

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING STEVEN W. EASTER UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to Mr. Steven W. Easter. He is retiring as vice president for member and government relations at Blue Diamond Growers in Sacramento, CA. As Mr. Easter is "roasted" by his many friends and business associates, I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in saluting his remarkable career.

Mr. Easter was born in Merced, CA, in 1941. He is a fifth generation Californian whose family has long been involved in agriculture and agricultural educational endeavors. He was raised on a small farm in the San Joaquin Valley where his father was an agricultural educator.

After growing up in Dos Palos, CA, he attended the University of California at Davis, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics in 1963 and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Business Management in 1964.

Blue Diamond Growers, a 4,000-member cooperative that is the largest processor and marketer of almonds in the world, first employed him as a field representative in 1967. His subsequent positions with Blue Diamond included that of assistant membership manager, field manager, and membership manager.

In 1975, Mr. Easter was given the additional responsibility of corporate secretary at Blue Diamond Growers. He assumed his current position as vice president, member and governmental relations in November 1980.

All told, Mr. Easter has served as a corporate officer at Blue Diamond for 23 years; his total employment there spans 31 years. I am honored to salute his outstanding dedication to one of Sacramento's finest corporate citizens.

Mr. Easter's business excellence also extends beyond Blue Diamond Growers. He currently serves as a director of the Almond Board of California and is past president of the Almond Hullers and Processors Association. He also recently served 2 years as chairman of the Board of the American Institute of Cooperation.

He is also a member of the Advisory Committee on horticultural trade to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative. Mr. Easter is presently chairman of the Agricultural Council of California.

Additionally, he has served as chairman of the American Institute of Cooperatives, as well as chair of the Agricultural Council Education Committee. Locally, Mr. Easter has served on the board of the Sacramento Country Day School for 15 years, including a term as Education Committee chairman.

Steve Easter has contributed enormously to Blue Diamond Growers and the Sacramento community-at-large. He has helped Blue Diamond grow its sales to \$500 million per year and seen it develop and open markets in more than 90 countries around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, as Steve Easter is "roasted" by his many friends and colleagues today, I am honored to pay tribute to one of Sacramento's great citizens. His tireless contributions to the member growers of Blue Diamond as well as to the Sacramento community are commendable. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in wishing him every success in all his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 81, to provide for a national medal for public safety officers who act with extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, on a day when many Americans are complaining about how much they pay in taxes, I rise in support of passing the Tax Limitation Amendment, legislation that would require a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority in Congress to approve any future tax increases.

If a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority is required to pass some of the most important issues concerning our Nation, like amending the Constitution and ratifying international treaties, the same standard should be used when deciding to take more hard-earned money from the American taxpayer. In short, the Tax Limitation Amendment gives taxpayers protection against future reckless spending and tax-grabbing by the Federal Government. I find it hard to believe any Member of Congress could oppose such a simple, straightforward protection for taxpayers.

By making it more difficult for Congress to reach into the pockets of taxpayers to fund increased Government spending, a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority requirement would ensure Congress is more fiscally responsible with America's money. Although the economy is presently in good shape, taxes are still the highest they've

been since World War II. It's important to implement the $\frac{2}{3}$ standard now, when we have a surplus and times are good, to prevent future Congresses from turning to high taxes down the road.

States have passed tax limitation measures with overwhelming voter support. In the 14 States which have implemented tax limitation standards, taxes and spending grow at slower rates, while the economy and job rates grow more quickly. In my own State of New Jersey, Gov. Christine Whitman is a strong supporter for the Tax Limitation Amendment because she knows, as do I, that this legislation is good for New Jersey's taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me today in making it tougher for this body to raise taxes on an America that is already over-taxed!

TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the American taxpayer and in support of the Tax Limitation Amendment.

The 105th Congress, more than any other, gave the American people much needed tax relief. Still, here we are at another April 15 and taxes are still too high and the Tax Code is still too complicated.

This year, just like every year, the average American family will work until approximately mid-May to earn enough income to pay an entire year's worth of taxes. In a time when we have budget surpluses, that fact seems inconceivable. Why have we not yet lessened their burden?

What is more inconceivable is that this past February the President sent us a budget proposal that increased taxes by an incredible \$108 billion. Why?

Mr. Speaker, I have come to this floor time and time again saying the same thing over and over. The "Tax and Spend" liberals just don't seem to get the message. Well, I will continue to come here to this floor and say the same thing again and again until they do. The message is quite simple: The American people know how to spend their hard earned income better than we do—it's time we lower taxes, not raise them.

I firmly believe that we must protect the American people from those would take their hard-earned dollars away at every turn of the hat to fund more feel-good programs. In my view, there is only one way to do that—make it more difficult for any Congress to increase taxes.

That's why I support this amendment, Mr. Speaker. It will force Congress to finally hold

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