

Now, perhaps more than ever, there is a greater need for these regional commissions. This bill recognizes the importance of the regional commissions to these chronically distressed areas. The bill strengthens the commissions by establishing a uniform organizational structure, under which an affirmative vote of a commission requires a majority of State members plus the affirmative vote of the Federal cochairperson. With this voting structure, the bill ensures that the Federal and State roles in a commission are equal and interdependent, thereby promoting a true Federal-State partnership.

In addition, the bill establishes a coordinating council for the regional commissions consisting of representatives from all the commissions, including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Denali Commission. The coordinating council is directed to meet biannually to discuss issues facing regions that suffer chronic distress and successful strategies for promoting regional development. While the council will assist the commissions in promoting regional development, it has no decision-making authority over any of the commissions.

Finally, the bill authorizes sufficient funds for each commission so that a commission will have the means available to fulfill its mission of promoting economic and infrastructure development. The bill authorizes \$30 million for each commission in fiscal year 2004 (the amount currently authorized for the Delta and Northern Great Plains Regional Authorities) and increases that authorization by \$5 million for each successive year through fiscal year 2008.

Frankly, I am concerned about this administration's lack of funding for existing regional commissions. In its fiscal year 2004 budget proposal, the administration slashes the budgets of the regional commissions—proposing only \$2 million for the Delta Regional Authority and no funding for the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority. If these budget proposals were to be enacted, the commissions, and their grant-making authority, would be rendered essentially ineffective. Providing the commissions with the funds necessary to carry out their purpose is crucial to the economic development of these regions.

It is time that we affirm our commitment to regional economic development by authorizing these commissions and providing the funding necessary from them to break the cycle of chronic distress in these regions. I believe this bill will help us do that.

SUMMARY OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT

The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act organizes four regional commissions under a common framework, thereby providing a more uniform method for distributing economic assistance throughout the regions most in need of such assistance. It reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority and creates two new regional commissions: the Southeast Crescent and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. Both of these latter commissions have been proposed in legislation introduced this Congress and are designed to address problems of systemic poverty and chronic underdevelopment in those regions. Every county or parish that is currently included in a commission through enacted or proposed legislation is similarly included in that same commission under this bill. While

the bill follows the successful organizational model of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), it does not include the ARC or the Denali Commission (a wholly intrastate commission) in its framework.

PURPOSE

To organize the regional commissions in the lower 48 states (with the exception of the Appalachian Regional Commission) under a common framework, providing a more uniform organization structure among the commissions and a more uniform method for distributing economic assistance throughout the country.

COMMISSIONS

The bill reauthorizes the Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission, and creates the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. The Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission are composed of the same states, counties, and parishes included in the existing Delta Regional Authority and Northern Great Plains Regional Authority. The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission are composed of the same states and counties proposed in legislation introduced in the 108th Congress to create a Southeast Crescent Regional Authority and a Southwest Border Regional Commission.

Each commission is authorized to receive appropriations of \$30 million for fiscal year 2004; \$35 million for fiscal year 2005; \$40 million for fiscal year 2006; \$45 million for fiscal year 2007; and \$50 million for fiscal year 2008.

Currently, some counties qualify for membership in more than one regional commission. The bill does not change that. However, the bill provides that an individual county may only receive economic assistance from one regional commission. Therefore, if a county is eligible for membership in more than one commission, it must select one commission in which it would like to participate and be eligible to receive funds. A county or parish can change its selection 90 days before the start of the fiscal year.

The Denali Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission are not included in this statute.

COMPOSITION

Each commission includes a Federal cochairperson and a state cochairperson, who is selected from among the state members. Like current law, the Northern Great Plains Commission also includes a tribal cochairperson.

An affirmative vote of a commission requires an affirmative vote of the federal cochairperson plus a majority of state members.

Like the current laws authorizing regional commissions, the bill sets forth provisions for the salaries of commission members, the appointment of alternatives, and the hiring of additional staff, including an Executive Director.

The bill establishes a coordinating council for the regional commissions consisting of representatives from all the commissions, including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Denali Commission. The coordinating council is directed to meet biannually to discuss issues facing regions that suffer chronic distress and successful strategies for promoting regional development. The council has no decision-making authority.

Also like current law, each state must develop a comprehensive economic development plan and each commission must develop an economic and infrastructure development plan.

