

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I missed rollcall votes number 147 and 148 on Monday, May 24, 1999, because I was attending a funeral of a dear friend.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both of these votes.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1905, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. DREIER (during special order of Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-165) on the resolution (H. Res. 190) providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1905) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DAIRY PRICING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about an important issue of fairness, fairness to farmers, fairness to consumers, and fairness to taxpayers. I know that "fairness" is an overused term. But quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it has never been more important or more true than it is on the issue that I want to talk about tonight, and that is the issue of dairy pricing.

For the last six decades, we have had a Government mandated system of dairy price supports. It began in the late 1930s because dairy producers had a difficult time getting their goods to consumers in a timely way. They had a difficult time because of technology in meeting consumption needs. We did not, quite frankly, have effective infrastructure or enough technology to transport our surplus to States that had deficit in production.

Those days are over, however. We have the refrigeration, we have the infrastructure to transport dairy products from States like Wisconsin anywhere in America overnight. As a result, the outdated dairy price system, the Federal order system, no longer makes sense.

Wisconsin dairy farmers and Wisconsin communities are being ravaged, they are being destroyed by the cur-

rent Federal order system. In the last 8 years, Wisconsin has lost over 10,000 dairy farms. Wisconsin has lost 2,000 dairy farms in each of the last 2 years. We have lost more dairy farms in the last 8 years than most States ever have.

Now, I am here tonight to speak to my colleagues, quite frankly, not on behalf of dairy farmers. Dairy farmers are not looking for our sympathy. They are a tough bunch. This is a tough life-style. They know that. They have been fighting uphill all of their lives. They are not looking for sympathy. They are looking for fairness.

More importantly, quite frankly, I would think to the Members of this body is the fact that this unfair system not only hurts our dairy farmers, my family farmers in Wisconsin, of which there are 22,000 remaining, but it is also unfair to consumers.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to realize, it is important to know that the outdated Federal order system artificially inflates the price of milk. And as more farmers go out of business, and as I just said, we are losing farmers each and every year, the more farmers who go out of business, the higher that price will be.

The Citizens Against Government Waste, Americans for Tax Reform, a number of taxpayer groups, groups that do not necessarily have a natural stake in the fight over a dairy policy, they have reached an interesting conclusion. After looking at the Federal order system, they have concluded that the Federal order system that we have had in this country for six decades is little more than a tax on milk. It is a milk tax that consumers are paying all across this land. It is a milk tax to the tune of about \$1 billion each and every year.

Now, the reason I come forward today is because of a battle that I believe is going to be on this floor tomorrow and, quite frankly and unfortunately, probably on this floor for weeks and months to come.

Some weeks ago, Secretary Dan Glickman proposed a final order on the Federal order system for dairies. And in that Federal order, Secretary Glickman proposed a very minor change to the Federal order system, a very minor, modest change. And it is true, it will benefit Wisconsin farmers, dairy farmers, but again in a very modest way.

□ 2115

Now, it may be ironic to some of you that I come here today to support a proposal from a Democrat administration. But I come forward because this issue of the Federal order system of the milk tax is not about Republican versus Democrat, it is not about conservative versus liberal. It is about doing the right thing. And I come here tonight to argue that we need to support Secretary Glickman's plan. Modest as it is, it is a step in the right direction.

Now, the Federal order system for dairy is one of the most complicated systems that you can possibly imagine. It is full of acronyms, it is full of terminology that the average person cannot understand, let alone a Member of Congress who may serve on the Committee on Agriculture or who comes from a dairy State. If you tried to explain to your constituents that this system that we have in place creates a price on milk based not upon productivity, based not upon quality, based not upon efficiency, but instead based merely on the distance that a producer is from the city of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, your constituents would not believe you. They would think that you were making it up. The sad reality is that that is the truth.

We have a dairy system in this Nation for which government mandates prices for fluid milk again based merely upon geography. That is wrong. It is unfair to farmers, it is unfair to consumers, it inflates the price of milk and, quite frankly, it is un-American because it is contrary to our free enterprise system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT). I know that he shares many of the concerns that I bring forward tonight.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding and especially thank him for requesting time for this special order tonight. I suspect there are an awful lot of Americans who may tune us in and certainly most of our colleagues who will be watching in their offices or are still here on the House floor who really do not understand this whole milk marketing order system. Frankly, having studied it now for about 5 years, I honestly cannot say that I completely understand it, either.

