

Neotropical birds, like bluebirds, robins, orioles, and goldfinches, travel across international borders and depend upon thousands of miles of suitable habitat. In fact, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, neotropical migratory birds typically spend five months of the year at Caribbean/Latin American wintering sites, four months in North American breeding areas, and three months traveling to these sites during spring and autumn migrations.

Sadly, there are 90 North American bird species that are listed as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and an additional 124 birds that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified on its list of Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern.

In North America, an estimated 70 percent of prairie birds are declining. The Government of Mexico lists approximately 390 birds species as endangered, threatened, vulnerable, or rare. What is lacking, however, is a strategic plan for bird conservation, money for on-the-ground projects, public awareness, and any real coordination among the various nations where neotropical migratory birds reside.

While the full extent of the problems facing neotropical migratory birds is unclear, there is no debate over the fact that both bird populations and critical habitat declined significantly in the 1990's. We must act now before more of these species become endangered or extinct. This bill will contribute to the recovery and conservation of migratory birds, without violating private property rights.

There are 60 million adult Americans who enjoy watching and feeding birds at their homes. In fact, these activities generate some \$20 billion in economic activity each year. In addition, healthy bird populations are an invaluable asset for farmers and timber interests. By consuming detrimental insects, these birds prevent the loss of millions of dollars each year.

Under the terms of this legislation, an individual or an organization would be able to submit a project proposal to the Secretary of the Interior. While the bill does not limit the type of projects, I would expect that efforts to determine the condition of neotropical migratory bird habitat, implement new or improved conservation plans, undertake population studies, educate the public, and reduce the destruction of essential habitat would be forthcoming. Since these birds migrate between the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America, comprehensive plans must be developed. It does little good if we are successful in conserving suitable habitat in only a portion of their range.

During the previous Congress, I introduced a similar bill to assist neotropical migratory birds. In fact, that bill was the subject of a public hearing on September 17, 1998. At that time, the Administration testified that "H.R. 4517 goes a long way in promoting the effective conservation and management of neotropical migratory birds by supporting conservation programs and providing financial resources. We applaud this important and timely initiative." In addition, representatives from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Audubon Society testified in strong support of my legislation.

I am confident that a Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund would provide much-needed support for projects designed to con-

serve critical habitat for declining migratory bird species in an innovative and cost-effective way.

I urge my colleagues to support the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN MEAT  
LABELING ACT

**HON. EARL POMEROY**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 6, 1999*

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce my original cosponsorship of the Country of Origin Meat Labeling Act of 1999. I am looking forward to working in a bipartisan manner with my colleague, Representative CHENOWETH of Idaho, on this important legislation for America's ranchers, farmers, and consumers.

The Country of Origin Meat Labeling Act of 1999 is designed to provide American consumers with the right to know where the meat products they are feeding their families are produced. As we all know, American consumers can easily determine which country their automobiles are from and which country their shoes, shirts, and trousers are from, but they have no idea where the meat and meat products they feed their families originate.

Throughout my service in the House of Representatives, I have been a strong supporter of country of origin labeling—especially for meat and meat products—because of its common-sense nature, its benefits to ranchers and consumers, and its cost-free benefit to taxpayers. During the 105th Congress, I joined Representative CHENOWETH as an original cosponsor of H.R. 1371, the Country of Origin Meat Labeling Act of 1997. I was pleased that the Senate adopted an amendment identical to H.R. 1371 by unanimous consent during consideration of the FY 1999 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Unfortunately, the special interests prevailed during the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Committee and the meat labeling provision was dropped from the report. Instead, Congress directed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to conduct another study to determine the empirical impacts of country of origin labeling for consumers, packers, and producers. Basically, the study provides the packing industry with yet more time to delay this important, consumer-friendly legislation.

Mr. Speaker, America's livestock industry is in dire straits. Livestock prices are near record lows while at the same time packers' profits are at near record highs. America's ranchers and farmers have invested heavily in genetic research and nutrients to produce the most cost-effective and nutritious products in the world. But, unfortunately, without country of origin labeling, consumers have no idea where the meat products they purchase originate, leaving American cattlemen's efforts for naught.

I look forward to working with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, the National Farmers Union, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Sheep Industry Association, and the National Consumers League in the passage of this important legislation.

