

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2392, the Small Business Innovation Research Program Reauthorization Act of 1999. Working with our colleagues on the Small Business Committee, we have crafted an authorization bill, which preserves the programs strengths. In addition, H.R. 2392 provides for a study of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. It is our hope to incorporate the results and findings of this study in the next reauthorization cycle.

The SBIR program is an important element in making the unique capabilities of small high-tech business available to the Federal government. Initiated in 1982, the SBIR program was built upon an existing NSF pilot program and now includes the ten federal agencies with the largest external research budgets. When the program was conceived, it was clear that small business had much to offer federal agencies, but were not receiving a proportional share of federal research contracts. In essence, they were shut-out of the federal research awards process. Through the SBIR we have guaranteed that at least 2.5% of agencies' external research dollars are awarded to small businesses. This set aside has created progress towards achieving the SBIR programs two major goals; providing small high-tech businesses the opportunity to meet federal research needs and increasing the number of technology based commercial products developed by small business.

As in any program, however, there is room for improvement. We need to ensure that an increasing percentage of SBIR winners go on to be commercial successes. And we need to build a better record in helping the best SBIR participants join the ranks of federal contractors. I will continue to work with my colleagues to address both of these concerns.

In closing, I would like to say that it has been a pleasure working with Chairman SEN-SEN BRENNER, Chairwoman MORELLA, and Ranking Member HALL as well as our colleagues on the Small Business Committee in developing this consensus legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2392.

LIFE AND TIMES OF OSEOLA McCARTY

HON. RONNIE SHOWS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 1999

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to take a minute to tell my fellow colleagues and the American People about Oseola McCarty. Ms. McCarty recently passed away and it is important that we pause to remember this remarkable Mississippian and American.

Oseola McCarty spent her life washing and ironing the clothes of others in Hattiesburg,

Mississippi. Her life was one of meager and simple means concerning the material things many deem important. Her spirit and faith, though, was large and full. Her capacity to give and care and love exceeded all boundaries. Ms. McCarty was a great American and we all need to know and learn from her story.

The Bible teaches us about the widow's mite; that lady who gave less than others but all she had and was called great for her more profound sacrifice. Friends, Ms. McCarty gave us all the widow's mite.

Her meager income over the years provided just enough for her to put away a little in savings each month. Over these 75 years this grew and in 1995 she gave the University of Southern Mississippi \$150,000 to help the poor go to school. This was a gift to all of us. Certainly to those who have and will benefit from a college education. But also Ms. McCarty gave us all the gift of love and generosity. She taught us that integrity in life and belief in God and others, when put into action, changes lives.

I am indebted to Oseola McCarty for her example. My Alma Mater, the University of Southern Mississippi, is indebted to her for her gift and inspiration. And everyone, all of us, is indebted to Ms. McCarty because she helped remind us that we all matter and what we do matters to all.

Many beautiful and great words will be said the next several days about Ms. McCarty. And, great things should be said. But, let's honor her the way she would want . . . let's give ourselves. Let's give to others, like Ms. McCarty.

PROGRESS IN THE GAMBIA

HON. EARL F. HILLIARD

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 1999

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my satisfaction with the course of certain events relating to The Gambia, in West Africa. Some of our colleagues may, or may not, be aware that due to the tireless efforts of President Yahya Jammeh, The Gambia continues to play a pivotal role in peacemaking and peacekeeping. Specifically, The Gambia has participated in peace efforts in three regions of conflict of West Africa—Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and the Casamance region of Senegal.

During the 21st summit of the sixteen-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), hosted by The Gambia in October 1998, President Jammeh was successful in bringing the two protagonists in the Guinea-Bissau conflict to the negotiating table for their first face-to-face meeting since fighting erupted earlier that year. Although the peace accord, which was signed by Guinea-Bissau President Joao Bernard Vierira and rebel leader Ansumane Mane was subsequently broken, President Jammeh continued to work toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict. For his efforts, President Jammeh was congratulated by other heads of state for being the first leader in the sub-region to send a delegation in search of a peace resolution to the crisis.

Similarly, in the conflict in Sierra Leone between President Kabbah and the Revolu-

tionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, Gambian President Jammeh was the first leader to make an international offer to mediate, and urge for peace in the country, as well as the entire sub-region. In June 1999, Banjul was again the scene of peace negotiations when the Senegalese government and separatist rebels from the Casamance province accepted President Jammeh's offer to facilitate peace in the troubled province.

Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has offered all possible assistance in order to facilitate the permanent return of peace to the West African region. On the occasion of President Jammeh's first visit to the United States as a head of state, I would like my colleagues to join me in honoring and commanding President Jammeh for his commitment to peace and unity in West Africa.

THE HASS AVOCADO PROMOTION, RESEARCH AND INFORMATION ACT

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 1999

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support for legislation offered with Representative KEN CALVERT to create a new national promotion program for Hass avocados. This bill, the Hass Avocado Promotion, Research and Information Act, provides a vehicle for both domestic producers and importers to work together to increase the demand for avocados.

The California avocado industry has benefited from an innovative, state grower-funded program administered by the California Avocado Commission. The means that 6000 Hass avocado growers in California currently assess themselves to pay for the national promotion of avocados. In recent years, however, imports are supplying an increasing share of the U.S. consumer market. In 1998, for example, import levels reached 100 million pounds, an amount equal to nearly one-third the size of U.S. avocado production. Given this trend, Congress should provide a mechanism for importers to share in the state commission's efforts. This bill will do just that, by providing tools to expand consumer markets for avocados at a time when supply is increasing.

This legislation is tailored to fit the special characteristics of Hass Avocado production, which is unique to California and several foreign countries. The creation of a national checkoff at no cost to the nation's taxpayers will allow US avocado growers and importers to fund and operate a coordinated marketing effort. This bill is designed to: (1) create a industry-based, international board to administer the program; (2) authorize promotion, research, and educational activities; (3) direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a referendum 60 days prior to implementation of the program; and (4) designate the initial rate of assessment on Hass avocados at 2.5 cents per pound, capped at five cents per pound. In addition to promotional and consumer information, this legislation allows producers to research issues important to avocado production and sales, such as market development, food safety, avocado uses, quality, and nutritional value.

For these reasons, I join my colleague on the Committee on Agriculture from California, Mr. CALVERT, in introducing this legislation, the Hass Avocado Promotion, Research and Information Act.

ARBITRARY DECISIONS BY INS ARE ROADBLOCK TO AMERICAN DREAM

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 28, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I read with great interest the story of Ms. Sherol Boles in an op-ed by Anthony Lewis in today's New York Times. It is a heart-wrenching story about a woman who is battling for her right to remain in this country with her children and her husband. Tragically, she may be deported at any time due to arbitrary decision making by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the harshness of the 1996 immigration law.

Mrs. Boles' story is not an isolated incident. Since taking office, I have personally heard INS horror stories from many immigrants, legal residents, and citizens who write, call, and visit my office seeking assistance. Ninety percent of casework in my district office is related to immigration issues. Many of the problems stem from a clear lack of inefficiency and unpreparedness in the INS office in Chicago.

During my visit to the Chicago INS office earlier this year, I witnessed first hand this inefficiency and unpreparedness. Even worse, I also witnessed the mistreatment of customers, the lack of respect for individuals, the complete disregard of common decency and the hostile environment many must face.

The culture of the "Customer is Always Wrong" at the INS must change. Customers at the Chicago INS must receive the quality service they deserve. These legal residents are customers who pay high fees and they deserve to be treated with respect.

The Chicago INS responded to my concerns and those of my colleagues by taking steps to improve the quality of service.

However, we must work to ensure that those steps taken by the Chicago INS remain in place and that additional improvements are made. Finally, we must translate our local efforts to the national stage so people like Sherol Boles are given the chance to live the American dream.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 28, 1999]

BALANCE OF HARDSHIPS

(By Anthony Lewis)

BOSTON—Dickens gave us the classic picture of official heartlessness: the government Circumlocution Office, burial ground of hope in "Little Dorrit." It would take his savage wit to tell, properly, the story of Sherol Boles and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Mrs. Boles is a 33-year-old woman from Barbados. In 1996 she married Michael Boles, an American who served 12 years in the U.S. Marines. They have 2-year-old twins, born three months prematurely weighing less than two pounds each; they were hospitalized for months and are still under medical treatment.

The I.N.S. has ruled that Mrs. Boles's marriage entitles her to permanent residence

here: a green card. But for reasons in the past she is legally deportable, and the I.N.S. says she must be deported. If she is, it may be as long as 10 years before she can enter the United States again.

Mrs. Boles wants to have her deportation case reopened, so account can be taken of her now-established right to a green card and her children's fragile health. If she is deported alone, her husband could not possibly take care of the twins by himself. If she takes them with her, the medical care they need may not be available in Barbados.

