

FERC. This provision flies in the face of the Coastal Zone Management Act. CZMA is a unique partnership between coastal States and the Federal Government that allows States to protect their own coastal resources. This is an especially important law for Connecticut, where the commerce that comes from the Long Island Sound fishing grounds, ports and recreational area makes it a \$5 billion economic asset. Because our State's economy depends on the Long Island Sound, we believe that the State has the obligation to protect it from possible environmental harm.

Rather than passing this legislation, we ought to be reducing our dependence on foreign oil by improving our energy efficiency and maximizing our domestic energy production in an environmentally sound way—by investing in cleaner, more secure energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass and fuel cell technology. My State of Connecticut is a leader in fuel cell technology, with several businesses doing research that is on the cusp of revolutionizing the way our Nation powers its homes, cars and businesses. This bill should be investing in American small businesses like Proton Energy in Wallingford, Nxegen in Middletown and Danbury's Fuel Cell Energy—companies that already do over \$300 million worth of fuel cell business and move us closer to true energy independence.

Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes 20th century solutions for 21st century energy challenges. It neglects the realities of a changing world—that our dependence on foreign oil has real consequences for our foreign policy, that the warming of the planet will have a serious impact on the lives of all Americans. It ignores our entrepreneurial spirit and technological know-how to develop and harness new forms of energy. And it ignores the rights of States to look after the interests of their citizens.

America can do better—and deserves better—than this conference report. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

#### INTRODUCING THE TEXAS EDUCATOR RETIREMENT EQUITY ACT

### HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 6, 2005*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Texas Educator Retirement Equity Act, which restores to widowed Texas public school teachers the means to receive the same spousal Social Security benefits as every other American. As I am sure my colleagues are aware, widowed public school employees in Texas, like public employees throughout the Nation, have their spousal Social Security benefits reduced if they receive a government pension. This "Government Pension Offset" affects Texas teachers who work in school districts that do not participate in Social Security and even applies if the teacher in question worked all the quarters necessary to qualify for full Social Security benefits either before or after working in the public school system!

Until last year, Texas schoolteachers could qualify for full widow benefits by working one day in a school that participates in Social Security. Unfortunately, last year Congress took that option away from Texas teachers.

One consequence of this action is that many teachers have taken early retirement while others have been discouraged from entering teaching. Thus, the victims of this action are not only Texas teachers, but also Texas school children who are denied access to quality teachers.

Passing the Texas Educator Retirement Equity Act is a good first step toward treating teachers fairly. Of course, I remain committed to working to pass H.R. 147, the Social Security Fairness Act that repeals both the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, another provision that denies public employees full Social Security benefits.

Congress should also be encouraging good people to enter the education profession by passing my Teacher Tax Cut Act (H.R. 402) that provides every teacher with a \$1,000 tax credit, as well as my Professional Educators Tax Relief Act (H.R. 405) that provides a \$1,000 tax credit to counselors, librarians, and all school personnel.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in enabling Texas teachers to obtain the Social Security benefits for which they would be eligible if they were not teachers by cosponsoring the Texas Educator Retirement Equity Act.

#### EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS ARISING FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HURRICANE KATRINA, 2005

SPEECH OF

### HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 2, 2005*

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, the destruction of Hurricane Katrina and the massive flooding of the city of New Orleans and surrounding areas have created a national tragedy that is unprecedented in U.S. history. The resulting humanitarian crisis and the horror that has developed in the streets of New Orleans are both appalling and unacceptable. Our national response must be equal to the need of the victims, and although emergency responders and relief workers on the frontlines are working around the clock to do everything they can, immediate Federal efforts were inadequate.

However, despite this grave tragedy, I am confident that together we will overcome the challenges ahead to help our brothers and sisters of the city of New Orleans and the impacted Gulf region. For the victims and their families, know that your country grieves with you, and we stand with you in this time of need. Be assured that help is on the way.

President Bush has told the Nation that the government will commit all the necessary resources, and we in Congress are working hard to make sure Federal aid is delivered and victims are helped. In the last few days thousands of National Guard troops, including 475 Wisconsin soldiers, have been deployed to the Gulf States to provide assistance and security to the region. Today, Congress will pass what is likely a first installment of emergency aid for the ravaged areas.

The national community is rallying in other ways as many local communities and volunteers are organizing fundraising drives and

other relief projects. I have heard from many constituents who want to know how they can help and who are already assisting in local efforts. The people of western Wisconsin have consistently demonstrated their generosity in times of crisis and once again they are answering the call of compassion.

There is a lot of work to do in the days, weeks and months ahead, but we will not stop until we have found a safe haven for every citizen, provided the necessary medical care to the weak and ailing, and attended to the needs of all victims of this awful tragedy. May our hearts, thoughts, aid, and support continue to be with the victims and their loved ones over the Labor Day weekend and throughout the relief and reconstruction process.

#### RECOGNIZING THE COMMUNITY OF ALMA, KANSAS

### HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 6, 2005*

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the community of Alma, Kansas for the successful revitalization of the Alma Creamery.

Beginning in 1946, this town of 762 people was identified by the presence of the Alma Creamery, famous for producing delicious Alma Cheese. Bernie Hansen, a pioneer in the development of value-added foods, furthered this tradition when he purchased the company in 1986. Bernie developed the company and sold it more than a decade later. Unfortunately, the creamery then closed in 2000. This was a setback to the community of Alma. And for more than 3 years, the production plant lay dormant. However, during this time, Alvin Kahle and Jim Ferguson, two longtime employees, did something great. On their own initiative, they regularly cleaned up and maintained the plant with the hope that one day it would reopen.

Their hopes were fulfilled in October of 2003 when former owner Bernie Hansen purchased the plant at an auction. Bernie quickly rehired Alvin and Jim. He also asked Linda Craghead, who serves part-time as Wabaunsee County economic development director, to serve as general manager of the company. In addition, more than one million dollars was invested in equipment, facilities and personnel.

On April 28, 2004, the hopes of Bernie, Linda, Alvin, Jim and the entire community were realized. On that day, the first batch of hand-made Alma Cheese was produced in a completely remodeled plant. Since the plant reopened, this delicious product has been attracting more and more customers. The company's workforce has expanded from 5 to 15 employees in order to keep up with increasing demand.

According to Bernie Hansen, the company's growth is the result of an inspired team effort "The renewed success of Alma Creamery can be attributed to a hard working staff, a supportive community and a trusted brand name widely-recognized across the state of Kansas," Hansen said.

For rural communities to survive and prosper into the future, citizens must be willing to create their own opportunities for success.