

AFRICAN GROWTH AND
OPPORTUNITY ACT**HON. PHILIP M. CRANE**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with so many of my colleagues today in reintroducing legislation intended to open a new era of trade and investment relations between the United States and the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

For more than three decades, the United States has supported a variety of foreign assistance programs designed to aid the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, traditional foreign aid alone will not lead to the level of economic development that we would all like to see on the African continent. In the long run, private sector investment and development must serve as the catalyst for Sub-Saharan African countries to compete in the global marketplace, to become self-reliant, and to raise the standard of living for their people. At present, however, there is no initiative underway to engage the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa as business partners through trade and investment.

I believe that we have an opportunity in the 105th Congress to fill this major gap in U.S. trade policy and in our relations with the region, which consists of a diverse set of 48 countries, many of which have undergone significant political and economic change in recent years. At this time, more than 30 Sub-Saharan African countries have taken steps, under the guidance of bilateral and multilateral donors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to create the necessary environment to attract private sector investment. In addition, more than 25 nations in the region have held democratic elections since 1990.

Given the changes that are taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa, I believe that it is appropriate for us to shift our policy toward the region. In particular, we must reach out to the Sub-Saharan African countries which have instituted programs to put their economies on the right track; we want them to succeed in charting a new course for their future. I also must note the reforms underway in Sub-Saharan Africa present many new trade and investment opportunities for United States exporters and workers, particularly in the area of infrastructure development. The legislation I am introducing today is designed to bring our private sectors together by providing the necessary framework to open a mutually beneficial trade and investment dialogue between the United States and Sub-Saharan African countries.

The legislation being reintroduced today, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, calls for the negotiation of free-trade agreements with countries or regions in Sub-Saharan Africa that are taking appropriate steps to reform their economies. To help give momentum to these negotiations, and to focus greater attention on Sub-Saharan Africa by the United States private sector, the bill calls for the creation of a United States-Sub-Saharan Africa trade and economic cooperation forum. This forum will provide regular opportunities for policy leaders and heads of state to meet to discuss issues of mutual interest and to keep the trade negotiations on track.

In addition, the bill would extend the generalized system of preferences [GSP] program, which provides duty-free access to the United States market to imports of eligible items from developing countries, permanently for Sub-Saharan Africa. It also would allow the President to designate countries in the region as eligible for additional GSP benefits on products currently excluded from coverage by the program. Recognizing that textile and apparel products development could result in immediate job creation in Sub-Saharan Africa that would not threaten existing jobs in the United States, the bill also states that the administration should continue its "no quota" policy toward the region on these products.

As I again offer this legislation, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize significant contributions made to this initiative by two of my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee, Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL and Congressman JIM MCDERMOTT, who worked with me throughout the past Congress to build a consensus. To initiate consideration of the issue by the 105th Congress, I have scheduled a hearing on this legislation in the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee, which I chair, for Tuesday, April 29. I look forward to listening to the testimony that the subcommittee will receive that day and to continuing to work with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to move this legislation forward.

IN HONOR OF "LET'S CELEBRATE"—MAKING A DIFFERENCE
IN THE LIVES OF JERSEY CITY
RESIDENTS FOR 15 YEARS**HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary organization, "Let's Celebrate," which is committed to making a difference in the lives of the residents of Jersey City. Let's Celebrate's contributions will be recognized during festivities to be held at Casino in the Park Restaurant in North Bergen on April 25, 1997.

The mission of Let's Celebrate was born in 1981 when a small group of Jersey City clergy formed a coalition to combat hunger and homelessness. Their efforts decreased hunger and homelessness in Jersey City. This led to the incorporation of Let's Celebrate as a non-profit organization dedicated to moving people from hunger to wholeness, in 1982. Jersey City residents have become the beneficiaries of the enormous commitment and compassion of the visionaries who founded "Let's Celebrate."

The original mission of Let's Celebrate has been greatly expanded over the past 15 years. The first turn in the road toward self-sufficiency, paved by the efforts of this organization, was the Emergency Food Network, a collection of food pantries focused on meeting the emergency food needs of both individuals and families. Within a short period of time, the need for prepared meals became obvious, due to the number of clients served by Let's Celebrate who did not have access to cooking facilities. Thus, The Square Meal Soup Kitchen was established on December 7, 1983, a day which will long be remembered by those who

have since passed through their doors. Initially located at St. John's Reform Church on Fairview Avenue, The Square Meal moved to Christ Church United Methodist in Journal Square, where it remained until July 1991 when it then relocated to its original, and current, home at St. John's Reform Church.

