

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING STEVEN W. EASTER UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to Mr. Steven W. Easter. He is retiring as vice president for member and government relations at Blue Diamond Growers in Sacramento, CA. As Mr. Easter is "roasted" by his many friends and business associates, I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in saluting his remarkable career.

Mr. Easter was born in Merced, CA, in 1941. He is a fifth generation Californian whose family has long been involved in agriculture and agricultural educational endeavors. He was raised on a small farm in the San Joaquin Valley where his father was an agricultural educator.

After growing up in Dos Palos, CA, he attended the University of California at Davis, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics in 1963 and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Business Management in 1964.

Blue Diamond Growers, a 4,000-member cooperative that is the largest processor and marketer of almonds in the world, first employed him as a field representative in 1967. His subsequent positions with Blue Diamond included that of assistant membership manager, field manager, and membership manager.

In 1975, Mr. Easter was given the additional responsibility of corporate secretary at Blue Diamond Growers. He assumed his current position as vice president, member and governmental relations in November 1980.

All told, Mr. Easter has served as a corporate officer at Blue Diamond for 23 years; his total employment there spans 31 years. I am honored to salute his outstanding dedication to one of Sacramento's finest corporate citizens.

Mr. Easter's business excellence also extends beyond Blue Diamond Growers. He currently serves as a director of the Almond Board of California and is past president of the Almond Hullers and Processors Association. He also recently served 2 years as chairman of the Board of the American Institute of Cooperation.

He is also a member of the Advisory Committee on horticultural trade to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative. Mr. Easter is presently chairman of the Agricultural Council of California.

Additionally, he has served as chairman of the American Institute of Cooperatives, as well as chair of the Agricultural Council Education Committee. Locally, Mr. Easter has served on the board of the Sacramento Country Day School for 15 years, including a term as Education Committee chairman.

Steve Easter has contributed enormously to Blue Diamond Growers and the Sacramento

community-at-large. He has helped Blue Diamond grow its sales to \$500 million per year and seen it develop and open markets in more than 90 countries around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, as Steve Easter is "roasted" by his many friends and colleagues today, I am honored to pay tribute to one of Sacramento's great citizens. His tireless contributions to the member growers of Blue Diamond as well as to the Sacramento community are commendable. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in wishing him every success in all his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 81, to provide for a national medal for public safety officers who act with extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, on a day when many Americans are complaining about how much they pay in taxes, I rise in support of passing the Tax Limitation Amendment, legislation that would require a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority in Congress to approve any future tax increases.

If a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority is required to pass some of the most important issues concerning our Nation, like amending the Constitution and ratifying international treaties, the same standard should be used when deciding to take more hard-earned money from the American taxpayer. In short, the Tax Limitation Amendment gives taxpayers protection against future reckless spending and tax-grabbing by the Federal Government. I find it hard to believe any Member of Congress could oppose such a simple, straightforward protection for taxpayers.

By making it more difficult for Congress to reach into the pockets of taxpayers to fund increased Government spending, a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority requirement would ensure Congress is more fiscally responsible with America's money. Although the economy is presently in good shape, taxes are still the highest they've been since World War II. It's important to implement the $\frac{2}{3}$ standard now, when we have a surplus and times are good, to prevent future Congresses from turning to high taxes down the road.

States have passed tax limitation measures with overwhelming voter support. In the 14 States which have implemented tax limitation standards, taxes and spending grow at slower rates, while the economy and job rates grow more quickly. In my own State of New Jersey, Gov. Christine Whitman is a strong supporter for the Tax Limitation Amendment because she knows, as do I, that this legislation is good for New Jersey's taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me today in making it tougher for this body to raise taxes on an America that is already over-taxed!

TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the American taxpayer and in support of the Tax Limitation Amendment.

The 105th Congress, more than any other, gave the American people much needed tax relief. Still, here we are at another April 15 and taxes are still too high and the Tax Code is still too complicated.

This year, just like every year, the average American family will work until approximately mid-May to earn enough income to pay an entire year's worth of taxes. In a time when we have budget surpluses, that fact seems inconceivable. Why have we not yet lessened their burden?

What is more inconceivable is that this past February the President sent us a budget proposal that increased taxes by an incredible \$108 billion. Why?

Mr. Speaker, I have come to this floor time and time again saying the same thing over and over. The "Tax and Spend" liberals just don't seem to get the message. Well, I will continue to come here to this floor and say the same thing again and again until they do. The message is quite simple: The American people know how to spend their hard earned income better than we do—it's time we lower taxes, not raise them.

I firmly believe that we must protect the American people from those would take their hard-earned dollars away at every turn of the hat to fund more feel-good programs. In my view, there is only one way to do that—make it more difficult for any Congress to increase taxes.

That's why I support this amendment, Mr. Speaker. It will force Congress to finally hold the line on taxes. It is a reasonable, straightforward approach that requires only one thing from Congress: Before any tax increase on the American people can be passed, a two-thirds super-majority in both Houses of Congress must agree to it.

Last Congress we passed the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 which balanced our Federal budget for the first time in a generation.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

We even managed to give the American people a tax cut in the process. The result? We now have projected budget surpluses for years to come totalling more than a trillion dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I don't buy the argument that raising taxes in times of emergency would be too difficult or even needed. But even if it were, I believe that Congress can and would put aside partisan differences and raise taxes in an appropriate manner to meet the nation's needs.

