

economy is largely dependent on foreign markets, and our farmers should not bear the brunt of our sanctions policy.

Another issue that must be addressed is the efficacy of the crop insurance program. Too many vulnerable farmers are not being protected under this program, and I am eager to find a way in which we can ensure the affordability of crop insurance for those at high risk, while making the program attractive to those at low risk, all at a cost the federal government can bear. I am pleased that the President's budget includes several preliminary proposals for crop insurance reforms, and I look forward to building on these initiatives to develop a system that is strong and effective.

Let me mention one more issue of critical importance to Illinois farmers, namely ethanol. The ethanol industry has generated significant economic activity throughout rural America and created thousands of high-paying U.S. jobs. At the same time, the use of ethanol has reduced air pollution, oil imports, and our trade imbalance, all at a net savings to the federal government. I am anxious to help our corn growers find new markets for ethanol. This is a product with far-reaching benefits . . . to agriculture, to our environment, and to all American consumers.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. STENHOLM for demonstrating their commitment to American agriculture and urging us to speak out on this important issue. I hope we can use the momentum generated today to begin solving the problems facing our agriculture economy and to ensure that the agriculture industry of which we have always been so proud in this country remains strong for generations to come.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, our nation's social security system has traditionally been a "safety net" to citizens hoping to lead long and fruitful lives. However, changes in our society's economic and social conditions warrant reform.

The facts are clear. The Trust Fund will be depleted by 2032.

As such, the current debate is not about the necessity of reform, but what structural revisions will preserve the system long term.

I believe that reform should be synonymous with "guarantee"—guaranteed minimum benefits for decades to come. Reforms that do not ensure system solvency or include pension or private savings plans without such a guarantee are, frankly, indefensible.

Today, I urge my colleagues to support reform that, as Franklin Roosevelt said best, ". . . take[s] care of human needs" throughout the next millennium.

TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY DARROW

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor Dorothy Darrow

who, for the last 30 years, has served as the Secretary of the Delta County Republican Party. In this capacity, Dorothy has won both the esteem and admiration of everyone, including myself, who has had the privilege of working with her. As Dorothy moves on from her position in the party, I would like to pay tribute to her and thank her for her many years of dedicated service.

First elected to the post of party secretary on February 7, 1969, Dorothy served with great distinction as secretary where she was chiefly responsible for coordinating and organizing the multiple activities of the local party. In doing so, Dorothy played an integral part in the success of both the party and its candidates for three decades.

Mr. Speaker, like those within the Delta Republican Party, I am truly grateful to Dorothy for her years of self-less service. She has been a wonderful asset to the local party, myself and other Republican candidates, as well as the Delta community at-large. As Dorothy ends her tenure with the Delta County Republicans, I would like to congratulate her on a job well done and wish her all the best in all of her future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, during roll call vote No. 52 on H. Con. Res. 24, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD RETIREMENT PORTABILITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE SCARBOROUGH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 1999

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, as the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Civil Service, I was pleased to introduce H.R. 807. As amended, this legislation addresses serious problems that affect a small number of Federal Reserve employees who transfer to other federal agencies and also federal employees who move from federal agencies to the Federal Reserve. This measure also ensures that the access provision of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 will be implemented as Congress intended it to be.

The Federal Reserve Board maintains two retirement systems of its own. Both are similar to the retirement systems that cover most federal employees. One is comparable to the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), and the other is structured like the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

Despite these similarities, there are also distinct differences between the Federal Reserve's programs and these federal retirement systems. One difference is how they are financed. The Federal Reserve programs are backed by real assets, stocks and bonds, that have appreciated to create a substantial cor-

pus from which benefits may be paid. In fact, the Federal Reserve's retirement fund is so over funded that it has not had to make any contributions to it since 1986. The CSRS and FERS systems, in contrast, are "invested" only in IOUs drawn on the taxpayers. Consequently, despite continuous employee and agency contributions, annuities are mainly paid from current tax revenue, and the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund is woefully under funded; its unfunded liability exceeds a half a trillion dollars.

There is also a difference between how employees who transfer between the Federal Reserve and other agencies are treated under the FERS system. Employees who transfer into the Federal Reserve receive credit under the Federal Reserve's FERS-like plan for their other federal service. But FERS does not provide reciprocal treatment to Federal Reserve employees who transfer to positions in other agencies.

