

signed by this President and other Presidents, and they are unenforced by this administration. Unenforced, and we do nothing about the media and the violence which they penetrate into our society because they are the friends of those who promote gun control legislation.

□ 1015

Let us be reasonable. Let us do what is right for America, not what is political. Let us pass reasonable gun legislation, when needed, and enforce that which is on the books.

ERODING THE SECOND AMENDMENT

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, when the President says put people first, what he means, particularly this week, is put politicians first, put political people first, because this week, as we further erode the second amendment, we are not putting people first, we are not putting children first, we are not putting safety first, and we are certainly not putting the facts first. But we hear over and over again, no, we are just closing a few loopholes. This is common sense, reasonable, sensible. Yet it goes far beyond closing loopholes in gun shows. It calls for registration of people's guns who go to gun shows, permanent registration. It calls for a 6-month background check that is kept by the FBI for 6 months, and many, many other measures that have nothing to do with closing loopholes.

Mr. Speaker, in Columbine High School, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris broke 23 gun control laws. In Heritage High School, the young man broke into his father's gun cabinet to steal a well-protected gun. Yet we have to ask ourselves, maybe there is something beyond gun control that could prevent these things from happening, because gun control is not working. It did not work in these two cases.

What about the violent video, the violent TV? What about the music? What about children being raised without parents? It seems in today's society, where there are no absolutes, no truths, there are also no values.

This week is not about children, it is about politics.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules.

SELECTIVE AGRICULTURAL EMBARGOES ACT OF 1999

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 17) to amend the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to require the President to report to Congress on any selective embargo on agricultural commodities, to provide a termination date for the embargo, to provide greater assurances for contract sanctity, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 17

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. REPORTING ON SELECTIVE EMBARGOES.

The Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of title VI:

"SEC. 604. REPORTING ON SELECTIVE EMBARGOES.

"(a) REPORT.—If the President takes any action, pursuant to statutory authority, to embargo the export under an export sales contract (as defined in subsection (e)) of an agricultural commodity to a country that is not part of an embargo on all exports to the country, not later than 5 days after imposing the embargo, the President shall submit a report to Congress that sets forth in detail the reasons for the embargo and specifies the proposed period during which the embargo will be effective.

"(b) APPROVAL OF EMBARGO.—If a joint resolution approving the embargo becomes law during the 100-day period beginning on the date of receipt of the report provided for in subsection (a), the embargo shall terminate on the earlier of—

"(1) a date determined by the President; or

"(2) the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of the joint resolution approving the embargo.

"(c) DISAPPROVAL OF EMBARGO.—If a joint resolution disapproving the embargo becomes law during the 100-day period referred to in subsection (b), the embargo shall terminate on the expiration of the 100-day period.

"(d) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an embargo may take effect and continue in effect during any period in which the United States is in a state of war declared by Congress or national emergency, requiring such action, declared by the President.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

"(1) the term 'agricultural commodity' includes plant nutrient materials;

"(2) the term 'under an export sales contract' means under an export sales contract entered into before the President has transmitted to Congress notice of the proposed embargo; and

"(3) the term 'embargo' includes any prohibition or curtailment."

SEC. 3. ADDITION OF PLANT NUTRIENT MATERIALS TO PROTECTION OF CONTRACT SANCTITY.

Section 602(c) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5712(c)) is amended by inserting "(including plant nutrient materials)" after "agricultural commodity" each place it appears.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois, (Mr. EWING).

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, American agriculture plays a key role in U.S. trade economy. The contributions of agricultural exports to the U.S. economy are impressive. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that farm exports will be \$49 billion in 1999, providing a positive trade balance of \$11 billion.

Just 3 years ago, however, there was another \$10 billion higher on our agricultural trade balance. This was almost three times what it is today. It is a fact, and it is a painful one to many of us, that our agricultural economy is the one sector of the great American economy that is suffering very badly. If things do not improve, 10 percent of American farmers could be forced from their farms this year.

