

SEANTA JOHNSON IS LEADING
THE WAY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 1997

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young man of outstanding character, courage, and compassion. Seanta Johnson, an African-American youth and a junior at Hayward High School in my district, is showing us what he's made of—and is encouraging other bay area youth to do the same.

Much to the delight of his mom, who describes him as a "self-starter," Seanta finds time to juggle school, sports, and community service. Seanta is an inquisitive student who is enthusiastic about school and who has maintained a high grade point average throughout his high school career. The second of three children, Seanta will be the first in his family to attend a 4-year college. He hopes to continue to study his favorite subjects, physiology and anatomy, and to prepare to enter the field of sports medicine. Seanta is also a member of the Hayward High School track and field team, and specializes in throwing the shot put. In addition to the demands of his busy schedule, Seanta has held a part-time job at Pizza Hut since age 15.

During his free time, Seanta can be found at the East Oakland Youth Development Center, assisting children with organized physical development activities like weight training and basketball. More importantly, he takes the time to talk with them about working hard in school, finishing their homework, helping out at home, and treating themselves and others with respect. Seanta's family and teachers say he sets an excellent example for the youth at the center. He demonstrates confidence and leadership when advising kids at the center, and they look to him as a leader, teacher, and friend.

Today, more than ever, our society is in danger of dividing itself along racial, economic, religious, political, and gender lines. The burning of black churches, the tensions over proposition 209, and the battle over welfare reform all threaten to divide us—but young men like Seanta remind us that we should be kinder to our neighbors and more sensitive to the needs of the children in our communities.

This outstanding youth is devoting his time, talent, and imagination to helping the youth in the bay area to follow their dreams and pursue their goals. I believe we should learn from his shining example.

RESTORATION OF LOBBYING
EXPENSE DEDUCTION

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 1997

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on February 4, I introduced legislation, along with my colleague Mr. CARDIN, that would once again allow businesses to deduct the ex-

penses they incur while responding to legislative proposals that can affect their businesses, their communities, and their livelihood. The bill would simply allow businesses to deduct legitimate business expenses incurred in contacting or working with their State representatives.

In 1993, Congress approved the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 which contained a provision that disallowed the deduction of certain business expenses against Federal corporate income taxes. The denial of deductibility of lobbying expenses was proposed as a means of curtailing the activities of special interests here in Washington. Those who advocated this provision made no claim that it was necessary to address any problem at the State level.

Instead of solving a problem, the enactment of this provision has created a major problem at the State level. Most businesses, and especially small business owners, can't afford the time to visit personally with their State legislators to discuss the impact of legislation on their businesses. To make sure their voice is heard in the legislative process, they count on trade associations, to which they pay dues. Of course, the dues are generally deductible as an ordinary and customary expense of doing business.

The problem under the 1993 change is that the portion of trade association dues attributable to lobbying activities by the trade association is no longer deductible. This creates a major record-keeping headache for the association and the small business owner.

The original proposal before the Congress 2 years ago would have applied to local governments as well as State and Federal Government. Fortunately, before it was adopted, it was amended to exclude local government from its coverage. That was a significant improvement. The bill Congressman CARDIN and I introduce today will further mitigate the adverse impact of the proposal by exempting State legislatures as well.

As a former State legislator, I know well the value of the input of businesses in the deliberations of State legislatures. With small staffs and limited resources, State legislatures make important use of information provided by local economic interests in considering policy proposals. Additionally, State Governors frequently appoint blue ribbon commissions and other advisory groups to recommend legislative solutions to problems. These advisory bodies depend on input from members of the business, professional, and agricultural communities who are knowledgeable about circumstances within the State. The record-keeping requirements and tax penalties associated with the lobbying tax discourages this important participation.

Mr. Speaker, we ought not to be making it harder for Americans to participate in the decision-making process in their State capitols. The denial of a deduction of a legitimate business expense incurred to lobby at the State level is an unwarranted intrusion of the Federal Government on the activity of State governments. At a time when we are attempting to return many responsibilities to the State level, it makes no sense for us to impose obstacles on the ability of State legislatures to gather the information they will need to do their jobs. I would ask our colleagues to join us in restoring this deduction at the State level.

CONGRATULATIONS TO U.S. GIRL
SCOUTS PRESIDENT

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 1997

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my congratulations to Elinor Johnstone Ferdon, of Alpine, NJ, on her selection as national president of the Girl Scouts. Her leadership of this most esteemed and revered organization is the crowning achievement of a lifetime of selfless dedication by Ellie Ferdon to young girls and the communities of interests they serve.

Ferdon began her career in Scouting in 1947 in Frankfurt, Germany, where her father was stationed with the Army. On March 7 of that year, 10-year-old and 6 other young girls became the founding members of Frankfurt Girl Scout Troop No. 1.

The Manhattan native was a member of the Frankfurt troop for 3 years before her family returned to the United States and she was sent to a boarding school in Massachusetts.

Ferdon resumed her involvement in scouting in 1968 after moving to Alpine as an adult and becoming a troop leader when her daughter showed an interest in scouting. All 3 of her daughters eventually became Girl Scouts and a 3-year-old granddaughter is expected to do the same as soon as she is old enough.

Once back in uniform, Ferdon rapidly rose through the ranks. She served two terms as president of the Girl Scout Council of Bergen County and has been on the organizations national board of directors since 1978. She was elected national president in October 1996. As such, she is in charge of all 3.4 million Girl Scouts and adult volunteers in the country.

The Girl Scouts still teach self-esteem and self confidence, grooming girls to be leaders in their communities. But the organization has gone beyond camping and selling cookies to develop programs in science and the use of the Internet, for example. Members volunteer their time at homeless shelters, foster homes, and even juvenile detention.

Ferdon this year is overseeing a major fundraising effort, seeking donations from the 50 million adult former Girl Scouts. Too many Girl Scout councils rely too heavily on annual cookie sales for their revenue, she says.

The Girl Scouts serve well their goal of inspiring young girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service that they may become contributing and resourceful citizens. Girl Scouting seeks to accomplish this by providing girls opportunities to develop their potential and have fun with their peers in a supportive setting.

The qualities of character, perseverance, and leadership instilled by the Girl Scouts helps thousands and thousands of girls prepared to meet the challenges of the future. There could be no finer, more dedicated leader than Ellie Ferdon to provide the inspiration for young girls of today and women leaders of tomorrow.