

as the implementation of new environmental regulations and laws threatened to completely shut down the U.S. military. With his commitment both to a strong military and to a clean environment, Richard was able to help the military chart a path through the evolving environmental laws that allowed for compliance, yet did not prohibit readiness and training.

Richard had many other legislative accomplishments during his ten years in Congress but few were as meaningful to him as establishing the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in Plains, Georgia. Working with the National Park Service, former President and Mrs. Carter, and the citizens of Plains, Richard Ray enacted legislation establishing both a permanent tribute to President Carter and a historic site presenting a comprehensive look at the rural south during the first half of the twentieth century.

Mr. Speaker, I also ask to have reprinted in the RECORD this selection chosen by Barbara Ray as a tribute to her husband. It is truly a fitting remembrance of his life—for he was a man who valued integrity, hard work, family and his Lord above all else.

MY CREED

I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon—if I can.

I seek opportunity—not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed.

I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the stale calm of Utopia. I will not trade freedom for beneficence nor my dignity for a handout.

I will never cower before any monster nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid; to think and act for myself, enjoy the benefit of my creations and to face the world boldly and say: This I have done.

All this is what it means to be an American.

H.R. 1000, THE AVIATION INVESTMENT AND REFORM ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just briefly harken back to something my friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) said earlier about environmental justice, because we are dealing with a number of environmental issues that are very important in my State of South Dakota.

In the beautiful Black Hills, we have this little pest called the pine beetle which, if not managed effectively, will destroy thousands of acres of forest in the Black Hills. The Clinton-Gore administration recently revoked a previously-agreed upon order that would have allowed the Forest Service to manage the problem. That is crazy.

I want to talk about another thing. We have another little pest called the

prairie dog which, if Members can believe this, is scheduled to go on the endangered species list.

Ranchers have been trying for generations to eradicate prairie dogs because they destroy the grass where ranchers allow cattle to graze. This, too, is crazy. I do not know what bureaucrats in Washington know about prairie dogs. These are issues that the people who live off the land are trying to manage. They are good conservationists.

We are dealing with another one right now having to do with wetlands regulations, trying to bring some common sense, some sense of balance, to these issues, and consistently we run into resistance from this administration, proving once again that common sense I think is in very rare supply in this city and in this administration.

What I would like to do this evening, Mr. Speaker, is talk, if I might briefly, about something that is a very positive development from my State, which we passed today. That is H.R. 1000, the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century. It will make important and long overdue strides towards restoring the integrity of the aviation trust fund.

As was the case with the Highway Trust Fund, the American people have been paying use taxes into what they thought was a dedicated trust fund reserved for maintaining and improving airport safety and capacity. Unfortunately, like in a lot of other areas, the Federal government for years has been less than honest in the way they have handled this fund. Passengers, aviators, and the airlines have paid billions of dollars to the Federal government in the form of taxes on tickets, fuel, and air freight.

They have expected these funds will go to keep the infrastructure repaired and in working condition, and to improve the efficiency of air travel, and most importantly, to ensure the safety of air travel. South Dakota's two busiest airports highlight this principle, painting the stark difference between the investment and the return.

The passengers and other aviation users in Sioux Falls Regional Airport, the State's largest airport, paid approximately \$8 million in aviation taxes to the Federal government in 1997. Yet the airport received only \$1.3 million in aviation improvement funds from the FAA.

Users of the Rapid City Regional Airport paid in nearly \$7 million and received \$850,000 in return. While both receive other indirect contributions through the presence of FAA personnel and air traffic control operations, these contributions hardly make up for the difference between contributions to the trust and payments made to the airports.

Air 21 would attempt to bring us closer to closing that gap. As my col-

leagues were probably aware, the bill would triple the airport improvement program entitlements to all airports, taking the minimum grant level from today's level of 500,000 to 1.5 million.

For South Dakota, this tripling would provide \$1.5 million annually for the airports serving the cities of Aberdeen, Pierre, and Watertown. For Rapid City and Sioux Falls, their entitlements respectively rise from about \$832,000 to an estimated \$2.5 million for Rapid City and from about \$1.3 million to an estimated \$3.9 million for the city of Sioux Falls.

Thankfully, Air 21 does not just stop at aiding the larger airports in South Dakota and across this Nation. The bill also includes a number of important provisions that would assist our general aviation airports, those airports which serve rural areas and smaller communities.

Perhaps the most significant contribution the bill makes directly to our general aviation airports would come in the form of a new direct entitlement grant program for general aviation airports.

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These grants would be in addition to the amounts provided for the States for distribution to various general aviation airports. With increased access to air service, one can clearly see that economic activity would increase.

It is no secret that one of the top factors businesses and companies consider is access to safe, reliable and affordable transportation. The bill proposes a number of important reforms that would help improve deficiency in competition. Among other issues, I commend the chairman for moving a proposal forward that would improve access to Chicago O'Hare International Airport. I firmly believe that today's high density rule is outdated and acts only as an artificial barrier for competition for areas of the nation, including South Dakota.

Fortunately, Air 21 would open access to this airport potentially for cities like Sioux Falls that might be able to provide competitive options for its travelers and profitable routes for air carriers that might not be able to access O'Hare today.

Mr. Speaker, I recently organized a series of meetings with community leaders across South Dakota to discuss air service issues. While they are generally pleased with the level of service they have today, they also believe there is room for improvement. Air 21 will bring needed improvement and see that the hard earned dollars of America's taxpayers are used for the purpose for which they were intended.

THE SCOURGE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY of Texas). Under the Speaker's