

Americans keep their jobs in this global battle for market share. Yet some in Congress would ignore this reality and abolish some or all of these programs. They think these programs are unnecessary or corporate welfare. But just as unilateral disarmament did not work against the Soviet Union during the cold war, efforts to cut or eliminate U.S. government export promotion programs will not stop foreign government subsidies of exports.

Who do you think would win if the U.S. withdraws support for the Export-Import Bank or OPIC? Only our vigorous competitors in Europe, Japan, and Canada would be the winners.

Japan supports more than 32 percent of its exports with some form of export credit. France finances 18.6 percent. Yet the U.S. supports only 2 percent of its own exports, and some in Congress would do away even with this.

No one particularly likes Government support for exports. I wish I could waive a magic wand and everyone, completely based solely on quality and price, would be able to compete. But, unfortunately, that is not reality in the global arena.

Let me give you one specific example that impacted the district I am privileged to represent. Beloit Corp., with operations in Beloit, WI and Rockton, IL is a manufacturer of paper-making machines. There are only two other companies in the world that make similar equipment, one located in Finland, the other in Germany. Beloit wished to sell two machines to Asia Pulp and Pacific worth \$330 million. This sale represents 40 percent of total sales for Beloit, translating into 2 years of steady work for 2,000 high wage, highly skilled union employees.

Obviously a sale of this magnitude takes several months and lots of hard work to compete. At every step of the way, Beloit's competitors from Finland and Germany were waiting outside the door of Asia Pulp and Pacific to take advantage of any opportunity. These foreign companies had already lined up support of their home government's export credit finance agency for their machines. Recently Ex-Im Bank came through with a \$270 million loan that provided the winning edge for Beloit to finalize the contract.

If Ex-Im was not there, Finland or Germany certainly would have filled the gap, and hundreds of forgotten Americans in Beloit, WI, and Rockton, IL would have been out of work. Ex-Im's actions were vital in solidifying America's position and in the global marketplace in the paper-making industry.

It is because of examples like Beloit Corp. that inspire me to fight for these export promotion programs. They are vital strategic weapons, not frivolous. In 1995, Ex-Im helped generate \$13.5 billion in exports for the U.S. economy, which directly supported about 200,000 high-wage U.S. jobs. Last year OPIC backed projects generated nearly \$10 billion in U.S. exports. The Trade De-

velopment Agency has helped generate \$9 billion in exports since its creation in 1981.

These are not faceless statistics; they are backed by hundreds of examples all across America, like Beloit, where a little help from these U.S. agencies and the Commerce Department proved to be the winning edge in securing a foreign contract.

Until all countries do away with all government export subsidies in a multilateral framework, these programs deserve our full support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MARCH 1997 NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH PROCLAMATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. Bilirakis] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, since 1983, Congress has joined with the Eye Bank Association of America in proclaiming March as National Eye Donor Month. March is a time to encourage all Americans to register their eyes for donation. Throughout the country, the miracle of transplant surgery is drastically improving people's lives.

Today I rise to request that my colleagues take a few minutes to focus on eye donations. Some of you may not realize that a person's vision can be restored through corneal transplantation. Every year, thousands of corneal transplants are performed across the country, restoring precious sight to both the young and old. In 1995, over 44,000 corneas were made available by our Nation's eye banks for transplantation procedures.

While figures for 1996 are still being tallied, even greater totals are expected.

In fact, just outside my district, the Lions Club of Tampa, FL, operates one of the largest eye banks in the world. The Central Florida Eye and Tissue Bank restores sight to over 2,000 people every year. Nevertheless, the need for corneal transplants continues.

The benefits of sight-restoring transplant surgeries extend well beyond the people who receive the transplants. The benefits also extend to the transplant recipients' families, friends and communities.

In recent years, the public education campaigns launched by Congress, educators, and the media have had a positive impact on the success of eye donation programs.

Since 1961, when the Eye Bank Association of America was founded, member eye banks have made over a half million corneal transplants possible. The success rate of these transplants, Mr. Speaker, exceeds 95 percent.

Let me stress an important point. Anyone can be an eye donor. It does not matter if people have cataracts, poor eyesight, or other eye ailments. They can still contribute to improving the life of fellow human being, regardless of age or health status.

Another area that is somewhat confusing is how one becomes an organ donor. Many States have potential organ donors declare their intentions on their driving licenses. However, in order to guarantee that an organ donation will occur, a person must share, and I repeat, must share these intentions with his or her next of kin and other family members.

In some cases, the deceased person's next of kin may object to their loved one becoming an organ donor because the matter was never discussed. If an individual's next of kin objects to their loved one becoming an organ donor, those wishes are usually respected. It is extremely important that potential organ donors make their intentions clear with family members before it is too late.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a tremendous opportunity to educate our fellow Americans about eye donations. We must take this occasion to encourage all Americans to give the gift of sight.

What better legacy to leave than to have our eyes become someone else's miracle?

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CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member comes to the floor to raise concerns about the Conservation Reserve Program signup which began on March 3.

Over the past decade, the Conservation Reserve Program, the CRP, has proven to be enormously successful. It is a national investment which provides dividends to farmers, environmentalists, sportsmen, conservationists, the general public, and wildlife. The CRP is a voluntary program established by Congress in 1985 that provides incentives for farmers to convert land poorly suited for row crops into grasslands and tree cover. Grasslands and trees in turn prevent topsoil erosion, improve water quality, and provide critical wildlife habitat.

The CRP has now reached a critical point as previous contracts expire and new land is enrolled in the program. This September, the contracts on more than 60 percent of existing CRP acres will expire. That is 60 percent. Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued its long-delayed rules to govern the enrollment of new land into the program. The new rules make two-thirds of all existing U.S. farmland eligible for the program. It is possible

that half the program's acres could be enrolled during this upcoming signup period.