Later, Let's Celebrate's goal to reduce hunger expanded to include job training. With a major grant from United Parcel Service, as well as additional financial support from Philip Morris, the Job Power program was born. This training program in the culinary arts has graduated 85 students ready to be productive members of the work force. In 1995 Let's Celebrate instituted the Housing Plus program to assist individuals with special medical needs. This invaluable program enables clients to receive medical case management along with help on housing issues. Another service provided by Let's Celebrate is the G.E.D. program located at the Square Meal Community Center, providing area residents the opportunity pursue a high school diploma.

It is an honor to have such an exceptional organization working in my district benefitting the underprivileged of Jersey City. Let's Celebrate has helped enhance the meaning of community service.

TRIBUTE TO PYRAMID ACADEMY
IN MEMPHIS, TN**HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to praise the achievements of the students, faculty, and the principal of Pyramid Academy in Memphis, TN. Pyramid Academy is an alternative school serving teen mothers and children with behavioral problems. Most of the students at Pyramid come from a world of obstacles and disadvantages. Many of them have been thrown off track by poor choices or a lack of direction.

As its name symbolizes, however, the Pyramid Academy, is giving these young men and women the building blocks they need to rise to the top. The school administrators transformed the way they educate and rehabilitate their students. They moved away from a punitive approach toward a holistic one, focusing on dropout prevention, personal development, responsible parenting, and achievement. Before this transformation, police walked the halls, and in the words of the principal, the school was nothing more than "a holding tank."

Those who doubt or question the power of placing high expectations and standards on our students, need only look to the example set by Pyramid Academy. As evidence, five young ladies from Pyramid Academy won first place in the African-American Knowledge Bowl, sponsored by the Memphis City Schools. I would like to include the names of the Grand Champion Knowledge Bowl team and ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring their achievements: Meisha Harris, Tamika Williams, Edwina Jefferson, Cortisa Thomas and Alicia Currie. These young women are sources of inspiration for the House of Representatives. They are my heroes. I would also like to include, in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, a newspaper article chronicling their achievement.

[From the Commercial Appeal, Apr. 17, 1997]

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROMOTES

ACHIEVEMENT

(By Regina L. Burns)

A 25-year Memphis City Schools educator, John White, is finding that expelled and board-suspended students, along with teen parents, can be motivated to achieve using high expectations instead of the police and corporal punishment.

White, principal at Pyramid Academy for seven years, points to his school's recent championship at the sixth annual African-American Knowledge Bowl as proof of his philosophy.

"It just made me feel so good. I was just bubbling up with joy," proclaimed White, 53, who pushed for the alternative school's name change from Comprehensive Pupil Services Educational Center.

The April 7 competition at the National Civil Rights Museum was sponsored by the Memphis City Schools Adolescent Parenting Mental Health Team, said Sherry Hardy, a school social worker in the Adolescent Parenting Program.

"The schools that participated are involved in our Rites of Passage effort," explained Hardy. The Rites of Passage program is designed to help young African-American men and women with development and responsibilities as they move toward adulthood.

Dr. Theresa Okwumabusi, supervising psychologist for the Adolescent Parenting Mental Health Team, initiated the Knowledge Bowl and the Rites of Passage program. She said, "The students interacted in a positive way with other children and experienced success in knowing about their culture and their history."

Five students from Pyramid Academy helped bring home the trophy. They are 11th-grader Edwina Jefferson, ninth-grader Alicia Currie, 12th-grader Mlesha Harris, ninth-grader Cortisa Thomas and 11th-grader Tamika Williams. Their teacher is Erma Sanders, a social studies instructor.

The second-place winner is Chickasaw Junior High. Raineshaven Elementary captured third place. Other finalists were Caldwell Elementary, Ida B. Wells Academy and Whitehaven High school, according to Hardy.

"I'm an advocate for having an alternative school in every school. When I came here, this was a holding tank. We changed the name. We got rid of the police. We don't need the police. I think it sends the wrong message," explained White.

He said his school has its share of difficulties but they are minimal. Each morning students and faculty gather at a "daily briefing."

"We reiterate our expectations on a daily basis. We ask any student who feels like rappin', tappin', singing or cursing to come down front. If anyone has had any difficulty, we have someone for them to talk to," he said.

IT'S TIME FOR BILLBOARDS TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Billboard Fair Share Act, legislation that would levy a 15 percent tax on the revenue from billboards and direct that money to help pay for our transportation system.

The billboard industry benefits as much as any other industry from our National Highway System. In fact, the industry even charges customers according to the number of cars that pass by the billboard on a given day. Despite its reliance on taxpayer-funded roads, the billboard industry contributes nothing to the construction and maintenance of our Nation's roads. It is time that the billboard industry paid its fair share.

