hopes of becoming a stockbroker. Unfortunately, an accident in 1983 left him a quadriplegic. Because of his injury, this man relies on a tracheostomy to help him breath and speak.

He requires nurses or caregivers to clean his tracheostomy and requires 24-hour home care to assist him bathing, dressing, housekeeping, and numerous other daily activities. This individual's physical challenge, however, does not inhibit his ability to become a stockbroker. Ten years after his tragic accident, he successfully passed the "Series 7" test, a grueling 6-hour exam, to become a licensed stockbroker. Except for Federal barriers, he would be a stock broker today. He cannot, however, because he would lose his Medicaid and Medicare, which he needs to survive.

His situation is not unique. His predicament is replicated all across this country—by the millions. Suffolk County, NY, alone has 261,000 disabled individuals—most of whom want to work. Yet, disabled Americans must choose between working and surviving. Federal benefit programs such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provide benefits, including eligibility for health coverage through Medicare and Medicaid. Services that many disabled workers require, such as personal assistance, are often not covered by employer health care. So, when a disabled American secures a job and earns income, he or she may lose their government benefits and, subsequently, their health coverage.

This is why I have introduced the Work Incentives Improvement Act in the House of Representatives. The Federal Government should remove existing barriers and allow these individuals to work. Like all other Americans, disabled Americans deserve economic opportunity. They deserve the satisfaction that

only a paycheck can bring. They deserve to be in control of their lives and have the peace of mind of independence and personal security. The Work Incentives Improvement Act takes significant steps toward reforming Federal disability programs, improving access to needed services, and releasing the shackles of dependency.

Look at today's disability program: more than 7.5 million disabled Americans receive benefits from SSI and SSDI. Providing assistance to these individuals costs the Government \$73 billion a year—making these disability programs the fourth largest entitlement expenditure in the Federal Government. Now, if only one 1 percent, or 75,000, of the 7.5 million disabled adults were to become employed, Federal savings in disability benefit would total \$3.5 billion over the lifetime of the individual. Removing barriers to work is a major benefit to disabled Americans in their pursuit of self-sufficiency, and it also contributes to preserving the Social Security trust fund.

The Work incentives Improvement Act would create new State options for SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who return to work to purchase the health care coverage they would otherwise be entitled to if they did not work. It would support a user-friendly, public-private approach job training and placement assistance for individuals with disabilities who want to work, and it provides for new ways to inform SSDI and SSI beneficiaries of available work incentives.

The man from Bay Shore, NY, said, "I want to work. I do not want to be a burden to taxpayers." The Work Incentives Improvement Act will help him become a successful stockbroker. When he does so, he hopes to open to open his own firm and hire people with disabilities.

Now is the time to make major progress toward removing barriers and enabling people with disabilities to work. Millions of Americans are waiting eagerly to unleash their creativity and pursue the American dream. They are waiting for us to act, Mr. Speaker. Let's act now.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 975, REDUCING VOLUME  
OF STEEL IMPORTS AND ESTABLISHING  
STEEL IMPORT NOTIFICATION AND MONITORING PROGRAM

SPEECH OF

**HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Bipartisan Steel Recovery Act of 1999. I believe this initiative provides a comprehensive approach to enforcing trade laws by stating clearly and forcefully that the United States does not and will not tolerate violations of trade laws by foreign corporations.

As we enter a new millennium, we must face and embrace globalism by ensuring that all our citizens have the skills required to compete in the international economy. Export-driven job growth ensures that our communities' living standards continue to rise.