so. We must strengthen women’s immediate ability to protect themselves—including providing new woman-controlled technologies. One such technology does exist called microbicides. The Microbicides Development Act of 2001 which I am introducing, will encourage federal investment for this critical research, with the establishment of programs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Through the work of the NIH, non-profit research institutions, and the private sector, a number of microbicide products are poised for successful development. But this support is no longer enough for actually getting microbicides through the development “pipeline” and into the hands of the millions who could benefit from them. Microbicides can only be brought to market if the federal government helps support critical safety and efficacy testing. Health advocates around the world are convinced that microbicides could have a significant impact on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Researchers have identified almost 60 microbicides, topical creams and gels that could be used to prevent the spread of HIV and other STDs such as chlamydia and herpes, but interest in the private sector in microbicides research has been lacking. According to the Alliance for Microbicide Development, 38 biotech companies, 28 not-for-profit groups and seven public agencies are investigating microbicides, and Phase III clinical trials have begun on four of the most promising compounds. The studies will evaluate the compounds’ efficacy and acceptability and will include consumer education as part of the compounds’ development. However, it will be at least two years before any compound trials are completed. Currently, the bulk of funds for microbicide research comes from NIH—nearly $25 million per year—and the Global Microbicide Project, which was established with a $35 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. However, more money is needed to bring the microbicides to market. Health advocates have asked NIH to increase the current budget for research to $75 million per year.

Mr. Speaker, today, the United States has the highest incidence of STDs in the industrialized world—annually it is estimated that 15.4 million Americans acquired a new STD. STDs cause serious, costly, even deadly conditions for women and their children, including infertility, pregnancy complications, cervical cancer, infant mortality, and higher risk of contracting HIV.

This legislation has the potential to save billions in health care costs. Direct cost to the U.S. economy of STDs and HIV infection, is approximately $8.4 billion. When the indirect costs, such as lost productivity, are included that figure rises to an estimated $20 billion.

With sufficient investment, a microbicide could be available around the world within five years. I urge my colleagues to lend their support to this vital legislation.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING THE OPENING OF THE SMITHSONIAN FOLK LIFE FESTIVAL

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to celebrate the opening of the Smithsonian Folk Life Festival. I commend the Smithsonian Institution for its decision to feature New York City and its rich heritage and diversity. I am delighted that Harlem’s own legendary Apollo Theatre, will be showcased by hosting its famous “Amateur Night at the Apollo” on the Mall Saturday, July 7. For the very first time Americans outside of New York will be allowed to be a part of Amateur Night at the Apollo. They will be able to experience the thrill of seeing the famous Apollo Theatre at the same time that past winners, such as, Billee Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, James Brown, and Stevie Wonder did many years ago.

When New Yorkers took the A-train uptown, the first stop was the Apollo. When the downtown musicians wanted to learn how to play jazz they went to the Apollo. When the kids from Brooklyn wanted to learn how to bebop and “lindy hop” they went to the Apollo.

The Apollo stage is where the Godfather of Soul—James Brown, got his soul; when—Michael Jackson showed off the moonwalk; and today it provides a showcase for leading hip-hop artists.

The Apollo Theatre was built in 1913, however it was not until 1932 when Sydney Cohen purchased it that it became known as a Black Vaudeville house. This change was reflective of the influx of African-Americans into the area between 135th and 145th streets and the changes in Harlem entertainment. Over the next few decades the Apollo became the place to perform for rising Black musician. You were not accepted as a serious musician in Harlem until you performed and excelled at the Apollo.

For more than eighty years the Apollo Theatre has been the first home of African-American music, the cultural mecca of Harlem, and the monument to the contributions of Black Americans in the entertainment industry. The Theatre achieved the high point of its popularity in the 1950’s when the growing number of popular Black entertainers were still restricted to performing at Black venues. Acts that have graced the stage include: Bessie Smith in 1935, Count Basie and Billie Holiday in 1937, Sammy Davis, Jr., as a dancer in the Will Matsuin Trio in 1947, Bill Cosby in 1968, Prince in 1993, and Tony Bennett in 1997.

The Apollo, located on 125th Street, is the centerpiece of Harlem and one of the main attractions for Harlem visitors. It has become the number one tourist attraction in New York. I am proud to announce that a major $6.5 million revitalization and expansion of the Apollo Theatre is being undertaken, which will make a major contribution to the Harlem community through the transformation of this venue into a major performing arts center.

The renowned Apollo Theatre is a national treasure that has made major contributions to the entertainment industry of this nation. The Theatre was designated a New York City landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Some might say the Apollo is the home of Black music, but I would say the Apollo is the home of American music.

I invite everyone to join with me in celebrating The Smithsonian 2001 Folk Life Festival, New York City, and the legendary Apollo Theatre.

INTRODUCTION OF THE “COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN SAFETY ACT OF 2001”

HON. ROB SIMMONS
OF CONNECTICUT
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, since colonial days my home town of Stonington has been tied to fishing. Today it is the home to Connecticut's only commercial fishing fleet, and I am proud to be its congressional representative.

Commercial fishing continues to rank as one of the most hazardous occupations in America. According to the United States Coast Guard and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual fatality rate for commercial fishermen is about 150 deaths per 100,000 workers.

In order to increase the level of safety in the fishing industry, the U.S. Coast Guard requires all fishing vessels to carry safety equipment. Required equipment can include a life raft that automatically inflates and floats free should the vessel sink; personal flotation devices or immersion suits; Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB); visual distress signals; and fire extinguishers.

When an emergency arises, safety equipment is priceless. At all other times, the cost of purchasing or maintaining life rafts, immersion suits, and EPIRBs must compete with other expenses such as loan payments, fuel, wages, maintenance, and insurance. Meeting all of these obligations is made more difficult by a regulatory framework that uses measures such as trip limits, days at sea, and gear alterations to manage our marine resources.

Commercial fishermen should not have to choose between safety equipment and other expenses. That's why I am introducing the “Commercial Fishermen Safety Act of 2001,” which would provide for a tax credit equal to 75 percent of the amount paid by fishermen to purchase or maintain required safety equipment. The tax credit is capped at $1,500 and includes expenses paid or incurred for maintenance of safety equipment required by federal regulation. Sens. Susan Collins (R–ME) and John Kerry (D–MA) have introduced identical legislation in the Senate.

The Commercial Fishermen Safety Act Of 2001 could improve safety by giving commercial fishermen more of an incentive to purchase and care for safety equipment. I ask my colleagues to join me in helping commercial fishermen protect themselves while doing their jobs.  

June 29, 2001