

Food Quality Protection Act.—Farm Bureau has declared the proper implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act as its top priority. Farm Bureau will work with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), land grant universities and local officials to get the act implemented as Congress originally intended.

Budget and Tax Reform.—Farm Bureau will continue to work for the elimination of the "Death Tax" and reduction of the capital gains tax. Other issues include: Farmer and Rancher Risk Management accounts, the balanced budget amendment, elimination of the Alternative Minimum Tax for agriculture, income averaging, unemployment tax exemption and Individual Retirement Accounts for farmers.

Environmental Issues.—Farm Bureau will continue to push for private property rights protection and elimination of disincentives in regard to endangered species, clean water, clean air and wetlands.

Trade.—Farm Bureau will be heavily involved in gaining "Fast Track" authority for the administration and eliminating existing trade barriers. Also, Farm Bureau hopes to be active in this year's round of the World Trade Organization's discussions.

Regulatory Reform.—Farm Bureau will attempt to pass legislation requiring standardized risk assessments and cost/benefit analysis on all proposed regulations. There will also be a push for a reform of the Department of Labor's H-2A program.

Mr. Mark James of the Lincoln County Stockmen also served on the panel and expressed his concern with aspects of the Endangered Species Act. Mr. James thought it was silly black-tailed prairie dogs would be added to the Endangered Species List. "Prairie dogs? Get reasonable," he said. Mr. James' comments were echoed by many of those in attendance.

Later that evening, at the forum held in Lamar, Mr. John Schweizer, District Representative for the Colorado Farm Bureau, spoke about issues facing farmers in the southeastern portion of the state. Mr. Schweizer cited his hope there would be continued tax relief for farmers such as complete elimination of the "death tax." He was quick to point out, however, that even though times are tough, "(farmers) are not looking for hand-outs." In fact, he expressed support for the 1996 Farm Bill which was supposed to remove government from the farm. Unfortunately, according to Mr. Schweizer, "rather than cut the cord, the government tightened the noose."

Mr. Schweizer also said the Administration and Congress needed to do more to open markets abroad. One way in which this could be accomplished, he felt, would be to fully fund and utilize the Export Enhancement Program. He also questioned the effectiveness of shutting American farmers out of world markets by using political sanctions against other countries.

Chad Hart of the Prowers County Farm Service Agency also offered his perspective. His main concern was the administration of the disaster assistance program which is running way behind. Cuts in funding have adversely impacted their ability to do their job in that the speed of response to emergencies has been greatly reduced. They are forced to do much more with far fewer employees.

Another member of the panel was Mr. Bob Arambel of the Northeast Prowers County

Conservation District. He runs a farm northeast of Holly, Colorado, and has had concerns regarding water quality on the lower Arkansas River. Although they have received some money to increase their compliance with water quality statutes, he was concerned reauthorization of the Clean Water Act may have adverse impacts on farming and ranching in the region if standards cannot be met right away. Mr. Arambel also had concerns about the direction of the Endangered Species Act.

Mr. Vernon Sharp, President-elect of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, mentioned taxes as his issue of greatest importance. He felt estate taxes and capital gains taxes were big problems, that they were punitive in nature and punished people for making good business decisions. He also felt the government should provide some sort of income tax relief in the near future. "This year I spent \$900.00 to have someone do my taxes to find out I have no income," he said.

Mr. Sharp went on to say property rights were also a very important issue and the federal government should fully compensate landowners when impeding their ability to use their land as they see fit. He cited the Endangered Species Act as a major threat to farmers and ranchers and their ability to manage their land.

Also on the panel was Mr. Jim Geist, Executive Director of the Colorado Corn Growers Association. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I refer the House to the remarks of Mr. Geist.

On behalf of Colorado's corn farmers, I appreciate the opportunity to express corn's policies and positions on issues that will have direct and indirect effects on the state's corn industry.

Demand for corn grows when our customers are satisfied. To increase demand and customer satisfaction, the United States must become a dependable supplier of commodities. Some of the issues that can assure U.S. corn and its products full access to world trade markets include the following: sanction reform; Fast Track authority; support of IMF funding and trade negotiations, including the specific objective of mutual acceptance of genetically enhanced agricultural products; continued leadership in the World Trade Organization; and Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations.

Corn producers continue to strive for a fair deal from the government. They are looking for market-driven farm programs, minimal consistent regulations, federal tax policy reform and sufficient financial and credit program so that this country can maintain its food security.

Improving our national transportation infrastructure in order to maintain a competitive advantage is becoming a high priority for grain producers nationwide. Upgrading rivers, locks and dam systems, improving the nation's railroad system and maintaining adequate highway funds for states will enable grain producers to move commodities to domestic and international customers when needed.

