

going to be able to make a living and to do what they do best, and that is produce the food that feeds our country, that feeds the world, we have to allow them to do it on a level playing field.

We are going to have a meeting tomorrow in the House Committee on Agriculture to discuss what we can do to respond, but one thing is clear, and that is before we adjourn this Congress, we need to respond to the crisis that is out there in a way that will allow our farmers and ranchers to get their legs under them and get back on their feet and make it through this year and on to a better year. And we need to do the job that we have to do, and that is to continue to expand exports and improve trade so they can compete on a level playing field.

□ 1815

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS NATIONAL YOUTH ESSAY COMPETITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUNT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. REDMOND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REDMOND. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to read the winning essay in the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Youth Essay Competition. It was written by Heather Hull of Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Heather writes about patriotism, and she says:

Patriotism, to me, is the spirit and soul of a country. It is what keeps a country together not only through war and hardships, but also through victory and triumph. What else could keep a soldier from losing hope in battle, a disheartened country from losing the burning desire to rebuild itself, a nation of divided citizens from dueling each other?

It is patriotism that keeps our love of freedom alive. It is not money or wealth; it is not social acceptance. It is the pure goodwill of every true American that keeps our Nation's dream alive.

Every day we show our patriotism in large and small ways: by proudly saluting the flag, by saying the Pledge of Allegiance, by celebrating the Fourth of July with its bursts of fireworks. Americans show their patriotism when soldiers give their lives serving our country and when citizens cast a vote in support of a candidate whose ideals represent their own.

Behind our many freedoms, including the freedoms of speech and religion, stand all the men and women who, through dedication to their dreams and perseverance, through their struggles, have made so many opportunities ours. Although we may only recognize their sacrifices and suffering on certain holidays such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day, their legacy is all around us every day. In every military cemetery, the gravestones there represent hundreds of other patriots who have served our country and who continue to do so.

To me, patriotism is a kind of heroism. When I saw my face reflected in the shiny granite of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, The Wall, in Washington D.C., I was reminded of the valor of those whose names are etched there and of the courage of their loved ones.

We Americans have always shown patriotism by honoring our values and by envisioning freedoms for all. To me, patriotism is the optimistic spirit and the deep-rooted soul of our country, the United States of America.

I would like to thank Heather Hull of Los Alamos, New Mexico, for allowing me the honor of reading her essay on patriotism in this time of need for our Nation. Thank you, Heather.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS ON BEHALF OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the gentleman from South Dakota and the gentleman from Oklahoma to talk about what we heard in the farm belt during our August recess.

I used the 4 weeks of August and early September to travel the 66 counties of the First District of Kansas, holding 66 town hall meetings; and at every stop, the primary concern of the folks who came to see their Congressman was the price of farm commodities, the price of oil and gas. Everything that we produce and raise in our State has depressed prices; it has significant impact upon the people of our State, the people of this region, and now the people of the country.

The stories were sad. I can remember the past president of the State Future Farmers of America who has had every intention of returning to the family farm, but now cannot see how that can be done with the current state of agricultural economics. We need that next generation to be able to afford the ability to return to the family farm and to provide food and fiber to this country.

I can envision at the other end the senior citizen, the senior farmer, the wife, the spouse who comes with tears and a choked voice to say, "Congressman, what can my husband and I do to keep our family farm? We have fought this fight for over 30 years and we cannot afford to do so any longer."

And I think it is accurate to say that many farmers who have fought the fight in the past will decide that they no longer can afford to do so, and as a result, we will see more farms on the market, we will see larger farms, we will see fewer family farms, and we will see great difficulties in rural communities across the State of Kansas and across the country.

This has significant impact on not just farmers and ranchers, but on all Kansans and upon all Americans. In my State alone, revenue from the wheat crop and the tremendous harvest we have had 2 years in a row, this is not because of lack of production but this is because of a dramatic decline in the price of foreign commodities. In Kansas alone we see \$750 million less in revenue to farmers as a result of the price of wheat, \$190 million less in revenue to farmers in Kansas because of

the reduction in the price of corn, a \$290 million reduction in the State of Kansas to family farmers because of reduction in the grain sorghum price.

Soybeans reduce farm income another \$250 million in the State of Kansas. And cattle revenues are down over \$400 million this year alone.

And when we add that to the oil and gas economy of my State, another reduction of \$260 million, we are talking about a reduction in farm and rural income of more than \$2 billion in 1 year alone.

Mr. Speaker, these issues matter to the survival of not only the farmer but the small towns of the State of Kansas. It is a story to be told by the grocery store clerk, by the car dealer, by the implement dealer. All of us are impacted, and ultimately we pay a tremendous price as Americans in our food supplies.

So tonight I rise to ask for assistance from my urban colleagues, from my colleagues from other rural States, from Republicans and Democrats, to see if in the remaining days of the 1998 session of Congress, if we cannot come together to seek solutions, to preserve a way of life and to fight on behalf of the cattleman and the farmer across the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of raising this issue and joining my colleagues in seeking solutions on behalf of American agriculture.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4006

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name withdrawn as a cosponsor of H.R. 4006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

FARM CRISIS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak also on this farm crisis.

I represent coastal Georgia, 18 southeast Georgia counties. But to the entire State of Georgia, the farm crisis has been devastating. The coastal area that I represent, Savannah, Brunswick, and Hinesville, often get hit by hurricanes. And when they get hit by hurricanes, it is easy to get FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Association, to come in, or GEMA, the Georgia Emergency Management Association, people to come in; because we have visual images, trees that have crashed through the roofs of houses, people who have lost their homes, businesses that are wiped out and then have power shortages for days at a time or refrigeration equipment that closes down and a product that goes rotten. They have boats that have been washed ashore and landed on Main Street.

