under the new Family Member Appointment. This position allows them to begin accruing retirement credit. However, these individuals are not allowed to pay back into the FERS for time worked in PIT positions. As a result, many Foreign Service spouses who worked as a PIT between 1989 and 1998 have lost up to nine or ten years of retirement credit.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of grave consequence to many Americans who devoted their most productive years to public service abroad. Foreign Service Officers and their spouses live lives that often put them in physical danger and cause great emotional distress. One constituent recounts being taken hostage with her husband by terrorists in Peru; while she was released early, she did not know if her husband was alive, injured, or dead.

It is simply unfair that these individuals, who have lived and worked under incredibly stressful conditions, are unable to choose as to the type of work they performed, are not able to buy back the retirement credit they earned. As I indicated, some of my constituents have lost up to nine years of retirement credit because this provision has not been corrected. I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this important legislation.

THE AMERICAN WETLAND RESTORATION ACT

HON. WALTER B. JONES
OF NORTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of the “American Wetland Restoration Act.”

This legislation builds upon the wetlands mitigation banking legislation I introduced in the last 3 Congresses and also the 1995 Federal Guidance issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

My Congressional district in eastern North Carolina includes most of the coast and four major river basins. More than 60% of my district could be classified as wetlands. My constituents are directly impacted by wetlands and the countless regulations that protect them. I have been contacted by farmers, business owners, state and local officials, land owners and even the military for advice and guidance in order to reach a balance between protecting these valuable resources while increasing economic growth. Wetlands mitigation banking is a concept the American Wetland Restoration Act will give wetlands mitigation banking the statutory authority it needs to flourish, and it will begin restoring the wetlands that many thought were lost forever.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill.

REFORM DAIRY PRICING REGULATIONS

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI
OF WISCONSIN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that will reform the method by which fluid milk has been priced in our country for too long. The Federal Milk Marketing Order system is a relic that fixes prices and feebly serves the outdated aims of a bygone era. Created in the 1930’s, its original purpose was ostensibly to provide a locally produced supply of fresh milk throughout the country. Over sixty years ago, such a system may have made more economic sense. We didn’t have the interstate highway system, efficient refrigerated trucks, or reconstituted milk, for example. Today, conditions are vastly different, necessitating reform of the federal dairy program.

By basing the price of Class I, fluid milk, on the distance from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the federal government has radically distorted dairy markets and discriminated against the dairy farmers of the Upper Midwest. The resulting inefficient production of milk in areas distant from the Upper Midwest has led to the oversupply of milk and depresses the price of processed dairy products. Dairy farmers in Wisconsin have paid dearly under this system.

Today, my state loses approximately five dairy farmers a year.

Furthermore, by using distance to set the price of fluid milk, the federal order system is inherently anti-consumer. Consumers are stuck paying the set price for milk instead of the price determined by a free marketplace where efficiency is rewarded. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that eliminating this market distorting system would save $669 million over five years. In an age of “global free trade,” this system that effectively puts a tariff on milk from other regions of the country is absurd.

The bill I introduce today reforms the single most discriminatory element of the Federal Milk Marketing Order program by prohibiting the Secretary of Agriculture from basing the price of fluid milk on distance or transportation costs from any location outside that order area unless 50 percent or more of that area’s milk comes from a location outside that order area. By eliminating this factor the Secretary of Agriculture will have to consider supply and demand factors when setting milk prices as required by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act. Additionally, the bill requires the Secretary of Agriculture to report to Congress on the specific criteria used to set milk prices. This report will include a certification that the criteria used by the Department in no way attempts to circumvent the prohibition on the use of distance or transportation costs as the basis for milk prices.

Reform of the Federal Milk Marketing Order program is long overdue. The discrimination against the dairy farmers of the Upper Midwest must end. Not only will this bill restore

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EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill.

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