But I would correct the gentleman on one fact, and that is, he said it is priced purely on how far you are from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. That is partially right. It is the only commodity I think in the United States, maybe in the world, that is priced not only based on where it comes from, it is also priced on what it will go into. Milk that goes into cheese is of lower value than milk that goes into a bottling plant and is sold for fluid milk for drinking.

There are actually four classes of milk. Class one is milk that goes into liquid dairy products that are drinkable. Class two are spoonable; that would be things like yogurt. Class three is cheese, and class four is dry powdered milk. So we have four classes, and it is all priced based upon where it comes from. And the farther you are from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the more the dairy farmer gets for their milk. The closer you are to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the less you get.

And then if you are at an area that has cheese plants and most of the milk goes into cheese, you get a lower price still.

In my opinion, it is the most indefensible thing that the Federal Government ever created. It may have made sense back in 1934. In my opinion, it makes no economic sense today.

Let me just show in this chart that I have next to me, and it sort of illustrates the differentials we are talking about. These are the producer class one blended price benefits per hundred weight. That is the way milk is priced. Milk to dairy farmers, and we have got a former dairy farmer sitting here in the second row and maybe he can talk a little bit about it, maybe he does not even understand how his cream checks were calculated.

But if you lived, for example, in the northeastern part of the United States, your differential came to about \$1.40. If you lived in the Appalachian region, that average price was \$2.34. If you lived down in Florida, that worked out to \$3.32. But if you live in the area that the gentleman from Wisconsin and myself come from, in the upper Midwest, you can see that over here it is only 27 cents. That is what we are talking about, ultimately.

We are not asking for special privilege, for special benefits; we are not even asking to receive equal pay for equal milk; but we would like to equalize it much more than it is today.

The second chart that I have I think illustrates it more geographically and what we are talking about. The country is divided up into all of these milk marketing order regions. For example, these are the average blended prices for current Federal milk marketing order areas. In the Pacific Northwest, that average price last month I believe was \$14.75. If you are in the upper Midwest, that is, basically Wisconsin, Minnesota, parts of the Dakotas, you are talking \$13.57.

Now, on the other hand, if you lived in eastern Colorado and produced milk, your average blended price last month was \$15.16. And if you lived down here in Florida, that price is \$16.82. If you look at this, at one time it may have made some sense because the area around Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was considered the dairy capital of the United States and in many respects the dairy capital of the world, and we are still privileged that in this region we produce about 30 percent of the milk in the United States.

But as I say, it may have made some sense back in 1934; that was before the days of refrigeration, that was before the days of the kind of transportation, the interstate highway system that we have, but today we can move milk 1,200 miles in 24 hours. So the whole idea that we need this regional balkanization of the United States as it relates to dairy production is just crazy.

Again, back to the point that my colleague from Wisconsin made about the basic unfairness of this: How can you say to dairy farmers in Glenville, Minnesota, that you are only entitled to \$13.57 for your milk, but the same quality, the exact same quality of milk in

the Southeast is worth \$16.13. That is a difference of over \$2. When you are talking about hundreds of thousands of pounds of milk per month, you are starting to talk real differences.

I see the chairman of the Committee on Rules is approaching the microphone and perhaps we should yield to him for a moment.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my very good friends for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my friends for their very, very hard work and wish them well in their proceedings here.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. We would like to thank the chairman and we hope that he will drink more milk. June is Dairy Month, so enjoy as much as you can.

Mr. DREIER. I will tell my friend that I am a huge dairy consumer. Ice cream is my favorite.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I would like to thank the chairman.

As I mentioned earlier, we have been pushing now for 60 years to get this whole milk marketing order system reformed. Finally, under the leadership of former Congressman Gunderson from Wisconsin, we finally got included in the ag bill a couple of years ago a requirement that the Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary Glickman, was forced to come up with a new plan to begin to bring some equity to this whole milk marketing order system. To his credit, he did come up with a plan that frankly some of us are not completely happy with.

