

COMMENDING ROGER TILLES'
LEADERSHIP ON THE NEA

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend Mr. Roger Tilles on his insightful and provocative op-ed piece on the National Endowment for the Arts, which was recently published in the New York Times. Mr. Tilles, who is the former President of Temple Beth-el of Great Neck, has worked from the private sector to further the cultural enrichment of the Long Island community. With generous support from the Tilles family, Long Island University created the Tilles Center which has been vital in educating students about the arts, and bringing world class cultural exhibits and performances to Long Island. His following op-ed piece recognizes the unique partnership that exists between the private sector and the NEA. When voting on the NEA, we should look to Mr. Tilles' example, and recognize that public funding for the arts, and private sector philanthropy go hand in hand.

[From the New York Times, June 29, 1997]

TIME TO FIGHT TO SAVE THE N.E.A.

(By Roger Tilles)

As efforts are mounted to scrap the National Endowment for the Arts, there is no small irony that among the reasons why Long Island is now among the top 20 places to live in the nation is its quality of life, best reflected in the broad scope of cultural and performing arts programs that are now at serious risk.

In the global battle for economic investment, local corporations seeking to entice new industries, jobs and capital to our region offset our high taxes and congested highways by using the arts as an attractive inducement. And with the bicounty region now deeply dependent on tourism, some 25 million people who visit Long Island annually now seek out our 12 dance companies, 40 arts organizations, 46 museums, 80 music companies, 30 theater companies and countless art galleries.

Far more than the loss of artistic outlets, shutting down the N.E.A. would have a direct, profound and negative impact on Long Island's economy. Without the small stipend many of these artistic programs receive from the National Endowment for the Arts, the vast majority of these cultural attractions would wither and disappear.

The battle over the N.E.A. has its roots in the fierce partisan battles that have erupted in Congress over the last several years. Whether it is dollars earmarked for Ernie the Muppet or Ernie the Artist, N.E.A. support is now considered a political litmus by the Congressional leadership. It is as if a performance of Mozart, an exhibit of de Kooning or a performance of "Swan Lake" are now battlegrounds for the hearts and minds of the electorate. This is treacherous ground because, for those with a sense of history, there is a faint echo from a not so distant past when a fascist government used the arts to sanitize their murderous regime.

To prevent plans from moving ahead to dismantle the National Endowment of the Arts, Long Island, with its population of nearly three million people, is going to have to become far more militant on behalf of the arts. It should not be unfamiliar territory. As we shifted public policy on issues relating to breast cancer and the environment,

we need to take those lessons and apply them to this equally crucial task.

Our first step should be the mobilization of those individuals who have served in the past as potent financial and ideological supporters of either major political parties. It will be a powerful message indeed if both Republican and Democratic standard-bearers discover that their core constituencies are united behind a common theme—protection of the arts. We need to condition our support based on where public officials stand as it relates to the arts and their support for the National Endowment.

In addition, because of Long Island's financial depth, many of us are targeted by political action committees and campaigns far outside Long Island. We need to include the arts as part of our personal platform for contributions.

Elected officials from Maine to California need to know that their support of N.E.A. programs is a critical factor in our determination of whether they are worthy of our dollars. We also need to network with those cultural and performing arts organizations working in Congressional districts where opponents of the arts endowment are located so that our message is carried far beyond the Long Island Expressway. That can be accomplished by becoming more involved with the artistic organizations that currently exist in the bicounty region.

As the Long Island Congressional delegation once led the charge to fund locally built weapons systems that defeated our Cold War opponents, let them now use their debating skills to protect the performances, programs and exhibits that now nurture the human spirit and enhance our region's economic and social quality of life.

We need only demonstrate our personal leadership to insure that our elected officials pretend that Chopin is a weapons system and vote accordingly.

H.R. 849—CORRECTIONS DAY
CALENDAR SUCCESS

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend this House for instituting a way Congress can quickly correct illogical and sometimes absurd quirks in our laws. Just this week, the Corrections Day Calendar was used to pass a bill I introduced, H.R. 849, that will save the taxpayers millions.

This past February, I was shocked to hear that because of a small loophole in the law, an illegal immigrant living in my own hometown was paid \$12,000 in taxpayer dollars to move her home. I then discovered that potentially millions were being handed out in this same way across the country. Mr. Speaker, the folks back home were outraged. My office received literally hundreds of letters and phone calls. They demanded that this practice be stopped.

Because of the Corrections Day Calendar, my bill to close that loophole was able to bypass the long process of hearings that accompany legislation, and go virtually straight to the floor for a vote. After only a short discussion, H.R. 849 passed without any opposition, 399 to 0.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are not satisfied with tough talk and no action. The folks in my district, much like folks all across the country, want to see results from Washington.

Using the Corrections Day Calendar to pass H.R. 849 shows America that this Congress is serious about cleaning up our laws and saving the taxpayer's money.