Draining more and more dollars from private individuals and businesses should not be easy. Taking a bigger bite out of the American people's paychecks should be just as difficult for that tax-collector as it is for us to earn those paychecks.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the American people to pass this amendment. We owe it to the American family. It's difficult enough to make "ends meet" these days. So on this tax day, let's put the final nail in the coffin of the days of "tax and spend" and pass this amendment.

TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Tax Limitation Amendment.

In his 1985 State of the Union speech, President Reagan said,

Every dollar the Federal Government does not take from us, every decision it does not make for us will make our economy stronger, our lives more abundant, our future more free.

Unfortunately, either the tax and spend liberals did not hear President Reagan or they weren't listening.

In 1993, the Clinton administration and the Democrat-led Congress passed into law the greatest tax increase in American history. And they passed it with a simple majority.

Today, the typical American family spends more money on taxes than it spends on food, clothing, shelter, and transportation combined. This is a burden of more than 38 percent.

While the Republican-led Congress has worked to alleviate the tax burden on our hard-working families over the last 4 years, the Federal tax portion of national production is at a post-World War II high. In fact, it is over 20 percent of the gross domestic product.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. Every year, the Federal Government continues to take more money out of the pockets of American workers, even during times of prosperity. Now, with the first budget surplus in a generation, we should be rewarding our hardworking American families for helping the country get back on its feet, not punish them with more taxes.

Today, we have an opportunity to ensure Congress acts responsibly with taxpayer dollars. The Tax Limitation Act would amend the Constitution to require a two-thirds "super majority" vote by Congress before it could increase taxes on American families.

That two-thirds majority indicates bipartisan support. And in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, Congress should never seek to raise taxes on the American people without a two-thirds majority.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Tax Limitation Act.

MELVIN RICE

HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, Melvin Rice began his career in law enforcement on March 5, 1973, with the Abington Township Police Department. Melvin was a member of the last class to be held at the Old York Road Police Department. During his 25 years in the department, Melvin worked the Patrol Division and was in the Special Task Force and Juvenile Detective Division for 2 years. He became one of the first (of four) K-9 officers in the department and served in that position for the past 16 years. Melvin has received numerous citations from the department, the U.S. Police Canine Association and other departments. Melvin also has served in the Abington Township Police Honor Guard and the Abington Township Human Relations Board.

It was Melvin's desire to recruit more minorities into the law enforcement field. This led him to develop the first concept of the pre-testing tutoring program, which was later adopted as an ongoing process for all new recruits.

The most rewarding experience came when Melvin cofounded, along with Sgt. William Hold, the Montgomery County Black Law Enforcement Officers Association, an association dedicated to minority recruitment.

Melvin retired on January 24, 1999, to spend time with his wife, Georgianna, his son, Michael, and his daughter, Danielle, daughter-in-law, Misty, and grandson, Joshua. He leaves the department with many happy memories and will continue his work with the Montgomery County Black Law Enforcement Officers Association and in his community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 82, congratulating the State of Qatar and its citizens for their commitment to democratic ideals and women's suffrage, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

THOMAS WARD HONORED

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Thomas J. Ward of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Tom is retiring as President and CEO of Blue Cross of Northeastern

Pennsylvania. I am pleased to have been asked to join in honoring his long career.

Tom began his career in New York in a variety of health care-related positions. In 1967, he was a research assistant for a special environmental project of the New York Department of Health. He taught at the State University of New York and later served as a research consultant there until 1969. Tom also held several positions at the Albany Medical College until he arrived in Northeastern Pennsylvania in 1973. He began as Director of Planning and Research for the Health and Hospital Planning Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and later became the Deputy Director of the entire Council. In 1976, Tom became Special Assistant of Health Care Planning at Blue Cross. He went on to hold the posts of Director of Professional Affairs, Vice-President of Professional and Public Affairs, and Executive Vice-President before being appointed President and CEO in October 1990.

Since 1990, Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania has soared in membership. Tom helped shift Blue Cross from an indemnity company to a managed care company by establishing six divisions in 1992, each under the supervision of a vice-president. Tom also instituted a quality management approach to review all the processes in the company and establish specific improvement goals.

Tom is very active in our community, sitting on the Board of Keystone Junior College, the Lackawanna County Association of Retarded Citizens, the Hospital Association of Pennsylvania, the Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, and the Boy Scouts of America. Tom and his wife Priscilla have five grown children and reside in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania.

Through his able leadership and broad vision of health insurance needs of the future, Tom Ward has skillfully led Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with his family, friends, and colleagues in thanking him for "a job well done" and wishing him a happy, healthy, and productive retirement.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER MEDAL OF VALOR ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 13, 1999

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 46, the "Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act." Our nation's firefighters, enforcement officers, and other emergency services personnel put themselves at risk every day to assure the safety of the general public. Just as our military personnel are recognized for extraordinary acts of valor in the effort to preserve peace abroad, so should our domestic safety officers be recognized for their bravery above and beyond the call of duty.

Last year, Members of Congress witnessed an extraordinary act of valor as Capitol Hill police officers gave their lives defending the Halls of Congress from a gunman intent on shooting his way into Congress. It was a potent reminder of the risks every public safety officer face each and every day. I never will