

Sunday, August 10. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all members to join me in wishing this charming community of wonderful people a happy 200th birthday, with many best wishes as it approaches its third century.

SOUTHCOAST RADIO COMES TO
WASHINGTON

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to declare how proud I am to have taken part today in a truly unique radio experience. Southeastern New England residents got a step closer to their Nation's Capital today thanks to a very special radio broadcast, live from my Washington office. WSAR-SouthCoast (1480 AM) brought a beehive of politics to the ears of a great many of my constituents back home, and I want to sincerely thank the station for demonstrating their commitment to keeping our community informed about important issues before our national legislature.

Modern technology and a couple of very resourceful radio personalities linked SouthCoast Radio to a long list of special guests. I want to thank Rick Edwards and Richard Trieff for making today an interesting and captivating experience for thousands of SouthCoast residents with their probing interviews of national journalists, Federal lawmakers, and administration officials.

I also want to thank all those who stopped by 512 Cannon this afternoon to share their views and to take callers' questions and comments. Rick and Richard tapped into the insider perspectives of top-notch political journalists like Chris Black of the Boston Globe, Jonathan Salant of the Associated Press, and Ellen Ratner of Talk Radio News Service. The radio team peppered with questions national legislators such as Representative BOB RILEY of Alabama, Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island, Representative JOHN TIERNEY, and Senator JOHN KERRY of Massachusetts, and SouthCoast Representatives BARNEY FRANK and myself.

Rick and Richard got a Clinton administration perspective on local Massachusetts issues by chatting with Maria Echaveste, Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Public Liaison. And the talk radio duo got Fall River Mayor Ed Lambert and National Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids President Bob Novelli to discuss the remarkable efforts of the Greater Fall River Fresh Air Kids. It was certainly a lively day of political discussions for SouthCoast residents.

I commend Rick Edwards and Richard Trieff, and the entire crew at WSAR, for a day well spent on Capitol Hill. I want to thank Rick and Richard for making the trip down to our Nation's Capital, for putting together a first-rate docket of radio personalities, and for making it possible for SouthCoast residents to talk one-on-one with a number of Washington's movers and shakers. Phone lines were kept open throughout the 6-hour show, and a good number of southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island listeners got to grill the men and women who write their laws, administer their programs, and produce their news.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation needs more civic journalism. WSAR's program today clearly il-

lustrates how electronic journalism can grant special access to ordinary citizens, and how talk radio can connect people who are hundreds of miles apart. A functioning democracy depends upon the people's ability to express their ideas, questions, and concerns to those who represent them. Thanks to modern technology—and because of the efforts of committed civic journalists like Rick Edwards and Richard Trieff—we can continue to strengthen our democracy while keeping our local community informed.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS J. MANTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill, H.R. 2160:

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment offered by Messrs. SCHUMER and MILLER.

Mr. Chairman, while I understand and appreciate the proponent's interests in pursuing this amendment, I believe their concerns are misplaced and their proposed remedy misguided. I have worked closely with my friend and colleague from New York, Mr. SCHUMER, on a number of important issues over the years, and I do not question his motives; however, I regret that we are once again at odds over this emotional agricultural matter.

Mr. Chairman, only last year, the Congress enacted major, far-reaching agricultural reform legislation. In that measure, we dramatically changed our Nation's long-standing policies affecting farming and agricultural markets, including sugar production—which, I believe, is the only program crop to lose the Government guarantee of a minimum price. I supported these efforts to reform and modernize the sugar price support program and believe these changes have benefitted all segments of the industry. These reforms represented an important first step.

However, we simply have not allowed enough time to pass to ensure we achieved our goals in revising the sugar program and determine whether these changes were sufficient. I would also remind my colleagues that this House defeated a similar amendment during the farm bill debate.

Mr. Chairman, for this reason alone, I believe it is unfair and unwise to make such a drastic change in the U.S. sugar program as proposed in the amendment at this time.

We will hear today that this is an issue of fairness and the free-market system; consumers will be pitted against farmers, producers against refiners and manufacturers. I believe these arguments are overly simplistic, picking and choosing statistics which best represent the proponents' arguments, and the distinctions they promote do an injustice to the sugar producers of our great Nation, be they farmers of sugarcane, sugarbeet, or corn.

Mr. Chairman, I do not deny that there are some very real differences between the pro-

ponents and opponents on the issue before us, and I doubt any amount of debate is likely to change the position of the amendment's authors. However, I have learned over my years in Congress, and as a New York City councilman, that no issue is one-sided, nor is there often only one all-inclusive right answer to a problem. Reasonable people can, and often do, disagree.

I believe the issue before us here today falls into that category. We differ on what the impacts of a particular program may or may not be, and how best to address these issues. But, I do not believe either side has a claim to the so-called high ground.

And, with all due respect to the amendment's proponents, I do not take a back seat to their concern for the American consumer. I represent a congressional district, a part of New York City, where the 1990 median family income was only around \$30,000 a year. In the areas of Queens and the Bronx which I have the pleasure to represent, the cost of living is a very real issue with everyday impacts on the hard-working families of the 9th Congressional District of New York.

The proponents argue that their's is the only way to protect the consumer, to potentially lower the cost of sugar and products containing agricultural sweeteners by a few cents or, more likely, fractions of a cent. This is all well and good, if they can ensure the savings they propose will indeed be passed along to the American consumer. A prospect which they can not guarantee.

But, cost aside, the proponents can also not be sure their amendment, if approved, would not seriously disrupt the supply and availability of sugar throughout our country.

Mr. Chairman, my constituents do not benefit if they have the potential of saving a penny or two on a product but can no longer obtain that commodity or the product is no longer available in a sufficient and steady supply to meet their needs.

I have often commented in meetings I have had over the years that I am unaware of any farms in my urban district, except for one lone victory garden started during World War II. But, I am sure of one thing, and that is that each and every one of my constituents eats and needs a secure, steady supply of produce and food products at a reasonable price. As such, I will continue to support those programs which I believe ensure just that, and oppose those measures which I believe will not.

I will note here, also, that New York State does play a role in domestic sugar production, with numerous farms that grow corn which is utilized in sweetener production.

Mr. Chairman, my strong, historic support of agriculture programs, including sugar, and the associated refining and processing infrastructure, is based upon this—perhaps simplistic—premise: That the United States must continue to ensure all its people are provided the best, most secure, and stable source of food products possible. And, I believe this goal is best accomplished by reducing our dependence on foreign sources of agriculture products through the encouragement and promotion of a strong domestic agriculture system, and challenging unfair, anti-competitive foreign sources of food.

While we are usually on the same side of most food related issues, from time to time, I part paths with this Nation's food processors. As is the case here, I side with the producers