The Billboard Fair Share Act would levy a tax on each billboard of 15 percent of gross revenues generated from the billboard. This is the same amount that billboard companies usually pay a property-owner for the right to construct and maintain the billboard on the property-owner's land. The revenue generated from this tax would be divided between surface transportation and funding for enhancement projects under ISTEA. In both cases, it would be used to improve our national system of roads.

As Congress works to reauthorize ISTEA while balancing the budget, it is important that we ensure that all road users contribute to providing transportation funding. While the billboard industry may not be a traditional road user, it is equally clear that they directly benefit from road construction. In fact, the billboard industry is entirely dependent upon roads.

All highway users must be willing to help build and maintain our Nation's roads. It is time for billboards to pay their fair share.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR SAN PEDRO CREEK WETLANDS RESTORATION AND FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the President's 1998 budget request for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As you know, the Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of important flood control projects around our Nation. I urge continued support for full funding of the Continuing Authorities Program which will ensure that important flood control projects around our Nation can proceed on schedule. Full funding will also ensure that there will be no delays in construction of projects that have already been started.

Mr. Speaker, I recently presented testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development regarding two local issues important to residents of the San Francisco Bay area. I respectfully request that my testimony appear in the RECORD for the benefit of my colleagues in the House.

TESTIMONY OF CONGRESSMAN LANTOS BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

March 31, 1997

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony to your Subcommittee as you begin to consider the Energy and Water appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998. We in Congress face difficult challenges and painful choices as we work to reduce the federal budget deficit. I applaud your record in this area and you can count on my continued support of serious efforts to

cut wasteful spending. I am delighted to present information regarding two projects important to my community which fall under your Subcommittee's jurisdiction and to urge your continued support for these significant projects.

As you know, the Congressional district that I represent is geographically unique and diverse. My Congressional district comprises the San Francisco Peninsula which is home to the residents of the City of San Francisco and northern and central San Mateo County. The Peninsula is flanked by the Pacific Ocean to the West and by the San Francisco Bay to the east. Steep coastal mountains run up the middle of the Peninsula.

To the east of these mountains are the densely populated cities of San Mateo County which are located along the San Francisco Bay. The Bay front itself consists of the San Francisco International Airport, Candlestick Park, light industry, salt flats and the Port of Redwood City. Residential neighborhoods and commercial areas lie between the Bay front and the mountain ridges. To the west of the mountains, which follow the San Andreas fault, are the coastal communities of San Mateo County, including Pacifica, which lie on the Pacific Ocean.

The City of Pacifica is located a few miles south of the City of San Francisco. It is surrounded by the Central Coast Ranges and by the Pacific Ocean. City limits include three ridge systems and their adjacent valleys and hillsides, set against a coastline of beaches and rugged headlands. San Pedro Creek has the largest drainage area and flows four miles through the narrow San Pedro Valley and the Linda Mar District to the Pacific Ocean. Linda Mar is the most populous of several seaside communities in Pacifica. This area has experienced numerous floods in recent history with flood damage occurring mostly in the lowest reaches of the creek.

San Pedro Creek has historically flooded on a 10-year cycle. The mountains and hills around San Pedro Valley are steep and rainfall and runoff can be rapid and intense. Currently, the lower reaches of the San Pedro Creek channel can contain within its banks, at maximum, an 8- to 10-year runoff event. The last major flooding occurred there in 1982 when more than 300 homes were flooded and more than \$5 million of damage occurred.

The City of Pacifica has been working closely with the US Army Corps of Engineers for more than 15 years in developing a flood control project to provide 100 year flood control protection in the Linda Mar Valley. A number of plans were originally proposed, but were stalled due to lack of funding and environmental concerns. Two alternative projects were considered as possible solutions to the flood problem. However, due to environmental concerns and prohibitive mitigation requirements associated with either alternative, a third alternative was developed by the City and residents in the community. This alternative would consist of a diversion structure, an underground bypass channel, a floodwall, and the creation of a wetland-flood basin.

The City and the Corps now propose to restore the tidally-influenced, freshwater wetlands associated with the lower reach of San Pedro Creek to provide flood control in the Linda Mar District of Pacifica. The restoration design as proposed will restore 10.1 acres of one of the rarest wetland types on the Pacific coast of North America. The project will also enhance a significant fisheries resource, i.e., a steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) run, and restore wildlife habitats for migratory waterfowl and other associated wildlife.

Mr. Chairman, the San Pedro Creek Wetlands Restoration and Flood Control Project