We support an active research and education commitment by all segments of the corn industry and government. Research and commercialization of corn products adds to the value of corn. Investing in technological advancements, working with the marketplace, and educating and communicating with consumers about the value of corn in their daily lives will enable our nation to have a stronger rural economy and greater national economic strength.

Leaving our world in better shape than when we found it has been a top priority in agriculture for generations. In using Best Management Practices (BMP) to build soil through conservation programs, BMP implementation to improve water quality, and utilizing the best crop protection practices available, corn producers are truly planting a crop that can help clean up the environment, from both a water and air quality standpoint. The growing concern within agriculture is the small, vocal, hard-line environmental groups trying to impose regulations on production agriculture that are uneconomical, unproven and that could have the effect of driving our nation's food production capabilities off our shores.

Agricultural producers in Colorado are struggling with poor economic conditions in the marketplace due to burdensome supplies—supplies that could be sold in international markets—and environmental regulations that will choke off sustainable food production capabilities. Much has to be done in short order to protect one of our nation's most valuable resources—America's farmers and ranchers.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to express to you just some of the issues and concerns that Colorado corn producers will be focusing on in the near future.

Our last panelist of the evening was Ms. Elena Metro, State Executive Director of the Colorado Pork Producers Council. Her thoughts focused on the state initiative, earlier alluded to, Amendment 14. Ms. Metro's presentation included this statement which I ask to be included in the RECORD:

The Colorado pork industry has been singled out by individuals and groups to be "controlled" by harsh rules and regulations. Amendment 14 here in Colorado is the result. The Colorado Pork Producers Council on behalf of the pork industry in Colorado asks that if rules and regulations are written and become law, whether on a state or national level, that these rules be based on "sound science," be fair and equitable, and not "socially engineered."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by thanking all of the participants for their input. Former Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, Mr. Carl "Bev" Bledsoe moderated the forum in Hugo. Ms. Sparky Turner moderated the forum in Lamar. Both did an outstanding job and helped draw many helpful thoughts and comments from all speakers.

It's obvious after hearing from my constituents that more needs to be done to expand trade with foreign countries. We need to bring some sanity to the Endangered Species Act, and we need to use sound science when making decisions about regulations which will affect a very important segment of our population—the farmer.

REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR VETERANS

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1401, the bill to authorize our all-important national defense programs and in support of the en bloc amendment which includes language that addresses a crisis in our veterans community.

Throughout their lives, the men and women of our armed services make great sacrifices in the service of our country. Yet, many families requesting honor guards at the burials of veterans are being told "NO"—that we do not have the resources to honor those who have served so nobly. As Americans, the very least we can do is make sure that our veterans are given a proper burial when they die.

My amendment strengthens the current language in the bill by requiring, not just permitting, the Secretary of Defense to provide necessary materials, equipment, and training to support non-governmental organizations—namely our VFW, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, and other veterans groups—in providing honor guard services.

Mr. Speaker, the newest of our National Cemeteries, Saratoga National Cemetery, will be opening in the heart of my district this July and will conduct funerals every thirty minutes for the next several years. Our active duty and reserve servicemen and women cannot keep up. Mr. Speaker—this is unacceptable!

Everyone who served in the armed forces gave something. Some who served gave everything. And we have a responsibility to give back!

Our veterans are eager to fill this void on a volunteer basis, but they do not possess the resources to do so. The committee bill will give private individuals the tools necessary to provide honor guard services, thereby reducing the demand on active duty servicemen or reservists.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and reaffirm our commitment to our veterans.

IN HONOR OF DR. DAVID KIRCHER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in tribute to Dr. David Kircher, Superintendent of Fairview Park Schools in Rocky River, Ohio. As he celebrates his retirement, I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in saluting his outstanding service and leadership in the Fairview Park Schools.

Dr. Kircher has dedicated a substantial portion of his life to the betterment of the Fairview Park Schools. For the past 30 years, Dr. Kircher has served as an important figure for the Fairview Park School district. He has held several positions throughout his tenure, but none as important as Superintendent of Fairview Park Schools, a position from which he will be retiring as of August 1, 1999.

As the fifth superintendent in the history of the Fairview Park Schools, Dr. Kircher worked his way up from an Earth Space Science teacher to Superintendent in 1996. Throughout his career he has been recognized for his hard work and dedication in the Fairview Park Schools. Many students and staff members are not only inspired by his motivation and hard work, but also appreciate the fact that he has helped create excellent schools. That is why in 1998 he was nominated for the National Superintendent of the year. The following year he received a resolution from the

city of Fairview Park recognizing his 30 years of dedicated service to the Fairview Park Schools.