We have that kind of visual image when a hurricane hits, and so it is a little bit easier to get help. People come

in. They send ice. They send chain saws. They send bulldozers. They write checks. The Red Cross comes in, the Salvation Army.

We have been hit by such a crisis, but it is not quite as visible, and it is the farm crisis. We have lost \$700 million in crop damage to the State of Georgia alone.

I believe, listening to colleagues from all over the country, Democrats and Republicans alike, that the damage nationally may be as high as \$3-, \$4-, \$5-, potentially \$6 billion. It is tremendous. What our farmers in southeast Georgia have told me in a series of farm meetings that I had over the last couple of weeks is that they need, right now, a lifeline. And they do not really want to see Congress get in a big debate about how the lifeline gets to them.

If they are a drowning man and somebody throws them an inner tube, a life preserver, a floating piece of log, anything to cling to is sufficient; and that is what they are. If the relief comes in crop insurance liberalization, if the relief comes in disaster loans, that is fine. Low-interest, no-interest loans, loans with little or flexible collateral; they need it and they need it now.

They need market relief of prices. Prices are lower now than they were 2 years ago. They are cyclical by nature, but they are worse than ever. It seems like their foreign counterparts are heavily subsidized, and they do not have to comply with the EPA standards that we make our farmers comply with in terms of fertilizer and pesticides and herbicides and so forth. And that is fine.

Our farmers are not bellyaching about complying with our environmental and regulatory and labor laws. But what they are saying is, their foreign competitors are not; and then on top of that, they are subsidized. It is very difficult for a Georgia farmer to produce oats to compete against imported oats. And we heard this message over and over again.

We on the Committee on Agriculture on the appropriations side and on the authorizing side, we are trying to work for solutions. We need the Secretary of Agriculture to submit his disaster plan so that we can immediately start working with the Senate and the House Members to try to do something for them.

Putting this in perspective, Mr. Speaker, imagine being a young farmer named Roy Collins. Roy is 35 years old. His farm was started by his grandfather, handed down to him from his mother and dad, and he has been a farmer now for 12 years. And at this point, if we cannot do something, he is wiped out. A third-generation family farmer will be gone forever. He will move off to Atlanta. He will sell real estate. He will go to work for a bank or something. We will lose his talent. We will lose his generation of farmers.

The average age of a farmer in Georgia right now is 56. We cannot afford to

skip a generation of farming. It becomes at that point an issue of national security, not just making a good vocation for people. But America does not and should not be dependent on foreign producers for our food.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KINGSTON. I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to indicate to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) that I have been listening to the very eloquent, I think "plea" is a fair word to say. In other words, that we are trying to get across what the difficulties are not only for the family farmer but for farming in general.

I simply want to say that I believe another speaker had said that there was an appeal being made to individuals who may represent urban areas to understand what the implications are.

AMERICAN FAMILY FARMERS

(Mr. ABERCROMBIE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I merely want to indicate that coming, as I do, from a State in which rural and urban constituencies meld into one another in ways that may not always be fully appreciated by the public at large, and representing the urban part of the State of Hawaii, I want to indicate that I am in full sympathy with that and want to express not only to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), but to all others who are finding themselves in this circumstance, that those of us who are working with sugar producers in the State of Hawaii fully understand what the implications are from foreign workers who are exploited and being utilized against American workers and against American growers, coming into the picture under adverse circumstances such as the gentleman has just outlined.

And I want to assure my colleague that those of us from urban areas who understand that this is a necessity for an integrated approach on behalf of Americans, both rural and urban, it being necessary not just for their survival, but for the prosperity of the country are in full sympathy with him and want to work with him on it.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to say, from Georgia to Hawaii, we are happy to work for the American family farmer; and at this point, if we do not help them, we will not have a family farmer left.

□ 1830

So we are unified in party and geography on this.

MANAGED CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUNT). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 15 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, can I just clarify again, is that because it is understood that the other 45 minutes of the hour will be dedicated to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE)?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is the Chair's understanding.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to talk about the prospects of passing a managed care reform bill in the time Congress has left before it adjourns for the year in October. Last evening, I mentioned how over the August break I had many town meetings and outreach programs throughout my district and continually the issue of managed care reform was the number one concern that my constituents had.

I know, having talked to many of my colleagues since we returned this week, that many of them say the same thing; that this is the issue that the average American or that most Americans want this Congress to address before we adjourn in October. Although there is not much time left, I am hopeful that we can reach an agreement with our Republican colleagues and send the President a managed care reform bill that he can sign.

Now, we know that the full House took up the issue of managed care reform before the August recess and the Republican leadership's bill narrowly passed and the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights, which I support, unfortunately was narrowly defeated.

I want to stress again how important it is to pass the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights or at least something very much like it because of the valuable patient protections that are included therein, such as the return of medical decision-making to patients and health care professionals, not insurance company bureaucrats; access to specialists, including access to pediatric specialists for children; coverage for emergency room care; the right to talk freely with doctors and nurses about every medical option; an appeals process and real legal accountability for insurance company decisions and, finally, an end to financial incentives for doctors and nurses to limit the care that they provide.

If Congress is going to get a bill to the President that is like the Patients' Bill of Rights, then the Senate must act very swiftly. We passed the Republican leadership bill, which I think was a bad bill, in the House but now it is up to the Senate to pass a strong bill so that we can go to conference and get something to the President's desk that both Houses agree on. The House Republican bill, I would point out, is considerably different from the Senate Republican bill, for one thing, but more importantly both Republican bills fail to address a number of provisions that the President and congressional Democrats believe must be part of any managed care reform legislation.