I want to point out these colors if I could. I promise not to take too much time here, but this essentially reflects some of the changes that would occur under the plan that Secretary Glickman came out with. If you look at this, actually Minnesota and Wisconsin lose under the Glickman proposal.

And so we are not asking for completely equal pay for equal milk, but we are asking to level the playing field. The net practical effect of the Glickman plan is, it does eliminate some of the differences. Relative to some of the other areas of the State, if you just go by winners and losers, we lose less than some of the other States, but that is because they already are getting more than we are getting.

So we are prepared to accept what Secretary Glickman has proposed in a spirit of compromise, because at least in general it moves to a leveling of the way that the milk marketing orders are set up.

Before I yield back to my colleague from Wisconsin, I want to play a little visualization game with some of my colleagues. If you could, just close your eyes and think of all of the products that the pricing is based upon some geographic location. Just think about that. Well, the answer is, there is only one. Only milk.

I think we have got a cartoon from, I believe it is from the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Maybe the gentleman from Wisconsin wants to talk a little bit about it. Maybe it is easier for me to talk

about it because I have got it right here.

But could we imagine a system where all computers would be price adjusted according to their distance from Seattle? We could not imagine that, could we? Could we imagine a system where all country music should be price adjusted according to how far it is away from Nashville, Tennessee? Where all oranges should be price adjusted according to their distance from Florida?

But we do have a system where all milk is priced based on how far away it is from Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Now, the question at the bottom is, which of these is actual Federal policy. It is amazing when you stop to think about it. It is the only product where the price is based on some arbitrary geographic location.

Secondly, it is based on what that product is going to go into. In fact, up in northern Minnesota where we produce an awful lot of iron ore, they produce taconite pellets. These taconite pellets, no one could imagine that some Federal bureaucrat would sit up there in front of an iron mine and say, well, these taconite pellets are going to go into automobiles so they will be priced at this level, and these taconite pellets are going to go into steel lockers and therefore the price will be something else. That would be a crazy, absurd idea. But the truth of the matter is that is exactly what happens to milk. It is all done by bureaucrats here in Washington, D.C.

Once again, we are here on the floor of the House tonight arguing this case because farmers in the upper Midwest have been dealing with this antiquated, in fact Justice Anton Scalia has referred to this system as "Byzantine."

We have dealt with this Byzantine system for 60 years. Finally, Secretary Glickman has come out with a plan which is not perfect, actually in some respects it still punishes dairy farmers in the upper Midwest, but at least it levels the playing field, at least it is fairer for dairy farmers regardless of where they are than the system we have today. I congratulate him for it.

I am willing, in a spirit of bipartisan ship, to move forward with the plan that the Secretary came up with.

I will yield back to the gentleman from Wisconsin and maybe we can talk a little more about this cartoon. As I say, it would be a whole lot funnier if it was not true.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. I thank my friend and colleague from Minnesota. I think he has pointed out again just the absurdity of the system and that cartoon does show it.

Think about this. We are entering the year 2000, the next millennium, yet we have a system for the production and consumption and distribution of milk that is based upon economic realities around World War II. Think about how much technology has changed since then.

Beyond that, we are at a time in our history in which Members of this body

from both sides of the aisle are emphasizing the need to open up borders, to break down barriers for trade all across this world. Yet here in America, in supposedly the bastion of entrepreneurial capitalism, we have a system that creates barriers, that blocks the flow, creates disincentives for the flow of dairy products across State lines and across regional lines. This is counter to everything that we stand for in America today.

Again, I want to come back and emphasize the point, this system is terrible for the dairy farmers in States like Minnesota and Wisconsin. Again, over the last 8 years, we have lost more dairy farmers than most States ever had.

But beyond that, this is bad for consumers. Under this system, we are driving up the price of milk. We are also encouraging large corporate farms, which are buying up the small family farmer.

□ 2130

If that trend continues, we are going to see dairy production in the hands of only a few, and then we will have a true monopoly on the supply of milk. Then we will see milk prices rise, and then milk will no longer be the cheap and wonderful fluid that it is, available to all today.

This is also, this system is bad for taxpayers. It drives up the cost on programs like the school meal program, it drives up the costs for families on food stamps, reduces the value of food stamps. This system, almost any way to look at it, is absurd, it is un-American, and it is wrong.