But the case cannot be reopened without the consent of I.N.S. officials, and they refuse to give it. Why? I.N.S. lawyers explained in a brief, "She has not shown that she would suffer irreparable injury or that the balance of hardships tilt in her favor." Dickens could not have put more unfeeling words in the mouth of one of his fictional tormentors.

Mrs. Boles is still in the United States because her lawyer, Harvey Kaplan of Boston, sought and won a stay of deportation from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. The I.N.S. is urging the court to withdraw the stay.

The past chapters of the story deepen its harshness. Mrs. Boles came to the United States in 1990, to Boston. Some years later she tried to obtain legal permanent residence by using the services of one Joseph Chatelain, who called himself an "immigration adviser." By 1995 Mrs. Boles and others realized they had been defrauded by Mr. Chatelain. She testified in full and agreed to be a witness against him, but he fled and has not been found.

In 1995, on the basis of her own statements, an immigration judge ordered her deported. He allowed her to depart voluntarily—legally advantageous—by April 1996 "or any extensions as granted" by the I.N.S. Immigration officials in Boston, citing her cooperation in the Chatelain case, extended the date successively to March 1998.

In the meantime Mrs. Boles had married and moved to her husband's home in Phoenix. In February 1997 Michael Boles filed an I-130 petition to get his wife permanent residence. The petition went to the I.N.S. Texas service center, covering Phoenix. It was then transferred to a California center, and from there back to the local I.N.S. office in Phoenix.

In May 1998, with the petition still pending and the date for voluntary departure just past, the I.N.S. office in Boston gave Mrs. Boles a year's stay of deportation. A year later she had still heard nothing about her green card. She asked an I.N.S. officer in Phoenix for a further stay. Denying it, he said the delay on the green card petition must mean that her marriage was fraudulent—in effect blaming her for the notorious inefficiency of the I.N.S.

"Based on a careful review of the facts of this case," an official wrote, "there do not appear to be any unusual humanitarian factors."

The petition for a green card was finally granted this past June, more than two years after it was filed. So far it has not helped Sherol Boles. If she is deported, she may come within provisions of the harsh 1996 Immigration Act that would bar her from this country for 5 or 10 years.

Tough as it is, the 1996 law gives the I.N.S. power to reopen this case. But the service seems determined in its refusal. In its First Circuit brief it argued that the court has no power to review its decision, right or wrong.

Why is the I.N.S. so adamant? It must want to establish the principle that nobody—not even a court—can make it pay attention to reason and humanity.

CONSOLIDATION OF MILK MARKETING ORDERS

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1402) to require the Secretary of Agriculture to implement the Class I milk price structure known as Option 1A as part of the implementation of the final rule to consolidate Federal milk marketing orders.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, in 1996 Congress agreed the U.S. dairy pricing system was seriously flawed and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) should develop a more evenhanded pricing system. After three years of research and an exhaustive public comment period, USDA proposed a modest reform plan, and now the proponents of H.R. 1402 seek to violate the agreement made in the 1996 Farm bill by leaving in place a blatantly unfair Depression-era pricing structure that penalizes dairy producers based on their distance from Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Few government programs are more complex and misunderstood than the USDA's milk marketing system. President Franklin Roosevelt established federal orders in the 1930s during the Great Depression to ensure an adequate supply of fresh milk nationwide. The primary goal of the system was to facilitate the flow of milk from surplus production regions to deficit regions. During the Depression, the Upper Midwest was the nation's center of dairy production. So to encourage the flow of milk from the region, the federal government required dairy processors to pay higher prices for fluid milk based on their distance from the Upper Midwest. This allowed our dairy farmers to recover the extra costs of transporting their product to consumer regions. Clearly, federal orders made sense sixty years ago.

The situation has changed. Dairy farms have sprung up in every corner of the country, especially in those regions farthest from the Upper Midwest where the government requires higher minimum prices. Federal orders no longer encourage the flow of milk from one place to another. Today, federal orders artificially encourage the production of milk by high-cost producers in certain regions at the expense of more efficient producers in the Upper Midwest. Geographically, the system favors milk production in high-cost regions such as the Southeast, Texas, and the Northeast at the expense of traditional dairy states such as Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The impact of this pricing system on the Upper Midwestern dairy farmer has been disastrous. Since 1955, Minnesota has lost nearly 60,000 dairy farms. Over one-quarter of Minnesota dairy farmers disappeared in the six-year period following 1993.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this misguided legislation that would continue an outdated dairy policy, and I believe that the USDA's reform plan should be implemented.