THE FAMILY FARM CREDIT
OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1997

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Family Farm Credit Opportunity Act of 1997, a bill that will correct an inequity in the Farm Service Agency's [FSA] Guaranteed Loan Program. Currently, this program has upper limits on the amounts that can be guaranteed by the FSA. Specifically, the two types of loans administered under this program—farm ownership loans and operating loans—have caps of \$300,000 and \$400,000, respectively. The farm ownership loan cap was adjusted to its current level in 1978, while the operating loan cap was last raised in 1984. At these times, farm ownership and operating costs could be adequately financed within both of these cap limits.

However, given today's larger and more capital-intensive farming operations, the limits must be raised in order to meet the needs of those seeking financing through the Guaranteed Loan Program. For example, in my home State of Mississippi, poultry is a growing industry. In the early 1980's a typical poultry house cost approximately \$65,000. Today the same poultry house can cost up to \$125,000. Also, more volume is necessary to compete on the world market. In fact, most banks will not finance a beginning poultry farm with less than four poultry houses. It is easy to see that a minimum of four poultry houses at a cost of \$125,000 per house exceeds the farm ownership cap level of \$300,000 in the Guaranteed Loan Program. This is just one example of how the upper limits on loans can take qualified applicants out of the market. This problem exists throughout the entire agricultural sector, not just the poultry industry.

To address this problem, I am introducing the Family Farm Credit Opportunity Act of 1997 which would raise the cap limits on both the farm ownership loan and the operating loan to \$600,000. The poultry example displays how much agriculture has changed since the caps were last amended in 1978 and 1984. In fact, while the increase in the cap limits may seem substantial at first, neither increase reflects the increase in inflation. Shouldn't we at least keep up with inflation for a program that has served as a consistent vehicle of opportunity for the small family farmer? In today's budget-minded era, I believe we must find solutions that will not only correct problems that have been developing over the years, but also do them at a relatively low cost to the taxpayer with a long-term solution in mind. That is why my bill increases the cap limits to specific amounts, \$600,000 for the coming year, but also includes a provision to index both caps for inflation beginning in year 2. This last provision will allow the caps to automatically adjust for inflation, which will provide a long-term fix to the problem and assure that the family farm does not outgrow the upper limits of the farm ownership loan or the

operating loan over time. I would like to point out that my bill will not guarantee acceptance of applications submitted to the FSA. Farmers would still have to go through an application process, but if the individual is eligible and accepted he or she would have the opportunity to receive adequate financing through a farm ownership or operating loan. In order to preserve the family farm and continue America's tradition of promoting the family farmer, we must provide a mechanism which enables them to receive the funds necessary for ownership and operation of a farming business.

Congress appropriates money for the FSA Guaranteed Loan Program each year. Shouldn't we put this money to its best and most efficient use? Should we also be willing to step back and take a good look at what a family farmer in 1997 really is? Of course we should use these funds as efficiently as possible and in a way that positively affects our overall economy. As for the family farmer, they still exist and are successful, but they aren't the same as they were 19 years ago in 1978 or even in 1984. Why?

Well, let's take a look at some of the changes that have occurred over this period. First of all, markets have become global. Not only do our farmers have to compete with each other, but also farmers around the world in China, Japan, Russia, Canada, Mexico just to name a few. Technology and research have both been overwhelmingly successful in allowing us to increase our production with less land, enabling us to idle environmentally sensitive land that is less productive and therefore ensure that we never revert back to the "Dust Bowl" days of the 1930's. Capital intensive is a word that was not as common in the late 1970's and early 1980's as it is today. In fact, we cannot talk about agriculture today without mentioning how the industry has drastically shifted from a labor-intensive industry to an industry dominated by capital. Twenty years ago, who could have imagined that we would be using satellites to level our land or to tell us exactly where chemical application was needed? Who could have imagined that biotechnology would yield such complex seed developments? Who could have imagined that we would have the technology to so closely monitor the growth of our animals that we would have the ability to specifically and scientifically regulate diets in order to achieve faster growth with less fat? My point, Mr. Speaker is that agriculture has changed and so has the family farmer.

The Guaranteed Loan Program was designed to help the family farmer. In order to continue this goal, we must address the needs of today by providing the capital necessary to compete and be successful. The family farmer is a larger operator relative to 1978 standards. We need cap limits that reflect this change. If we truly want to help the family farmer, let's fix a program that has historically been successful in helping this critical sector of our country. Let us not stop the progress of our farmers. We should not deny any eligible person in our Nation the opportunity to own and operate a family farm in order to pursue their idea of the American dream. This legislation will help our farmers expand their opportunities, increase our markets, improve our competitiveness, and make possible those dreams.