Now we are not going to change things overnight, we are not going to change things here tonight, but we do want to make our case to the American people. It is a long uphill battle, but it is certainly no longer and no more uphill than our dairy farmers are facing.

We want to start the process tonight, and as has been stated before, it is a long battle that we have ahead.

I yield my friend from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for yielding, and again I thank him for having this special order.

As my colleagues know, if this regional differentiation was not bad enough, and if the fact that we price milk to the producer based on not only how far they are from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, but what ultimately that milk is going to go into, if that were not bad enough, we have one other little wrinkle that has made things worse. It is called regional compacts.

Now this is the only area, again, that I can think of where we have allowed States literally to go together and hold out imports of dairy products from other parts of the country. In other words, they have created their own little fiefdoms.

As my colleagues know, at the very time, as was mentioned by the gen-

tleman from Wisconsin, at the very time we are saying to Europe and we are saying to Asia and we are saying to our trading partners all around the world it is time to bring down those trade barriers, we need open markets and open trade, we have problems trading even with certain regions of the country.

Right now there is a Northeast Dairy Compact, and unfortunately some of our colleagues, even as we speak, are trying to work out new compacts to try and create even worse regional differentiations between the regions and to keep out imports from other parts of the country.

As my colleagues know, this seems, and the gentleman mentioned the word "un-American". At the very time that we are trying to break down trade barriers to China and to Asia, we are constructing trade barriers right here in the United States, and in my opinion it is just an outrage, and so the only thing we can do is come to the House floor, offer amendments, talk about this, talk about the fairness, and hopefully in the long light of history sooner or later these trade barriers are going to be knocked down. We are going to see open trade not only with Europe, but with the Northeast as well.

The problem with compacts in my opinion is they do violate, if not the letter, certainly the spirit of the Commerce Clause in the Constitution, and frankly, had they not been legislatively approved, there is a very good chance that the Supreme Court would have thrown them out. That debate is going to get very heated because, as I say, not only does the Northeast want to expand its dairy compact, they are talking about a regional compact in the Southeast, perhaps extending as far west as into Kansas.

And we joked with some of the supporters of those compacts. We would be happy to allow those compacts, if they would just allow the upper Midwest in. I mean, if we could be getting the same price, for example, that they are already getting in New York and New Jersey, and you see by this chart \$13.57 for us, \$15.40 in New York and New Jersey. The New England Compact States are getting \$15.61. Now our dairy farmers would love to be in that compact if that meant that they got \$15.61 for their milk.

That is the difference. Again, it is unfair, and if the system is already convoluted and complicated, the terrible tragedy is there are people here in the Congress today, well-intentioned Members, but they are trying to make the situation even worse, even more complicated, even more unfair.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, what my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT), points out is something important, and that is that there are really two different elements to this overall fight that we have on the dairy front.

There is, first of all, the problem of the Federal order system, which is

what we began talking about tonight, and that is the differential system that does base the price of milk largely on the proximity to Eau Claire.

In fact, it was interesting. That is a fight that my predecessor has been fighting and so many men and women over the years have been fighting. The Agriculture Commissioner from your State, in Minnesota, pointed out that dairy farmers in Minnesota have become so frustrated with their inability to change that system that they actually think it might be easier to physically relocate the City of Eau Claire to the West Coast than actually making a reform to it. That is the Federal order system.

But the second part of this, and it is a problem, as you rightly pointed out, which is equally bad, it is the problem of the compacts because the compacts do serve to create trade barriers between States and between regions, and Citizens Against Government Waste have calculated that the compacts are a major tax on milk that will drive up the cost of milk for so many consumers in this country.

As my colleagues know, we are the most effective dairy producing region in the whole world in the upper Midwest, and yet because of the combination of the compacts, because of the combination of the compacts with the Federal order system, we are being punished for that very productivity which we have.

And as the gentleman pointed out also, the dairy farmers in Minnesota and Wisconsin are not asking for any favors. They do not want favors. They do not want sympathy. They just want the chance to compete. They know that if they are given that equal chance to compete, they will succeed. They will succeed vis-a-vis farmers in America, but also farmers all across the world.