Mr. Speaker, this is unfair. H.R. 807 will provide the retirement portability that is currently lacking. Under it, those employees who participate in the Federal Reserve's FERS-like retirement will receive FERS credit for their Federal Reserve years when they transfer to another federal agency. In short, this legislation provides reciprocity. Without this correction, former Federal Reserve employees would receive smaller annuities upon retirement than they otherwise should.

H.R. 807 also fixes another problem that was brought to the Civil Service Subcommittee's attention after we held a hearing on the Federal Reserve's retirement programs and marked up the bill at subcommittee. Under current law, Federal employees participating in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) who transfer to the Federal Reserve Board, are not permitted by law to withdraw funds from their TSP accounts. Current law specifies that employees "must separate from Government employment" in order to be entitled to withdraw funds. However, employment at the Board is considered to be "Government employment." Therefore, employees who transfer to the Federal Reserve and are covered by its Thrift Plan may not withdraw the funds in their TSP accounts.

I amended this bill when it was marked up by the Committee on Government Reform to correct this problem. H.R. 807 now allows Federal employees who have transferred or will transfer to the Board to move the funds in their TSP accounts to the Board's Thrift Plan. I believe that this technical correction, along with the portability language in the underlying bill, are appropriate and necessary remedies to ensure Board employees fair treatment under current law.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very pleased to support section 4 of this measure. Section 4 was added to the bill by my good friend from Florida, Mr. MICA, who chaired the Civil Service Subcommittee during the last two Congresses. This provision will ensure that the Administration will implement the access provision of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 as Congress intended it to.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, OPM's interpretation of that Act undermined the very reason Congress adopted the access provision: to open competition for previously restricted jobs. OPM ruled that agencies cannot appoint veterans selected under the access provisions of that Act to the competitive service unless they

already have competitive status. Instead, OPM instructed agencies to appoint these veterans to the excepted service under Schedule B. Many veterans fear that if they are appointed as excepted service employees, as OPM's guidance requires, they will, in effect, be placed in dead end jobs.

This fear is not unfounded. As excepted service employees, these veterans would not be eligible to compete for other agency jobs under internal agency promotion procedures. That is manifestly unfair and directly contrary to congressional intent. The access provision of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act intended to open up employment opportunities for veterans and to provide those selected under it with the same rights as their co-workers. Any other result is totally unacceptable.

The men and women who have served our nation under arms should not be relegated to second-class status when hired into the civil service. Section 4 makes sure that they will not.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has strong support on both sides of the aisle. I want to thank the distinguished Ranking Member of the Civil Service Subcommittee, the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. CUMMINGS, for his strong support for this measure. I commend the majority and minority leaders of the Committee on Government Reform, Chairman DAN BURTON and Ranking Member HENRY WAXMAN, for expediting committee approval of H.R. 807 and for their support. I also want to express my appreciation to Mr. MICA, the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, Mr. DAVIS, the distinguished gentlelady from Maryland, Mrs. MORELLA, and the distinguished gentlelady from the District of Columbia, Ms. NORTON, for their strong support.

I urge all Members to support this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CANTON MIGHTY EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL BAND

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the hard work, discipline and deserved achievements of the Canton High School Band—from my Fourth District in Texas. Besides numerous awards and recognitions, the Mighty Eagle Band has been chosen to represent the State of Texas, today, St. Patrick's Day, by performing in Dublin, Ireland—in that city's St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The young men and women of this band have participated in and won a multitude of competitions every year since 1993. More recently, the Canton Band was named the third overall band in the State of Texas. Along with this honor, came an invitation to perform in Dublin, Ireland, on St. Patrick's Day. As if the many hours of sacrifice and discipline exhibited by these young men and women—was not enough—they managed to raise an amazing \$200,000 in order to pay for their trip.

Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by their many achievements and awards, the Canton ISD music program emphasizes responsibility, accountability and service to others. Obviously, these youngsters have internalized these characteristics in their search for success. As we

adjourn today, let us do so in honor of the Canton Mighty Eagle Band and their numerous merited accolades.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America. I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

BLACK DOCTORS' ORGANIZATION PULLS CONVENTION FROM SEATTLE, CONSIDERS BALTIMORE

SEATTLE(AP).—A group representing 20,000 black physicians is withdrawing its 2001 convention from Seattle, citing the state's passage in November of an anti-affirmative action initiative.

"Such legislative enactment (of Initiative 200) is counter to the basic tenets upon which the National Medical Association was founded more than 100 years ago," NMA executive director Lorraine Cole said Tuesday in a statement.

The association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., will relocate its convention. It listed potential sites as Denver, Miami, Nashville, Orlando, Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore.

