

POLLINATOR HABITAT
PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President I rise today to speak about S. 1496, the Pollinator Habitat Protection Act, which I introduced on May 24. Pulitzer Prize-winning insect biologist E.O. Wilson said the honeybee is nature's "workhorse—and we took it for granted." That statement sums up the state of the Nation's honey bee.

Our Nation's honeybees are being affected by a phenomenon named colony collapse disorder, and the symptoms are baffling. Since October 2006, 35 percent or more of the United States' population of the Western honeybee—billions of individual bees—simply flew from their hives and disappeared.

We don't know what is causing their disappearance. The honeybee is an active pollinator for both agriculture and native plants. It is used commercially to pollinate crops across the country, and some crops, like apples and almonds, will not produce fruit without the assistance of the honeybee. My home State of Montana is the country's fifth largest honey-producing State. Without bees, Montana would not produce our famous huckleberries.

During busy years, a hive might make up to five cross-country trips, following the crop blooming cycles. Scientists are speculating that the bees are stressed from making cross-country journeys and are being attacked by viruses and parasites. Either way, this is an emergency situation, and we have to do something now.

That is why I am introducing the Pollinator Habitat Protection Act. This bill is simple and it makes sense. It is the right thing to do.

Through the use of the existing conservation programs in the farm bill, agricultural producers would receive incentives to rebuild natural habitat with flowering plants to benefit pollinators such as honey bees. For example, a producer could plant clover, alfalfa, or other native flowering plants on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

Perhaps this bill's most attractive feature is that it does not cost additional money or create a new program. It simply requires existing conservation programs to acknowledge pollinator habitat as a conservation resource and rewards producers whose conservation practices are beneficial for pollinators.

When the budget is tight, it is better to improve existing programs rather than create new ones. This is a dramatic important improvement for our conservation programs.

It is not often we can protect our environment and increase producer's income at the same time. But that is exactly what this bill will do. This is one simple way to help out our honeybee population and give farmers another option to make money on their land.

As a honorary cochair of the Pollinator Partnership, I am honored to in-

roduce this legislation. I thank organizations like the Coevolution Institute which are doing the right thing, by bringing a diverse group of people together from across the country to address this challenging issue.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1496 the Pollinator Habitat Protection Act.

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD
LABOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today, June 12, is the annual observance of the International Labor Organization's World Day Against Child Labor. This is the day we set aside each year to speak out against the fact that millions of children around the globe continue to be trapped in forced and abusive labor, often in extremely hazardous conditions.

For many years, I have been active in efforts to stop exploitative child labor as well as trafficking in child and female slaves around the world. In my travels, I have seen this scourge firsthand. I have come to the floor of the Senate many times to speak about this issue. I have spoken about how shocked I was to see the deplorable conditions under which these kids are forced to work. Many are physically, emotionally, and sexually abused. All of them, every child engaged in abusive child labor, is deprived of a childhood solely for someone else's gain.

Why should we as a nation tolerate children being used in such a manner? We should not. It is a moral outrage and an affront to human dignity. When a child is exploited for the economic gains of others, not only does the child lose, but the family loses, and I think the whole world loses. It is bad economics, and it is bad development strategy. A nation cannot achieve prosperity on the backs of its children, and there must be no place in the global economy for child labor.

This year, the World Day Against Child Labor specifically shines a spotlight on child laborers in agriculture. This has been a special concern for me going back many years. I have been especially concerned about forced child labor in the cocoa industry.

In 2001, the Knight-Ridder syndicate ran a series of articles on forced child labor on cocoa farms in West Africa. According to one of those articles, child laborers in Ivory Coast "are whipped, beaten, and broken like horses to harvest the almond-sized beans that are made into chocolate treats for more fortunate children in Europe and the United States."

When I read these articles, I resolved to do everything I could to end this tragic exploitation of children. Together with Congressman ELIOT ENGEL of New York, we engaged the major chocolate companies in lengthy, intense negotiations. The result was what is now called the Harkin-Engel protocol, an agreement that aims to ensure that cocoa beans are grown and

processed in a manner that complies with the International Labor Organization Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.

The Harkin-Engel protocol, signed in September 2001, applies everywhere that cocoa is grown and processed. It laid out a series of date-specific actions, including the development of credible, mutually acceptable, voluntary industry-wide standards of public certification by July 1, 2005 in order to give a public accounting of labor practices in cocoa farming. Although I was disappointed that the July 2005 deadline was not fully met by the industry, we have continued to work together and the rollout of the certification system—including monitoring, data analysis reporting, and activities to reduce the worst forms of child labor—will proceed as aggressively as possible in Ivory Coast and Ghana with the goal of covering 50 percent of the two countries' cocoa producing areas by July of 2008. This is, indeed, a milestone on the path toward the ultimate goal of 100 percent coverage in cocoa-producing countries around the world.

The clock is ticking. The corporations and national governments that were party to the Harkin-Engel protocol are moving forward. For example, the Government of Ghana has conducted a pilot project and the results were released. However, the results still need to be independently verified, and I am hopeful that the industry will work with the Ghanaian government to have these preliminary reports independently verified in accordance with the protocol. Additionally, the Ivorian government has only recently begun to conduct a pilot certification process. It is a good start, but that pilot needs to be scaled up in order to give more realistic results for the main harvest season.

The Harkin-Engel protocol marks an important first—an entire industry, including companies from the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom taking responsibility for addressing the worst forms of child labor and forced labor in its supply chain.

Today the protocol stands as a framework for progress in West Africa, bringing together industry, West African governments, organized labor, non-governmental organizations, farmers groups, and experts in a concerted effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and forced labor from the growing and processing of cocoa.

To further assist in the effort to eradicate child labor, in my capacity as chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, this past April I convened a hearing to facilitate collaborative efforts by advocacy groups in the child labor field. In light of the International Labor Organization's report last year, the discussion focused on how best to continue the cooperative international effort to eradicate child labor.