That is all they are looking for, and in this land of opportunity it seems to be the least that we can do.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, talking about what this really ultimately costs to consumers as well, the estimate that we have of the cost of the compact to New England consumers has been \$47 million.

Now some people will say that milk is not a price-sensitive item and that, as my colleagues know, people, consumers will continue to drink about the same amount of milk regardless of the price. I am not sure I really believe that, and in fact I have had some of my friends at the Dairy Association try to tell me that. It seems to me that if you over-price milk in certain regions of the country, the net practical effect is you are going to drive down consumption, and what we desperately, and one of the real problems with what I call the Balkanization, and we are having this war going on in the Balkans right now where that term came from, but basically what we have is Balkanization of the United States as it relates to milk.

The real tragedy is the biggest war that is going on right now for the milk industry is this competition with the soft drink industry, and the soft drink industry is out there, and they are marketing and they are competing, and they are vicious on price and they are vicious on advertising, and they are constantly taking a bigger and bigger share of the beverage market, if my colleagues will, and at the very time, it seems to me, that the milk industry ought to be speaking with one voice and ought to be working together and figuring out how they can get a bigger market share relative to the soft drink industry, at that very time they should be working together. Unfortunately, we have all of these regions working against each other, and the net practical effect, of course, is that we continue to lose market share relative to Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola, Mountain Dew and all of those other soft drinks that are out there competing particularly for the younger people's market.

And so there are so many things that need to be said positively about the milk industry, the dairy industry, and unfortunately we spend so much of our time here in Washington fighting with each other over this regionalization of the way pricing is structured. It is a terrible mistake, and it has cost the consumers.

Let me also add that, as my colleagues know, a lot of the argument for this system and even for the regional compacts has been that it will save small dairy farmers. Well, over the last 10 years we have lost something like 10,000 dairy farmers. As my colleagues know, if that is the definition of success, we cannot afford much more of that.

What we really ultimately need to do is work together to find fairness, to find common ground, to work together to expand markets for our dairy products, and we are not just talking about fluid milk either. I think there is a tremendous market worldwide for cheese products and other dairy products which we can produce so well, so efficiently, with great quality here in the United States. But unfortunately, as I say, we spend too much of our time from a national perspective not looking for additional markets for our dairy farmers both here in the United States and around the world, but fighting amongst ourselves over this antiquated, Byzantine, unfair milk marketing order system.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on 2 points that the gentleman made.

It is ironic that at this point in our history where as Americans we are so health conscious, we keep talking about dietary changes and the things that we should be doing especially for young people in trying to encourage good health practices, at that very time when we should be encouraging the free flow of milk all around the Nation and keeping milk prices low, we are actually reinforcing a system that

does just the opposite. We are making milk a healthy, wonderful product. We are making milk more expensive than its counterparts. We are actually encouraging people to shy away from milk and to go towards such products as soda, and no one is going to say that soda rivals milk for health value. That is a great irony.

Secondly, I know a lot of people out there listening tonight are saying to themselves, well, if the price of milk is going to go up, that is okay if it goes to help the family farm. Well, perhaps the greatest irony of all is that the compact system, the Federal order system, hurts the small farmer to the advantage of the corporate farmer. Every analysis I have seen shows that the lion's share of the value of any increase in the price of milk does not go to that small family farmer. Instead, it goes to the large corporate farmer.

Nothing against the corporate farms, but they are pushing the small farmer out, and again, as we put more and more of the means of production for dairy products in the hands of those large corporate farmers, we are losing control, and then one day when we only have milk being produced by a few, then we will truly see milk prices go up. We will have a true monopoly.

So for those out there who are saying, "I am willing to pay more if it helps the family farm in Minnesota or in Wisconsin," the sad reality is it does not. Instead it pushes them out of business. We lost 2,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin last year, 2,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin the year before. We have lost 10,000 over the last 8 years. We have lost 50 percent of all dairy farms lost in the Nation over the last decade were lost in the upper Midwest in States like the gentleman's and mine.