Commissions are required to designate distressed, transitional and attainment coun-

ties, and isolated areas of distress within attainment counties, within their region and must allocate at least 50 percent of the appropriations made available to the commission to projects in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Commissions have the authority to make grants to State and local governments, and public and nonprofit organizations, for economic development projects, with an emphasis on infrastructure projects, including transportation, basic public, and telecommunications infrastructure projects.

The bill provides for a commission share of 50 percent of the costs of projects; that percentage increases to up to 80 percent for distressed counties. These shares are increased by 10 percent (to 60 percent and 90 percent, respectively) for those projects that have a significant regional impact.

Commissions have the authority to make grants to local development districts to assist in the payment of the administration of the district. The commission of these grants is limited to 80 percent of the administrative expenses of the local development district receiving the grant.

Commissions have the authority to supplement part of the basic Federal contribution to projects authorized under other Federal grant programs and to increase the Federal contribution above the fixed maximum part of the cost. The federal share is the same for projects (50 percent and 80 percent for distressed counties, with a 10 percent bonus for regional projects), with the stipulation that the total federal contribution cannot exceed 80 percent.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. JOHN A. DAVITT, PRESIDENT AND SUPERINTENDENT OF GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate John Davitt who has dedicated 35 years of service to Glendale Community College.

John A. Davitt received a B.S. in History in 1954 and an M.A. in Secondary Education in 1958 from the University of San Francisco. In 1977, he graduated from the University of Southern California with a doctorate in Community College Administration-Higher Education. While he pursued his own studies, Dr. Davitt continued to exercise his passion to teach and serve the student community in the San Francisco Unified School District. From 1968 to 1980, he was a consultant for the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and from 1970 to 1985, he was a consultant for the College Entrance Examination Board.

Dr. Davitt has had a myriad of impressive employment and service experiences. From 1955 to 1957, he was stationed at Fort Mason, California as a First Lieutenant in the United States Army. From 1957 to 1964, he was a Social Studies teacher, counselor, and debating coach at Roosevelt Junior High School, and instructor at Galileo Adult School in San Francisco. Additionally, from 1964 to 1966 Dr. Davitt was a counselor at Merritt College. He was the director and assistant professor of the Institute for Training of Community College Student Personnel Workers at

California State University Los Angeles from 1966 to 1968. His distinguished list of memberships includes the Glendale Chamber of Commerce, and the Association of California Community College Administrators. He is also on the board of directors for Crestview Preparatory School and Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy.

In 1968, Dr. Davitt introduced his unique and open management style to our community by taking the position of Administrative Dean of Personnel Services at Glendale Community College. In 1983, he was named Vice President of Instructional Services. Subsequently, in 1985 he became the college's Superintendent-President, transforming the campus into an innovative and productive center for learning. Davitt fervently fosters and promotes ideals of development and growth. As President, he has led the college through unprecedented achievements. Dr. Davitt is a remarkable man whose unwavering passion and dedication have been instilled not only in the college's faculty, but student body as well.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in congratulating John Davitt on a truly exemplary professional and public service career, and for his immense commitment to Glendale Community College and the students it serves.

H.R. 7

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, in my district, the Kansas Health Foundation is working to increase the health of Kansans, especially the health of children. Its goal is to make Kansas the best State in the Nation in which to raise a child. By working with individuals, communities, universities and other institutions, the Kansas Health Foundation is helping build a community of people who care about the health and well-being of children and other at-risk individuals.

I rise today in support of H.R. 7, the Charitable Giving Act of 2003. This bill will help organizations like the Kansas Health Foundation raise more funds and ultimately reach more people. All across this country we have organizations, foundations, churches and faith-based groups helping the disadvantaged. I am especially supportive of this bill because it encourages individuals and the private sector to act responsibly toward their neighbors and those who are less fortunate. By increasing the flow of funds to charitable organizations, we will help make America and the world a better place to live.

H.R. 7 will provide more than 85 million Americans who do not itemize on their Federal tax returns the ability to deduct a portion of their charitable contributions. By making it simpler for taxpayers to deduct money for charitable giving, we will be sending a positive message to taxpayers that encourages giving money to organizations that help those in need.

