

in the Special Olympics, in the Toys for Tots, who get involved in the Boys and Girls Clubs, they are gone. They are no longer part of the community. They are shipped off, and once again the military becomes somebody else's constituent, somebody else's neighbor.

It is bad, because when we lose that property, we never get it back, particularly our bases that are in waterside communities, once that property is disposed of, should there be another national crisis. And let me tell the Members, there will be another national crisis.

I have been in Congress for 12 years. I no sooner got here than the Berlin Wall came down and 3 months later American forces were in Panama. Less than a year later they were in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Since then they have gone to Bosnia, Kosovo. Right now, they are in Afghanistan. Who knows, given the open-ended use of force resolution that this Congress has passed, what happens next.

I think it is a horrible message that we are going to tell those people who defend us that their military housing is at risk because we could very well close down the base that houses them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), for helping me to introduce this resolution. I would hope my colleagues would give serious thought to this. Not one Member of the House has voted to close bases. The other body only passed it by three votes.

I think it would be insane of the House of Representatives to allow this bad policy to become law tomorrow.

#### AMERICA CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE THE PLIGHT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FARMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, as I have often spoken to this body about the plight of black farmers, again I rise today to speak about the same subject. Their problems and their possibilities transcend region and reach beyond where each of us lives and encompass a wide array of economic opportunities, and include not just black Americans but Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Indian Americans, and women.

This issue also affects the disabled. A wheelchair-bound white male in Michigan has felt the sting of unfair, discriminatory practices at the hands of those charged with serving, through the Agriculture Department, all citizens who make farming a way of life.

The plight of black farmers also affects those who reside in urban America as certainly as it affects those in rural America. What if the cost of milk was prohibitive for the average person? It is in many parts of the world. What if eggs and bread was not readily available, even for those who could afford

them? That is the situation for some on other continents. What if fresh fruit, vegetables, or poultry could not be found on our supermarket shelves? There are supermarket shelves devoid of these products.

Just a short time ago, many Americans were touched by the kind of discomfort that citizens around the world experience on a daily basis when the meat crisis ground some hamburger sales to a screeching halt. The fate of farmers and the fate of urban dwellers are inextricably tied together. Discriminatory practices in extending loans, technical assistance, and resources of whatever kind will cost those in New York as surely as they will cost those in my district in Halifax County, North Carolina. Fading numbers of small farmers, black farmers, necessarily impact the quality of life and the cost of food and fiber.

Mr. Speaker, the motivation for me to seek an assignment with the Committee on Agriculture was that it provided me an excellent opportunity for me to improve the quality of life for the residents of my area, the First Congressional District of North Carolina, a primarily rural and economically disadvantaged area with large and small farmers, both commercial and non-commercial.

Farms have been important to this Nation's past; and farmers are vital to this Nation's future, especially small family farmers and ranchers. American producers, who represent less than 3 percent of the population, provide more than enough to meet the needs of our Nation, as well as many nations of the world.

There has been a great decline, however, in our Nation's farms since the late fifties. In 1959, there were over 2.4 million small farms in the United States. Over 170,000 farms were in North Carolina, representing some 6.9 percent. But by 1978, the national number of small farms had declined to a little over 1.3 million, a loss of 1.1 million small farms. In the same period, North Carolina lost 106,262 small farms, bringing our total to 69,091 small farms, but still holding at 5 percent of the national total.

It is also important to understand that by 1990, almost a quarter of all farm households had incomes below the poverty line, more than twice the national average. Life has become very tough for our American farmers.

By 1992, there were only 1.1 million small farms left in the United States, a 45 percent decline from 1959. North Carolina had only a little over 59,000 farms left in 1992, a 23 percent decline; better than the national percentage, however, but certainly nothing to brag about.

Several factors have accelerated the demise of small producers: Globalization of commerce, economies of scale, limited access to capital, technological advances. The existence of worldwide markets for all commodities, not just agriculture, has created unique market forces.

Indeed, black farmers have suffered more. More than anything else, Mr. Speaker, the American people have ignored the fact that only 1 percent of the total farmers that now exist are African American; that is 18,816. This Nation cannot afford to ignore the plight of American farmers who happen to be African American.

#### TAX RELIEF FOR FAMILIES OF SURVIVORS OF SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS, ECONOMIC SECURITY, AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss a number of topics tonight; and I know I am going to be joined by at least one of my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN).

But I wanted to say that in the last couple of weeks before the holiday break, which I guess most of the Members of Congress are hoping that there will be some sort of holiday break, what I find, both here in Washington, in this Chamber, as well as back at home, is that while people continue to be concerned about the war on terrorism and also security here at home, they are also increasingly concerned about the economy and the recession that we now face, and the fact that so many workers have lost their jobs, the unemployment rate continues to rise, and that those displaced workers oftentimes have a problem, obviously, finding a new job, but also with their health care, their inability to keep their health insurance, as well as the fact that many Americans now face a problem that even if they have health insurance, they find that it costs them more, either because the premium goes up or because they have more copayments.

There is a tremendous amount of concern also, I think, by Americans, by the average American, about retirement security and whether Social Security, for example, or their pension, is going to be there when they retire.

So on the one hand, we continue the war on terrorism, which the President has very successfully continued in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al Qaeda; but at the same time, there is increasing concern about the economy at home and the recession that faces us.

I wanted to start this evening very briefly by talking about an issue that kind of goes together and concerns what happened September 11, and also is an economic security issue.

About one week ago, last Wednesday, in fact, there were about a dozen women who lost their husbands during the September 11 terrorist attack who