H.R.—

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GUARANTEED FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS; INDEXATION TO INFLATION

Section 305 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1925) is amended—

(1) by striking "\$300,000" and inserting "\$600,000 (increased, beginning with fiscal year 1998, by inflation percentage applicable to the fiscal year in which the loan is to be made or insured)"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: "For purposes of this section, the inflation percentage applicable to a fiscal year is the percentage (if any) by which (A) the average of the Consumer Price Index (as defined in section 1(f)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) for the 12-month period ending on August 31 of the immediately preceding fiscal year, exceeds (B) the average of the Consumer Price Index (as so defined) for the 12-month period ending on August 31, 1996."

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GUARANTEED FARM OPERATING LOANS; INDEXATION TO INFLATION.

Section 313 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1943) is amended—

(1) by striking "\$400,000" and inserting "\$600,000 (increased, beginning with fiscal year 1998, by the inflation percentage applicable to the fiscal year in which the loan is to be made or insured)"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: "For purposes of this section, the inflation percentage applicable to a fiscal year is the percentage (if any) by which (A) the average of the Consumer Price Index (as defined in section 1(f)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) for the 12-month period ending on August 31 of the immediately preceding fiscal year, exceeds (B) the average of the Consumer Price Index (as so defined) for the 12-month period ending on August 31, 1996."

TRIBUTE TO PAUL CHOW

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual, Mr. Paul Chow. Mr. Chow is being honored by the Angel Island Association for his 25-year crusade leading the preservation and restoration of the Detention Barracks at Angel Island State Park.

In addition to helping prevent the demolition of the barracks, Mr. Chow founded the Asian-American Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee to restore the barracks and protect the Asian history and poetry carved in the walls. He was also instrumental in the creation of a museum at the former Immigration Station on Angel Island.

In recognition of his accomplishments in the areas of historical, cultural and natural preservation, Mr. Chow was the recipient of the Phoenix Award, presented by the Society of American Travel Writers. He continues to volunteer his time to guide hundreds of people through the Immigration Station, relaying personal stories about the struggles of his own family during their time at the station as they became citizens.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay tribute to Paul Chow. His dedication and success to preserve a piece of history is admirable. I wish Paul and his family the best.

ROSAIRE "ROSS" RAJOTTE

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend Rosaire "Ross" Rajotte on a distinguished and storied dual commitment of service to both his country and the community of Northbridge, MA. Remarkably, Ross Rajotte earned four Purple Hearts during World War II. He then returned home after the war to become a leader in municipal affairs, serving three times on the board of selectman, and as its chairman once, as well as helping establish both Northbridge's conservation commission and the planning and zoning board of appeals. An activist by nature, Ross Rajotte must also be recognized for his impeccable commitment of service to his community, which has witnessed Ross attend an incredible 50 consecutive annual town meetings. Ross' genuine concern for others is truly a product of his community's similar desire to promote the public good.

Mr. Speaker, I insert into the RECORD two newspaper articles about Ross Rajotte, one from the Worcester Telegram and Gazette and one from the Northbridge Times, detailing Ross Rajotte's outstanding and distinguished service.

[From the Northbridge (MA) Times, May 15, 1997]

FIFTY IN A ROW—ROSS RAJOTTE STARTED ATTENDING TOWN MEETING IN 1947—AND HASN'T MISSED AN ANNUAL SINCE

(By Rod Lee)

Standing on the Whitinsville Town Common for middle schoolers' Civil War Monument Rededication Ceremony last Thursday morning, Rosaire J. "Ross" Rajotte was still sky-high from having attended his fiftieth consecutive Annual Town Meeting less than forty-eight hours earlier—an unprecedented mark at least within the Blackstone Valley and possibly throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

Rajotte had reason to rejoice: not only did two of the three articles he submitted by petition for the warrant win voter approval on the floor of the Northbridge High School auditorium last Tuesday evening, he was also singled out for praise by Town Moderator Harold D. Gould Jr. and received legislative proclamations and standing ovations from fellow residents in recognition of his remarkable achievement. He is to Northbridge Town Meeting in terms of longevity what the fabled and now-retired runner Johnny Kelley is to the Boston Marathon.

Most persons in their mid-seventies like Rajotte, or approaching that age, and a few who have even passed it, admit they cannot fathom such stalwartness.

Even Whitinsville Attorney Joseph Jundanian, who will turn eighty-two in September, shakes his head in wonder when he contemplates Rajotte's record.

"I'm not that faithful," Jundanian said. "I started attending in the 1950's, but I haven't gone to every meeting. Ross, he's a living legend."

"I'm perhaps the oldest active public official in the state of Massachusetts because I was nominated for the Northbridge Housing Authority in 1956 and am still a member. I've had cause to be at Town Meeting on most occasions. But Ross is a very active person, and deserves a great deal of credit."

Another Town Meeting "old-timer," Jerry Bagdasarian, says that compared to Rajotte,