HEALTH INSURANCE TAX  
DEDUCTIBILITY ACT

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 6, 1999*

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1998. This bill is the same simple, common sense solution to a very complex and destructive problem in our society.

Since I came to Congress in 1992, we have debated health care reform and considered a wide range of proposals—all designed to insure a greater number of Americans. When President Clinton signed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) into law in 1996, everyone said Congress had taken the first step towards ensuring access to health insurance to more individuals and families.

Unfortunately, a study completed last year by the General Accounting Office shows us this goal has not been achieved. Although HIPAA did expand access to health insurance, it did nothing to ensure that Americans can afford health insurance. And as the GAO study recognized, affordability has become the major hurdle for the American family to clear.

In the past, Congress has passed initiatives to encourage and assist people to get health insurance. We allow employers who sponsor health insurance for their employees to deduct the employer's share of the premium as a business expense. We allow self employed people to deduct a percentage of the health insurance premium they purchase. Yet we provide no assistance or incentive for individuals whose employers do not provide health insurance.

The Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1999 will do just this. Under this legislation, individuals will be able to deduct a portion—linked to the deduction for the self insured—of the money they pay for health and long-term care insurance. This proposal will make health insurance more affordable for individuals and their families, which in turn, will give American families greater peace of mind.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND DR.  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 6, 1999*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to honor the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday we will be commemorating later this month. It is now over 30 years that his life was senselessly snuffed out by an assassin in Memphis, TN.

Following his death, I joined my colleagues in calling for the establishment of the third Monday in January to be a national holiday in honor of Rev. King. While this holiday is not ingrained in the American fabric of life, many of us are bittersweet regarding the message the holiday conveys. Too many Americans view Martin Luther King day as a holiday just for black people. Rev. King himself would be the first person to repudiate that attitude, for his message was for all people, of all races,

creeds, colors and backgrounds. Today, in 1999, we should dedicate ourselves to re-membering the universality of his message.

Dr. King contributed more to the causes of national freedom and equality than any other man or woman of our century. His achievements as an author and as a minister were surpassed only by his leadership, which transformed a torn people into a beacon of strength and solidarity, and united a divided nation under a common creed of brotherhood and mutual prosperity.

It was Dr. King's policy of nonviolent protest which served to open the eyes of our nation to the horrors of discrimination and police brutality. This policy revealed the Jim Crow laws of the South as hypocritical and unfair, and forced civil right issues into the national dialectic. It is due to the increased scope and salience of the national civil rights discussion that the movement achieved so much during its decade of our greatest accomplishment, from 1957 to 1968.

It was in 1955 that Dr. King made his first mark on the nation, when he organized the black community of Montgomery, AL, during a 382-day boycott of the city's bus lines. The boycott saw Dr. King and many other civil rights activists incarcerated prison as "agitators," but their efforts were rewarded in 1956, when the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the segregational practices of the Alabama bus system was unconstitutional, and demanded that blacks be allowed to ride with equal and indistinguishable rights. The result proved the theory of nonviolent protest in practice, and roused our nation to the possibilities to be found through peace and perseverance.

In 1963, Dr. King and his followers faced their most ferocious test, when they set a massive civil protest in motion in Birmingham, AL. The protest was met with brute force by the local police, and many innocent men and women were injured through the violent response. However, the strength of the police department worked against the forces of discrimination in the nation, as many Americans came to sympathize with the plight of the blacks through the sight of their irrational and inhumane treatment.

By August of 1963 the civil rights movement had achieved epic proportions, and it was in a triumphant and universal air that Dr. King gave his memorable "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In the next year, Dr. King was distinguished as Time magazine's Man of the Year for 1963, and he would later be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1964.

Throughout his remaining years, Dr. King continued to lead our nation toward increased peace and unity. He spoke out directly against the Vietnam War, and led our nation's War on Poverty, which he saw as directly involved with the Vietnam struggle. To Dr. King, the international situation was inextricably linked to the domestic, and thus it was only through increased peace and prosperity at home that tranquility would be ensured abroad.

When Dr. King was gunned down in 1968 he had already established himself as a national hero and pioneer. As the years passed his message continued to gather strength and direction, and it is only in the light of his multi-generational influence that the true effects of his ideas can be measured.