These facts make it clear that a careful, thoughtful approach is needed to ensure that the benefits of this successful program are not lost. Unfortunately, this Member must be concerned that the complex new rules combined with the short time frame in place to implement them could lead to an unmitigated disaster which could tarnish this program for many years to come.

By taking so long to issue the rules, the USDA left a ridiculously short amount of time to inform producers and employees about the changes, conduct the signup and reach decisions about which bids to accept. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a recipe for a bureaucratic disaster. While the intent of the new rules to focus on more environmentally sensitive land is, indeed, laudable, and supported by this Member, this Member is also concerned that the rushed and haphazard signup process will make this goal much more difficult to reach.

Although local USDA employees are doing their best to implement these new rules, they have clearly been given a demanding task which has been made even more difficult by shifting instructions. Recent changes in the rating system during the signup process has only added to the frustration of producers.

Another concern about the signup is that the proposed rental rates announced by the Farm Service Agency office do not reflect the grassroots input that was solicited and furnished last fall. A related concern is that the resulting rates in many instances could significantly distort any signup efforts.

A local County Conservation Review Group recently reviewed the rental rates for counties in southeastern Nebraska which were announced by the USDA. In one instance, the same type of soil is projected for a rental value of \$84 per acre in one county but only \$58 per acre across the road in another county. Disparities such as this are simply too great.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation has invested too much in the CRP to risk it on a rushed signup process. This Member believes it would be wise, and yes, absolutely necessary to offer an extension for existing contracts which expire this year. Such action would allow sufficient time to carefully analyze the new guidelines and determine whether any corrections are needed before the majority of CRP signups take place.

I would like to start it now because so much is involved in the signup period, but simply, we have waited too long at the USDA. It would be extremely detrimental if irreversible damage is done to the CRP during this signup period. This Member believes that the new process should be tested to determine whether the new rules are feasible and beneficial. Action must be taken now before it is too late.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. QUINN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. QUINN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ST. PATRICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about something a little bit out of the ordinary of what has been discussed today. I want to talk about St. Patrick. We are coming up on St. Patrick's Day, and though many people celebrate it in this country, few in America understand or recognize the significance of St. Patrick in the history of western civilization.

In fact, I have been reading a book called "How The Irish Saved Civilization," and it lays out wonderfully the story of St. Patrick who, at the age of 16, was a member of a British family in the fourth century and was also a member of the Roman Empire.

Late one night he was actually kidnapped by Irish barbarians and sold into the slave trade in the fourth century, and from the age of 16 to the age of 22 he stayed out in the cold and the rain as a shepherd. He was poorly clothed, he was not fed well at all, and in fact he spent his evenings nearly freezing to death in barns along with the other slaves.

In the middle of the night, of one of his nights in his 22d year, God came to him in a vision and told him to go south, a ship would be waiting for him. So Patrick journeyed south and sure enough, a ship was waiting for him that took him back to Great Britain.

The story of Patrick goes that he went back to Great Britain, once again was reunited with his family, was educated, and a few years later God came to him again in a dream and told Patrick that it was his duty to go back and spread the gospel to the people of Ireland.

This was a first, and in fact, I will be reading from "How The Irish Saved Civilization." Thomas Cahill writes:

However blind his British contemporaries in the 4th century may have been, the greatness of Patrick is beyond dispute. He was the first human being in the history of the world to speak out unequivocally against slavery. He was also a first as the first missionary to barbarians beyond the reach of the Roman law. The step he took was in a way as bold as Columbus', and a thousand times more humane, speaking out against slavery and going to barbarians to spread the Gospel. He himself was aware of its radical nature.

"The Gospel," he reminded his accusers later in life, "has been preached to the point beyond which there is no one," nothing but the ocean. Nor was he blind to his dangers, for even in his

last years, he said, "Every day I am ready to be murdered, betrayed, enslaved, whatever may come my way." But in his last years, he could probably look out over an Ireland that was transformed by his teaching.

With the Irish, and even with the kings, Patrick succeeded beyond measure. Within his lifetime or soon after his death, the Irish slave trade which had once enslaved him came to a screeching halt, and other forms of violence, such as murder and intertribal warfare, decreased greatly.

However, Patrick's emotional grasp of Christian truth may have been his greatest success, and greater than Augustine's. Augustine looked into his own heart and found there the inexpressible anguish of each individual, which enabled him to articulate a theory of sin that has no equal, which is the dark side of Christianity.

Patrick prayed, made peace with God, and then looked not only into his own heart but into the hearts of others. What he saw convinced him of the bright side, that even slave traders can be turned into liberators, even murderers can act as peacemakers, and even barbarians can take their places among the nobility of heaven.

Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, on this St. Patrick's Day that is a lesson that all of us can learn.

HEALTH CARE FOR OUR NATION'S CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, once again, today I rise to draw the attention of my colleagues to the problem of so many children in our country who do not have health insurance, and I am very pleased that I am going to be joined today by the gentlewoman from Oregon [Ms. HOOLEY], who is here also to talk about the same issue because of her concern about the fact that this Congress so far has not addressed the issue.

I have been talking over the last few weeks, and I guess a couple of months now, about various reports that have come out in various States; we had one in New York City, and we had another one in Massachusetts. We have had accounts in some of the Nation's major newspapers pointing to the problem of increasing numbers of children that do not have health insurance in this country.

Well, yesterday the Children's Defense Fund, which is certainly one of the leading organizations that is an advocate for children, and particularly on the issue of health care for children, released its annual report on the state of America's children. And like so many other reports congressional Democrats have been talking about here on the House floor in recent weeks, the Children's Defense Fund report is full of