can provide a capital gains tax break. I realize this legislation may not help all in need, but it is an important piece of the relief puzzle.

I hope my colleagues will join me in their support of this bill. If they do, they will be joining several others concerned with the economic viability of the Nation's heartland.

TRIBUTE TO LITHUANIA

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the country of Lithuania. In just a few days, on February 16, Lithuania will celebrate its sixth year as a truly free and independent country. Since proclaiming its independence Lithuania has implemented a Democratic policy. Democracy, for this country, is a vast change from its previous 50 years of forced annexation by the former Soviet Union.

Although it has been, to some degree, a struggling progression, the overall picture is a steady one with greater potential on the horizon. In the past 6 years, Lithuania has seen monumental revision from drafting its own constitution, holding elections for its own Parliament and President, to developing a market economy.

The old Soviet methodology and regularity of bureaucracy has dwindled almost to the point of extinction as privatization has taken a strong hold. Because of their privatization priority policy, 85 percent of state-owned enterprises have been transmitted to the private sector. In addition the development of a western-oriented program of reform regarding trade and banking has led to an increase in trade with western countries, gaining from just 15.3 percent in 1990 to over 60 percent in 1995.

Another indication of Lithuania's progression toward Democracy and a market economy is that about two-thirds of the economic product is now industrial. There has also been so much growth potential emerging that foreign interest and investment has increased substantially.

Just before the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991 Soviet troops attacked Lithuania's capital city, Vilnius. During the initial invasion several Lithuanians were wounded, some resulting in fatalities. For those who perished, they will be remembered as the ''Defenders of Freedom.'' I stand before you today to commend these defenders and all of Lithuania for what has become their common goal so eloquently stated by President Algiras Brazaukas, ''Now all people have a common goal: to live in an independent and free country.''

REFORM TERM LIMITS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, term limit supporters across Missouri—like me—are rightfully disappointed that the vote on congressional term limits is doomed to failure. I am a cosponsor of a constitutional amendment calling for tough, 12-year term limits for Senators and Representatives, alike. It had been my hope that a united stand for term limits would finally lead to real limits with teeth. On Wednesday, the House of Representatives will vote on term limits and it appears my vote in favor will be for naught, thanks to a problem that has grown out of control—division among conservative ranks.

Last November, voters in Missouri and eight other States approved so-called scarlet letter constitutional amendments. These scarlet letter amendments require Members of Congress from Missouri and the other affected States to vote for term limits of 6 years in the House and 12 in the Senate. If Members don't vote for these particular limits, or if Members vote for different limits, the phrase ''disregarded voter instruction on term limits'' will appear next to their names on the next ballot if they choose to seek re-election. Disregarding for a moment the fact that ballots will soon be cluttered with inaccurate information, this sounds like a good idea. Why not put a little muscle behind the campaign to enact term limits which, after all, are supported by 70 percent of Americans, ourselves included.

A not-so-funny thing happened on the way to the vote on term limits. As sure as the Mississippi flows south, the vote on term limits today will fail. It won't fail for lack of general term limit support, but will fail because of the handcuffs placed on the 30 Members of Congress who come from States where the scarlet letter initiative passed. Each State constitutional amendment—they are all different—requires that Members from those States vote for different versions of term limits. Even though term limit supporters garnered 227 votes in the last Congress (it takes two-thirds of Congress, or 290 votes, to pass a constitutional amendment) and even though more supporters of term limits were elected to Congress last November, there's no chance that tough, commonsense congressional limits can not pass. Missouri's scarlet letter amendment has joined with similar, but different, amendments in other States and backfired against the shared goal of conservatives to enact tough term limits.

So how did this mess come to be? Most Missouri voters will probably be surprised to learn that the scarlet letter amendment, when it appeared on the ballot in the voting booth, deceptively asked if voters support term limits, but did not state that Members would be prohibited from supporting other term limit bills if the three term limit fails. In fact, the fine print of this amendment explicitly instructs Members to vote against all other term limit bills. Put simply, the amendment reburies limits of three terms in the House, or nothing at all.

With that in mind, I intend to vote for every single reasonable measure that would limit congressional terms to either 6, 8, 10 or 12 years when the House considers term limit legislation. I campaigned in support of term limits and intend to carry through on that commitment.

Term limit supporters should consider this farce. The scarlet letter will likely be invoked even if I vote for the 6-year term limit, which is certain to fail despite my support. The scarlet letter will be invoked simply because I later vote for a different term limit bill that has a realistic chance of passing.

As if that weren't enough, different versions of the scarlet letter laws passed in each of the nine States. Thus, if Members from those States precisely follow those instructions, they must all vote for a different version of term limits—and against any others. It's the equivalent of asking the offensive line of the St. Louis Rams to sack their own quarterback each time they take to the field.

In the end, I will vote in favor of each and every serious term limit amendment brought before the House this week. If that means I invoke a misleading scarlet letter, then so be it. Those of us charged with the responsibility of dealing with the legislative agenda of the people on a practical basis are duty-bound to deliver what is feasible, and that includes term limits that stand a chance of passing Congress. We will never succeed in passing real term limits as long as outside groups continue to divide conservatives who support them. In our efforts to pass term limits with teeth, we should remember that when united, we win, when divided, we fail.

THE CROP INSURANCE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1997

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker I rise today to introduce a desperately needed piece of legislation, the Crop Insurance Improvement Act. This bill will restore fairness to the crop insurance system and make crop insurance a reasonable risk management tool for producers in North Dakota.

In my State farmers have suffered through three successive seasons of disastrous crop production and the fourth is already on its way. Abnormally high rainfall and wet conditions have prevented farmers from planting crops and have ruined crops that were planted. Through no fault of their own, these farmers have seen their crops destroyed and livelihood threatened year after year.

Now producers are being told that they will have to pay higher premiums for lower coverage as a result of these losses. Many producers are now faced with unaffordable insurance bills that provide little coverage. Nothing could be more unfair to the farmers of my State or any farmers who have suffered crop losses due to natural disasters.

Last year 172 producers in North Dakota were placed on the nonstandard classification list following 3 years of successive losses. Nonstandard classification results in higher premiums and lower coverage. This year, hundreds more producers face a similar situation because of the continued disaster. Even if the flooding and wet conditions were to stop today, many farmers would not be able to afford the crop insurance they need because of losses in previous disaster years.

My bill would ease this situation and restore some fairness and sanity to the crop insurance program. The Crop Insurance Improvement Act would provide exceptions for producers farming in areas declared a disaster by the President or the Secretary of Agriculture. It would prevent the listing of producers on the nonstandard classification list if they had losses related to a major declared disaster.

This bill would also prevent FCIC from counting losses in disaster years in the calculation of insurable yields. Poor yields in