While America is the land of great opportunity, there remain many families, both here

and around the world, that lack food, shelter, medicine and other basic living needs. Millions of individuals across this country pool their resources to help meet many of these needs by giving money to their local churches and non-profit organizations. H.R. 7 will make such acts of goodwill even more rewarding for those who give by allowing taxpayers to claim a deduction for their charitable giving, even if the taxpayer does not itemize.

I applaud House Majority Whip Roy Blunt for sponsoring this important bill that will, in his words, help more charities help more Americans.

The Charitable Giving Act of 2003 further provides financial incentives for charitable giving by allowing older Americans the incentive to make tax-free contributions from their Individual Retirement Accounts. If people want to give donations to help those in need from their retirement savings, I think it is only proper that we reward such acts of generosity.

H.R. 7 would encourage more giving from the private business sector as well. By gradually increasing the cap on corporate charitable contributions from 10 percent to 20 percent over the next decade, Congress will be sending a clear message of community responsibility to corporate America. The more investment a company or business makes in its community, the more goodwill it generates.

I urge my colleagues to join me today in supporting the Charitable Giving Act of 2003. It is a well-crafted, bipartisan bill that deserves our full support.

TRIBUTE TO JERRY IZENBERG
AND PROJECT PRIDE

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the legendary columnist, Jerry Izenberg, and his immense contributions to the Newark community through his organization, Project Pride.

Jerry Izenberg has been a newspaperman for over 52 years, most recently with the New Jersey Star-Ledger, contributing columns that have appeared throughout the United States, as well as Puerto Rico, Alaska, Mexico, Canada and Italy. As a sportswriter, Jerry Izenberg's accomplishments are incredibly vast. Over his career, he has won numerous literary awards and recognitions, has been inducted into seven Halls of Fame and has been an integral part of the sports world in the United States. To this day, he continues to leave his mark on the sports writing world, all the while inspiring numerous young writers. And above all, Jerry Izenberg has also managed to be a dedicated family man, with his wife, Aileen, four children and four grandchildren.

Despite all of these remarkable professional and personal accomplishments, I can say with confidence that Jerry Izenberg is most proud of his work with Project Pride. As a native of Newark, New Jersey, Jerry knew of the hardships that the people of that area face on a regular basis. When he founded Project Pride

Incorporated 25 years ago, Jerry Izenberg took the personal initiative to create hope and opportunity for the children of Newark. Over the 25 years of its existence, Project Pride has helped send 902 kids to college, allowed the kids in Newark K-5 schools to study a variety of subjects and funded numerous community and athletic programs that have kept as many as 1,000 Newark kids off the streets. What is more amazing, Project Pride has accomplished all of it without accepting a single penny from Federal, State or local funds.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Education and Workforce Committee and a former teacher, I understand the significance of the work that Jerry Izenberg has done for the city of Newark. I know that my colleagues here in the U.S. House of Representatives not only join me today in recognizing the tremendous contributions of Jerry Izenberg and Project Pride, but also commending Jerry for his own personal dedication to continue providing the opportunity to so many of our youths.

A TRIBUTE TO THE ASSOCIATION
OF THEATRICAL PRESS AGENTS
AND MANAGERS

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 29, 2003

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, it is my great personal pleasure to rise today in cognition of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers (ATPAM) for its contribution to the art of stage entertainment so immensely enjoyed by residents of New York and by audiences throughout the Nation and around the globe.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of ATPAM, an organization that has maintained a prominent place in the entertainment industry since it first received its charter from the American Federation of Labor in 1928. Since its inception, ATPAM, a coalition of press agents, publicity and marketing specialists, company managers and house and facilities managers, has devoted its resources to the enrichment of stage entertainment and the health, vitality, and success of its members.

ATPAM has also dedicated considerable efforts to philanthropy in its support of industry-wide charities such as the Actor's Fund of America and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. ATPAM was able to expand that objective even further when it decided to affiliate with IATSE and carry its good work to a broader community. Most notable are ATPAM's exemplary actions in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York. ATPAM members accepted salary cuts in order to keep Broadway going after 9/11, and mobilized members of other New York theatrical unions to follow their lead.

The Association of Theatrical Press Agents & Managers has been an inspiration to the entertainment industry since its founding seventy-five years ago, and remains a tremendous force for the cultural arts of New York City and beyond. Today, I am proud to stand before Congress and join ATPAM in their celebration.