EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CAROLYN BEEN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize a woman who was dedicated to the community, the church and her family, Carolyn ''Cookie'' Been. In doing so, I would like to honor this individual who, for so many years, exemplified the notion of public service and civic duty.

Carolyn's many entrepreneurial achievements speak well of the hard working woman that she was. Those achievements are highlighted by her contributions to the Naturita community. There, she served as a town board member from 1991–1992, when she was elected to the position of Mayor. For six years she served diligently and accomplished numerous feats. Among those feats, she secured $500,000 for the renovation of the town park and community center, and rebuilt the town's water and sewer treatment facilities. Numerous other achievements by Carolyn, too many to mention, had a profound positive effect on the community of Naturita. Carolyn received several awards for her contributions. She was named Woman of the Year in 1993 by the San Miguel Business and Professional Women, and Citizen of the Year in 1998 by the Nucla-Naturita Chamber of Commerce.

Carolyn Been considered her finest achievement to be her children, who have proven themselves very successful in Colorado and other states. Also, she is survived by seven wonderful grandchildren who will undoubtedly carry on her good will.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I recognize and say thank you to a fine citizen of Colorado and the United States. Her memory of love and dedication will live on forever.

H.R. 3011, THE TRUTH IN TELEPHONE BILLING ACT OF 1999

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R. 3011, the Truth in Telephone Billing Act of 1999.

This legislation is premised on a simple idea that consumers should know when their government is taxing them.

This may seem self-evident to my colleagues. But in reality, politicians and regulators all too often attempt to withhold from consumers information about the government's spending habits.

This is a particularly acute problem in the area of telecommunications services. The telecommunications services market has become a ''cash cow'' for politicians and regulators to fund their spending habits.

The ''Gore Tax'' is only one example of what has become a widespread problem not only at the Federal level but also with state and local governments as well. Here's how it usually works.

Rather than make its case for more government spending directly to the people, governments instead levy the tax on telecommunications service providers. The providers, in turn, pass the cost on to American consumers in the form of higher rates. What's worse, regulators then pressure the service provider to bury the tax in its rates, rather than permit the provider to clearly identify for the consumer how much of his or her monthly bill is attributable to government programs.

I know this because, last year, the Committee on Commerce conducted a thorough investigation of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC's) implementation of the Gore Tax. We found that the FCC imposed extraordinary and unprecedented political pressure on the Nation's largest long distance carriers (on whom the Gore Tax is levied) to withhold information from their subscribers about the true cost of the Gore Tax.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the specifics of government spending, we should all be able to agree that the American people should at least know when they're being taxed, and for what purpose.

Congress has enacted similar legislation dealing with taxation of cable services. As part of the 1992 Cable Act, I included a provision in the law that permits cable operators to place a line item on consumers' monthly bills that identifies the portion of the bill that is attributed to ''franchise fees'' that cities and counties typically exact from cable operators as the ''price'' for offering service. Again, while we may differ on the merits of a spending program, consumers are entitled to know when they're being taxed, and for what purpose.

Accordingly, the legislation I am introducing today will ensure that consumers of telecommunications services will have a complete picture of how much their monthly bills can be attributed to government spending. The legislation would require each telecommunications carrier to identify on each subscriber's monthly statement: (1) The government program for which the carrier is being taxed, and the government entity imposing the tax; (2) the form in which the tax is assessed (e.g., per subscriber, per line, percentage of revenues); and (3) a separate line-item that identifies the dollar amount of the subscriber's bill that is being used by the carrier to pay for the government program.

Mr. Speaker, consumers have a right to know whenever their government levies taxes. By mandating that telecommunications companies identify these taxes through line-items, Congress will promote transparency in taxation.

Moreover, this bill will help to promote the legitimacy of government spending when financed by consumers of telecommunications services. Government can never claim that its programs have the support of the American people when the people are unaware of the extent of the cost.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3011, the Truth in Telephone Billing Act of 1999.

AGRICULTURAL RISK PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2559) to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act, to strengthen the safety net for agricultural producers by providing greater access to more affordable risk management tools and improve protection from production and income loss, to improve the efficiency and integrity of the Federal crop insurance program, and for other purposes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 2559, the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 1999.

For several years now, farmers in this country have been plagued by severe weather conditions compounded by drastically low world prices for agricultural products. I am pleased that the Agriculture Risk Protection Act seeks to address the plight of farmers and that we are now taking these steps to enhance the federal crop insurance program.

H.R. 2559 will enable more farmers to participate in the federal crop insurance program and provide them with the tools they need to more adequately address their risk management needs. The Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 1999 increases the government premium support for the federal crop insurance program which will enable more farmers to participate in the program and afford higher levels of crop insurance protection.

The bill would make the federal crop insurance program more user friendly by expediting the policy approval process and helping farmers buy new policies. Furthermore, it would increase the number of crops that are eligible for the crop insurance program and, for the first time, make risk management assistance for livestock producers available to ranchers through a pilot program.

Many producers in the past, did not participate in the federal crop insurance program because they felt it was too expensive and provided too little coverage. To remedy this problem, the bill provides for performance based discounts for ''low risk'' producers. This will make it more appealing and affordable for ''low risk'' producers. this will make it more appealing and affordable for ''low risk'' producers, who previously did not participate in the federal crop insurance program.

I would also like to point out that I have introduced legislation, H.R. 473, intended to expand the scope of the federal crop insurance