EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING LARRY THOMAS WEAVER II

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 2003

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, Whereas, Larry Thomas Weaver II has devoted himself to serving others through his membership in the Boy Scouts of America; and

Whereas, Larry Thomas Weaver II has shared his time and talent with the community in which he resides; and

Whereas, Larry Thomas Weaver II has demonstrated a commitment to meet challenges with enthusiasm, confidence and outstanding service; and

Whereas, Larry Thomas Weaver II must be commended for the hard work and dedication he put forth in earning the Eagle Scout Award;

Therefore, I join with Troop 260, the residents of Junction City, and the entire 18th Congressional District in congratulating Larry Thomas Weaver II as he receives the Eagle Scout Award.

UNITED STATES EMBARGO ON CUBA

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 2003

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise again in this Congress to introduce a bill to lift the harmful and counterproductive United States Embargo on Cuba.

On June 29, 2001, the Texas state legislature adopted a resolution calling for an end to U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba. Lawmakers emphasized the failure of sanctions to remove Castro from power, and the unwillingness of other nations to respect the embargo. One Texas Representative stated:

''We have a lot of rice and agricultural products, as well as high-tech products, that would be much cheaper for Cuba to purchase from Texas. All that could come through the ports of Houston and Corpus Christi.'' I wholeheartedly support this resolution, and I have introduced similar federal legislation in past years to lift all trade, travel, and telecommunications restrictions with Cuba. I only wish Congress understood the simple wisdom expressed in Austin, so that we could end the harmful and ineffective trade sanctions that serve no national purpose.

I oppose economic sanctions for two very simple reasons. First, they don't work as effective foreign policy. Time after time, from Cuba to China to Iraq, we have failed to unseat despotic leaders by refusing to trade with the people of those nations. If anything, the anti-American sentiment aroused by sanctions often strengthens the popularity of such leaders, who use America as a convenient scapegoat to divert attention from their own tyranny. History clearly shows that free and open trade does far more to liberalize oppressive governments than trade wars. Economic freedom and political freedom are inextricably linked—when people get a taste of goods and information from abroad, they are less likely to tolerate a closed society at home. So while sanctions may serve our patriotic fervor, they mostly harm innocent citizens and do nothing to displace the governments we claim as enemies.

Second, sanctions simply hurt American industries, particularly agriculture. Every market we close to our nation's farmers is a market exploited by foreign farmers. China, Russia, the middle east, North Korea, and Cuba all represent huge markets for our farm products, yet many in Congress favor current or proposed trade restrictions that prevent our farmers from selling to the billions of people in these countries. The Department of Agriculture estimates that Iraq alone represents a $1 billion market for American farm goods. Given our status as one of the world's largest agricultural producers, why would we ever choose to restrict our exports? The only beneficiaries of our sanctions policies are our foreign competitors.

I certainly understand the emotional feelings many Americans have toward nations such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Cuba. Yet we must not let our emotions overwhelm our judgment in foreign policy matters, because ultimately human lives are at stake. Economic common sense, self-interested foreign policy goals, and humanitarian ideals all point to the same conclusion: Congress should work to end economic sanctions against all nations immediately.

The legislation I introduce today is representative of true free trade in that while it opens trade, it prohibits the U.S. Taxpayer from being compelled to subsidize the United States government, the Cuban government or individuals or entities that choose to trade with Cuban citizens.

HELP REMOVE BARRIERS TO WORK FOR THE DISABLED

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 2003

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, millions of disabled Americans must rely on government disability checks or support from family members in order to get by. For many of these men and women, the prospect of being employed outside the home seems out of reach because the costs associated with working are simply too daunting.

For example, in order to work, an individual who uses a wheelchair might need to hire a personal attendant to provide transportation to and from the job site. Such persons might also need assistance with cleaning, cooking, and other daily tasks that they are unable to perform independently and, without which, they could not be gainfully employed outside the home.

In many cases, the amount of money that a disabled worker would have to spend on these essential services is substantial. And if a significant portion of the worker's earnings would be spent on paying for such expenses, the disabled individual might elect to stay home—absent some additional financial incentive.

Unfortunately, not only do these individuals fail to benefit from all that employment could offer, but society as a whole never realizes the enormous contributions they might have made if given the right opportunities. Disabled workers possess a myriad of talents and skills that could be of tremendous value to the business community and provide a boost to the U.S. economy.

Today, I am introducing the Disabled Workers Empowerment Act, which would expand upon an existing provision in the tax code in order to make it easier for disabled persons to enter the workforce. Current law allows a limited deduction for disabled workers' expenses, but this deduction is strictly limited to expenses incurred at the workplace or for work performed at home. Moreover, it can be claimed only by individuals who itemize expenses on their tax return.

My bill would expand the types of expenses that could be deducted as work-related and permit a deduction regardless of whether or not the taxpayer itemizes expenses. Specifically, expenses incurred away from the job site (such as paying an attendant to provide transportation to and from work or perform domestic and personal care services at home) would be deductible as long as such expenses were incurred because of the individual's disabilities. In this way, the bill reflects the real-life costs that disabled workers face on a daily basis.

Finally, the amount that could be deducted for any taxable year would be no more than the disabled worker's earned income. By tying this new tax benefit to income generated from work, the deduction would serve as an incentive for disabled individuals to engage in employment that is both personally fulfilling and creates financial independence.

The Disabled Workers Empowerment Act would open the door to employment for millions of disabled Americans, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this measure.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 9, 2003

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall votes No. 109, No. 110, and No.111. If present I would have voted ''yea.''

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.