So, people may be thinking that they are helping out dairy farmers with these higher prices. The sad reality is they are not. They are not. If anything, they are accelerating the decline of the family farm, and that is a great tragedy.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, if you look at this purple section here, we are losing an average of three dairy farm families every single day, and as my colleagues know, as I said earlier, if the definition, if this program was designed to protect the small dairy farm, I mean by its very definition it has been an abysmal failure. We cannot afford to continue this policy much longer.

And the gentleman is also exactly right that ultimately, unfortunately, unless we have some real reform of this system and at least have some fairness, and we cannot guarantee that some of these smaller dairy farmers are not going to go out of business. And I will be honest, some of them go out of business just because of quality of life.

I mean there is nobody who works harder than that dairy farmer who gets up every morning at 5 o'clock to milk 60 cows and then has to repeat the process that afternoon. I mean it is one

of the hardest lives that anybody can take on, but it should not be made unfair by a Federal milk marketing order system which penalizes someone just because they happen to be from the upper Midwest.

Now in this great debate, and my colleague is going to learn the longer he is here in this business and in this city, when you talk about, and I do not even particularly like the term leveling the playing field. Actually I just like to talk about fairness. All we want is fairness. But many people will use the term "leveling the playing field." The truth of the matter is, in any debate about leveling the playing field there is at least half of the people in that debate who do not want to level the playing field because they have an advantage, and they want to keep the status quo.

But even in some of those areas where they currently have a huge advantage, like the Southeast and down in Florida, even into Texas and over into New Mexico, the further away you get from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, I think even those people have to acknowledge that at the end of the day milk ought to be treated like almost everything else, and it ought to be priced more or less based on what the market will yield.

Now I am fully in favor of putting some kind of a minimum price under the floor of milk. In fact, I have introduced a bill this year to put a floor of at least 10.35.

□ 2145

I think there is a need to create some kind of a job absorber in case there are market aberrations which would drive the price of milk too low, but at the other end of the spectrum, part of the thing that happens with this also is in some respects, it keeps milk from going up. If one cannot expand markets, if one limits oneself in their ability to get into Asian markets with cheese and other dairy exports, ultimately one limits their ability to increase net farm income, and particularly farm income as it relates to dairy producers.

So this is a bad system, a bad system for dairy producers. It is bad because it causes conflict among the regions when we ought to be working together. It is a bad system because it ultimately costs consumers in some areas more than they should have to spend for the milk that they buy, and it really has done almost nothing to protect the small dairy farmer.

So from every perspective I think this has been an abysmal failure. The time has come, even though, as I said earlier, the plan that Secretary Glickman came up with is certainly not perfect; and frankly, on a net basis, we still lose under this plan, but we lose less than we are losing today.

So those of us in the upper Midwest, from Wisconsin, Minnesota, parts of the Dakotas, we are prepared to accept the Secretary's plan. We think it

should be allowed to go into effect, and frankly, we think we should do what the Congress said 2 years ago and then again repeated last year, and that is to allow the compacts to expire.

They were designed originally only as an experiment which would last a year, and part of that experiment was to find out if they could curb the number of small dairy farms that were going out of business. The evidence is in, the evidence is clear; they have not done that. They have cost consumers more money. They have increased the number of corporate farms on every front; in my opinion, the compacts have been an abysmal failure.

We should allow them to do what the agreement originally was, which is just keep all ends of the bargain, move ahead with the dairy reform that Secretary Glickman has come out with, and end these crazy compacts and do not expand them to other States.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. The gentleman has been fighting this fight a lot longer than I have, and I applaud his efforts.

I guess, just to wrap up and summarize, as the gentleman has pointed out, Secretary Glickman's order is not perfect; and for those of us in Minnesota and Wisconsin, we would argue it is far from it, and it is a very small, modest step. But at least it is a step in the right direction.

It recognizes that the long-standing system, standing since 1937, of Federal orders and compacts is bad for farmers, driving our family farms out of business; it is bad for consumers because it inflates the costs of milk, it adds a milk tax in so many ways; and finally, it is counter to free enterprise, free enterprise not just in the manufacturing sector, not just in the service sector, but even in the agricultural sector. It is the only agricultural product treated like this.

So it is bad on all counts. It is time to make a larger change, but at least to support Secretary Glickman's proposal, let that come on line, make a small but positive step and offer some hope to our farmers.