Dr. King was a man who lacked neither vision nor the means and courage to express it.

His image of a strong and united nation overcoming the obstacles of poverty and inequality continues to provide us with an ideal picture of the "United" states which will fill the hearts of Americans with feelings of brotherhood and a common purpose of years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to bear in mind the courageous, dedicated deeds of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to join together on Monday, January 18, in solemn recollection of his significant contributions for enhancing human rights throughout our nation and throughout the world.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS

**HON. BUD SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 6, 1999*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing a simple authorization extension bill for the Federal Aviation Administration's programs. With the passage of this bill, \$10.3 billion for FAA would be authorized for 1999.

The Omnibus Appropriations bill passed at the end of last Congress extended FAA's Airport Improvement Program for 6 months. The bill I am introducing today would extend AIP until the end of the fiscal year and reauthorize two other FAA programs for 1999—Facilities and Equipment, and Operations.

The AIP program authorization expires on March 31, 1999. Since AIP is funded with Contract Authority, the expiration of Contract Authority means no further funding of the program. Without this extension, the nation's airports will stop receiving new airport grants. These grants fund projects such as runway extensions, taxiway constructions, and other airport capacity enhancing projects.

Aviation delays already cost the industry billions of dollars. According to the Air Transport Association, aviation delays in 1997 cost the air carriers \$2.4 billion. If this bill is not passed by March 31, 1999, the airport capacity enhancing projects supported by the AIP program could be delayed, possibly increasing the cost of delays in the future.

The bill also reauthorizes the formula that determines the Aviation Trust Fund contribution to the FAA's Operations account. In addition, the bill makes minor adjustments to the Airport Improvement Program formulas.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has always worked in a bipartisan fashion. I look forward to working with my colleagues; Congressman JIM OBERSTAR, Congressman JOHN DUNCAN, JR., and Congressman BILL LIPINSKI, on this bill and other important aviation issues we will face during the 106th Congress.

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LIMIT CONGRESSIONAL TERMS

**HON. BOB STUMP**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 6, 1999*

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again introduce a proposed amendment to the

U.S. Constitution to limit the terms of Members of the House of Representatives. I do so on the first day of the 106th Congress to underscore my belief that this legislation is one of the most important reforms the new Congress can pursue.

My legislation would limit Members of the House to three four-year terms. I have long maintained that the current system of unlimited two-year terms frustrates our ability to advance legislation that is in the Nation's best interest. We have seen first-hand that reelection pressures can paralyze Members. All too often, Members succumb to special interests and cast their votes in favor of parochial causes, instead of what is best for the country. Under the system of nation-wide term limits that I am proposing, Members would have a new perspective on governing. They would have a sense of independence in knowing that they will be in Washington for a limited time and would no longer be beholden to special interest and contributors.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that term limits must be enacted nationally to be truly effective. Some of my colleagues, who I admire and respect, have chosen to abide by self-imposed term limits. While their actions are clearly well-intentioned, I believe they are placing their states and districts at a disadvantage. Under a system of piecemeal term limits, unaffected states will build an inordinate amount of seniority and power.

Mr. Speaker, the courts have ruled that nothing short of a constitutional amendment can limit congressional terms. Last Congress, we failed to agree on term limit language to send to the 50 states for ratification. We should not repeat this mistake in the 106th Congress. I strongly urge all of my reform-minded colleagues to cosponsor my proposed amendment.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE MILITARY RETIREE HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE ACT

**HON. JO ANN EMERSON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 6, 1999*

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to introduce the Military Retiree Health Care Task Force Act of 1999. This legislation will establish a Task Force that will look into all of the health care promises and representations made to members of the Uniformed Services by Department of Defense personnel and Department literature. The Task Force will submit a comprehensive report to Congress which will contain a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions. This report will include legislative remedies to correct the great injustices that have occurred to those men and women who served their country in good faith.

Let us not forget why we are blessed with freedom and democracy in this country. The sacrifices made by those who served in the military are something that must never be overlooked. Promises were made to those who served in the Uniformed Services. They were told that their health care would be taken care of for life if they served a minimum of twenty years of active federal service.

Well, those military retirees served their time and expected the government to hold up its