The convention was scheduled for the Washington State Convention Center July 27-Aug. 2, 2001. Between 8,000 and 10,000 people usually attend, said NMA spokeswoman Tomeka Rawlings.

"It's their loss," said John Carlsson, of Bellevue, who headed the petition drive to put 1-200 on the ballot.

"Unless their organization was founded on the tenets of racial quotas and preferences, they are seriously misreading Initiative 200 because that's all that prohibits," he added.

Mayor Paul Schell plans to ask the association to reconsider, spokeswoman Vivian Phillips said.

"He feel it's quite unfortunate," Phillips said of the association's action. "Seattle did not vote in favor of 1-200. In fact, it was overwhelmingly defeated in Seattle."

The National Association of Black Journalists said before the election that passage of the initiative might be reason for a minority journalists' group to withdraw its conference, scheduled for Seattle this summer.

However, the group UNITY: Journalists of Color voted two days after the Nov. 3 election to keep the convention in Seattle, despite passage of 1-200. The UNITY '99 conference is scheduled July 7-11 at the Washington State Convention Center.

The group said in a news release that passage of 1-200 "cries out for the need to educate the public about affirmative action."

Besides the NABJ, the UNITY group includes the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Native American Journalists Association, and the Asian American Journalists Association. Their memberships total more than 6,000.

Initiative 200 was approved by nearly 60 percent of the state's voters, but a majority within the city voted no. It bars state and local governments from giving preferential treatment to women and minorities in contracts, jobs or public higher education.

WHAT IS THIS GROUP THAT HAS EMBROIDERED LOTT?

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—Behind a wooden partition in a back room of the Lizard's Thicket

restaurant, about 30 members of the Council of Conservative Citizens—many wearing Confederate battle flag pins and belt buckles hovered over plates of fried catfish and chocolate cream pie as Dennis Wheeler laid out the struggle before them.

Wheeler, a freelance writer from Atlanta opened last week's meeting with a reading from Revelation about the beast that "opened his mouth in blasphemies against God." Among those blasphemies, he told the group, is a "Yankee radicalism" known as equalitarianism.

"(I)t is exactly this philosophy that our Confederate forefathers fought against in the War Between the States," said Wheeler, head of a council chapter in Georgia. "The current mark of the beast is the equalitarian religion which names as sins racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and homophobia, among others, rather than the Ten Commandments."

The only blacks within earshot were the waitresses and busboys working the tables on the other side of the partition.

Just what is the Council of Conservative Citizens? It was formed 13 years ago, it claims 15,000 members and lately it's been in the news since Sen. Trent Lott and Rep. Bob Barr landed in hot water after it was revealed they had addressed the group.

But what else? Is it a reincarnation of the old White Citizens Councils, as some suggest? Is it a white supremacist group?

"We are not racists," insists South Carolina director Frances Bell, citing her American Indian background and noting the group has some Jewish members.

Is the council merely an organization so devoted to free speech and assembly that it refuses to silence racist or bigoted views?

The questions have sent Lott, R-Miss., and Barr, R-Ga., scurrying for cover. The chairman of the Republican National Committee has called on GOP members, including national committee member Buddy Witherspoon of Columbia, to quit the organization that calls itself the "active advocate for the no longer silent conservative majority."

Gordon Baum, the St. Louis attorney who runs the group, says attacks on the council—especially by people like law professor Alan Dershowitz—are liberal diversions to take the heat off President Bill Clinton. "It all has to do with protecting Billy's butt," he said.

"Why are they so afraid of us?" Baum said in a telephone interview last week, noting that the council is best known for opposing affirmative action and quotas and defending the Confederate battle flag against those who would remove it from public display.

He answered his own question: "Because these are all politically incorrect (stances), and they would prefer that we would not have a voice. I mean, neither the Republicans nor the Democrats will touch these issues, and they're afraid of the people out here's growing discontent with the parties."

But to the Rev. Joseph Lowery, who founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference along with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the group is "the Ku Klux Klan with a coat and tie."

"What they stand for sounds like just a recycled White Citizens Council," the Atlanta preacher said, "A cocklebur by any other name is just as thorny."

In fact, some of the group's original members came from the old Citizens Councils of America, a pro-segregation group formed as a response to the 1954 Supreme Court decision integrating public schools.

Baum was its Midwest field organizer and Robert "Tut" Patterson its founder. Patterson now writes a column for The Citizen Informer newsletter for Baum's group.

Mark Potok, a researcher for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.,