PROGRAMS THAT WORK FOR EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to spend some time with my colleagues talking about an issue that is important not only to me and my colleagues on the minority side, but I think to all Members of this Congress and certainly to the people of America.

The topic is education, an issue that we talk an awful lot about, but I want to talk this evening and share with my colleagues some examples of not only

programs that work, but also people that are doing outstanding things for our children, certainly in my district and in my State.

I want to talk a little bit about an innovative program that I visited a couple of weeks ago in Greensboro. It was a program called Reading Together. One of the things that I learned before I came to Congress, and I think we have all known it for a long time, but certainly it was pointed out to me very vividly while I was superintendent of schools, if one can teach a child to read by the time they are in the third grade, one has accomplished a great deal as to what we need to do to help a child learn and do well, and certainly make it in school and in the world.

The Reading Together program is a program that is being piloted in a number of areas; I think it is in Pennsylvania, but also in Greensboro. What that program does is takes mentor students from the upper grades, and in this case they were fifth graders, and on a regular basis they are trained, they work with a trained teacher, and they come down and work with children who have difficulty reading in the earlier grades, normally in the first and second grade, and they become not only mentors, but they become tutors.

I watched them for over an hour, and in this process, as those children worked and worked with young people, they had been trained; and when they finished the reading, they debriefed the young person they were working with, and then when the second graders went back to their classes, the fifth graders met with their teacher. They then were debriefed, talked about what had happened, how each child had done, made notes, kept a journal.

These are things that very few adults do, and here we have young people doing them. I hear so many times people talk about our young people. They need to get out in the schools and see what is happening, the good things that they are doing, the outstanding jobs our teachers are doing. So I thought this was a good time to talk about these good things, as we are now all across America beginning to close down the school year.

In my State, some of the schools were out last Friday and others will finish up this Friday, and many Members like myself will be speaking at commencement exercises. I did last week and will again this week.

But I would like to share a program that really is working and making a difference. It is a pilot program that had been started really before I came to Congress, and it is working with some money through the U.S. Department of Education on a direct grant, and it is making a difference. The reading scores have improved dramatically.

Students really work their way out of these classes and into the regular class. So that is what it is all about. We give a child some help, and then they can help themselves.

Mr. Chairman, my friend from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) has been out in

his schools working, and is a great leader for education and a leader in this Congress. He has some excellent examples, and I would like to yield to him so he may share those with us.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding and thank him for his leadership in the Congress in reminding all of us how important education is.

Mr. Speaker, I am a great believer in Dr. James Comer. Dr. Comer has a philosophy which I truly believe in, and he talks about the fact that a child can have the will, a child can have the genetic ability, but if a child does not have the opportunity, then that child is in trouble, he is going to have problems.

I look at my own life. I started it off in special education. I was told I would never be able to read or write. But because of opportunity, because there were teachers who stood by me and told me what I could be instead of telling me what I could not be, because of my parents who were involved, and I know we are going to be talking about parents tonight and how important that is; but I can remember, I say to the gentleman, that when my father, who worked at Davidson Chemical Company, he would come to our PTA meetings. And he used to work in the evenings and his boss would let him come to the PTA meetings in his overalls, all greasy, but he would come in there and talk to the teachers and participate in the PTA meetings, and he played a significant role in our lives, and the teachers expected him to be there.

But just going back to some of the things that the gentleman was saying a little while earlier, I too have been involved in these commencements and I have seen so many of our children who go through so much difficulty to get through high school and they make it, and it just makes one feel good to see those young people marching down that aisle and to know that they have truly accomplished something.

I think it is important for us as Members of Congress to do what the gentleman said that he does and I do and I am sure many of our other Members do, and that is to celebrate our children's lives, to celebrate their victories.

I think I was telling the gentleman a little bit earlier about a wonderful contest that we had in our State whereby our Department of Children, Youth and Family, the Governor's Department of Children, Youth and Family, sponsored a contest for the school that read the most books. Out of our 24 counties, I am very pleased to say, and out of our eight congressional districts, there was a school in my district that read the most books, an elementary school. The school is not located in the most affluent area, but these children made a decision that they were going to work hard; and they read these books and they had a way of making sure that they examined them, and they had to do little reports and whatever.