Education has always been Dr. Kircher first priority. He earned a Ph.D. in educational administration at Kent State University. His wisdom and educational background helped him become one of the most influential superintendents in Fairview Park Schools.

Although his work puts extraordinary demands on his time, Dr. David Kircher has never limited the time he gives to his most important interest, his family, especially his lovely wife, Maryann.

I ask that and my distinguished colleagues join me in commending Dr. David Kircher for his lifetime dedication, service, and leadership in Fairview Park Schools. His large circle of family and friends can be proud of the significant contribution he has made. Our community has certainly been rewarded by the true service and uncompromising dedication displayed by Dr. David Kircher.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing three bills which reflect my long-time interest in helping the economy and the people of Puerto Rico. Rather than spending taxpayer money on government programs, these bills will provide tax incentives for the private sector to help the economy of Puerto Rico.

In 1996, Congress phased out Section 936 over my objections. As a result, the economic incentives for U.S. companies to do business in Puerto Rico have dwindled, negatively impacting the economy. In an effort to reverse that trend, the Government of Puerto Rico reduced their tax burden by 19 percent in recent years. However, they need more help. We in Congress can play an important role in that effort by putting in place long-term tax incentives to spur private sector growth on the Island.

The first bill, the Puerto Rico Economic Activity Credit Improvement Act of 1999, will modify and extend the existing economic credit, which is due to expire at the end of 2005. My bill will build upon the replacement for Section 936, Section 30A, by extending the wage tax credit until the economy in Puerto Rico meets certain economic objectives designed to bring the Island up to a level more on par with the mainland. The credit will also be available to new companies locating in Puerto Rico. Companies already in Puerto Rico and utilizing the existing income credit will be given a one-time option to switch over to the wage credit before the termination date of the income credit.

The second bill will make the research and development (R&D) tax credit available to companies operating in Puerto Rico. The R&D credit has never been accessible in Puerto Rico, but, until the demise of Section 936, the lack of an R&D credit was of little tax consequence to companies operating on the Island. My bill will provide this small, but important, tax credit for Puerto Rico and the other U.S. possessions as a matter of fairness.

The third bill will repeal the limitation of the rum tax cover over. Under current law, a tax is collected on rum entering the U.S. mainland from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A portion of this tax is returned (covered over) to the governments of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Because of a dispute in 1984, the cover over was limited to \$10.50 of the total \$13.50 per gallon tax. My bill will restore the cover over to the full amount. In particular, the government of the Virgin Islands desperately needs the revenue from the full cover over as they are currently in critical economic straits.

In addition to restoring the cover over, this bill will also provide funding for the Conservation Trust Fund of Puerto Rico. The Fund has been very successful in preserving the natural resources of the Island for the people of Puerto Rico. In conjunction with the Governor of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Department of the Interior, we developed a plan to direct 50 cents of the per gallon rum tax to the Trust Fund for 5 years. This funding would allow the Trust to finish building their endowment in order to fund their operations in perpetuity.

I want to thank my colleagues who have lent their support in different ways to these proposals: CHARLIE RANGEL, CARLOS ROMERO-BARCELÓ, JERRY WELLER, DONNA CHRISTENSEN, NANCY JOHNSON, PHIL ENGLISH, J.D. HAYWORTH and MARK FOLEY. I urge the rest of my colleagues to support us in these efforts.

HONORING TOLEDO METAL SPINNING COMPANY

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 10, 1999

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Toledo Metal Spinning Company (TMS), a business in my district recently honored as one of only six recipients of the Blue Chip Enterprise Initiative Award. This award, given to companies who have overcome both internal and external struggles throughout their organization, was extended to TMS in recognition of their exceptional ability to cope and rebuild virtually their entire business after a fire ravaged their operation.

TMS Vice Presidents Eric and Craig Frankhauser are to be commended for their efforts to restore their corporation. After a disastrous fire that destroyed much of the plant in February 1998, the two brothers worked tirelessly to fulfill customer orders and remain in production mode. Remarkably, five days after the fire, the company was back online and serving its customers with the same level of professionalism and courtesy as before the tragedy. Clients turn to TMS for a wide range of products including parts for missiles, passenger jets, and military aircraft, as well as stainless steel, cone-shaped hoppers used for countless purposes from releasing fruit into yogurt to processing pills.

As the Frankhausers rebuilt their facility their innovation and ingenuity led the way. Forced to rebuild not only their physical building but also their business structure, the