New and reliable markets are one of the answers to this very serious problem. The U.S. agricultural economy is more than twice as reliant on exports as the overall economy. This reliance makes agricultural-specific embargoes especially painful for the American farmer and rancher. H.R. 17 provides a vital and necessary foreign check and balance system. This legislation provides for congressional review and approval of both Houses of Congress if the President imposes an agricultural-specific embargo on a foreign country.

H.R. 17 would require the President to submit a report detailing to Congress reasons for the embargo and a proposed termination date. Congress then has 100 days to approve or disapprove the embargo.

If Congress approves the resolution, the embargo will terminate on the date determined by the President or 1 year after enactment, whichever occurs earliest. If a disapproving resolution is enacted, the embargo will terminate at the end of the 100-day period.

This legislation would not impact embargoes currently in place, nor would it impede the President's authority to impose cross-sector embargoes. Additionally, H.R. 17 would not take effect during times of war. This legislation was the official policy of the United States when the Export Administration Amendments Act was adopted in 1985. Unfortunately, that act expired in 1994 when Congress failed to reauthorize it. It is important to note that the failure to reauthorize was not a result of any opposition to the agriculture embargo language contained in that act.

Mr. Speaker, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, the Soviet grain embargo cost the United States about \$2.3 billion in lost U.S. exports and U.S. Government compensation to American farmers. The Soviet grain embargo is still fresh in the minds of grain farmers throughout America. In the midst of an already poor overall economy, the imposition of the Soviet grain embargo triggered the worst agricultural economic downturn in America since the Great Depression.

As if we had not learned our lesson from the Soviet grain embargo, there are unilateral sanctions in effect today that have damaged our image as a reliable supplier of agricultural products. The problem with agricultural-specific embargoes is that our farmers and ranchers end up losing a share of the global marketplace, while the embargoes often fail to achieve their purpose. The purpose of the Selective Agricultural Embargo Act of 1999 is to emphasize the importance of U.S. agricultural exports and the unique vulnerability of agriculture in the world trade arena. Agricultural embargoes hurt our farmers, help our trade competitors, and the 1980 Soviet embargo is a perfect example. The U.S. was deprived of the Soviet grain market, and France, Australia, Canada and Argentina stepped in to take over this market.

Our reputation as a reliable agricultural supplier suffers and will suffer every time agricultural embargoes are put in place. On April 28, 1999, the President announced a significant change in U.S. policy on sanctions and embargoes, and we applaud that change. With the enactment of the Freedom to Farm Act, our farmers are dependent more and more on foreign markets for an increasingly significant portion of their income. In our global marketplace, the importance of being a reliable supplier of food and fiber cannot be overstated. Therefore, Congress should have input when the President decides to use American agricultural products as a foreign policy tool. My legislation does not eliminate the President's ability to impose sanctions; it just includes Congress in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the rest of my colleagues join me in helping the American farmer and rancher by voting "yes" on H.R. 17 today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise as an original co-sponsor in support of the Selective Agricultural Embargo Act of 1999. This bill provides for greater scrutiny of the unilateral embargoes we place on our trading partners, and is an important step towards the comprehensive sanctions reform that need to be enacted.

When Congress passed freedom to farm 3 years ago, it promised to open foreign markets to U.S. agriculture products. So far, we have failed to deliver on that promise.

By providing congressional review of unilateral agriculture sanctions, this bill will require us to put a little more thought into our actions, to think before we concede our agricultural markets to our competitors. The bill will also help to maintain our reputation as a reliable supplier of food. It is time to find a more effective way to implement our foreign policy goals. Unilateral sanctions do not work, and they cost our farmers and ranchers dearly. Let us pass this bill and begin moving in

the direction of comprehensive sanctions reform.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 17, the Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999. The bill requires the President to report to Congress on any selective embargo on agricultural commodities and specifies the period during which the embargo will be in effect.

I congratulate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Risk Management, Research and Specialty Crops, and the author of this bill, for his hard work and tenacity on moving this subject forward.

The use of economic sanctions is a subject that has captured the attention of all of us that are interested in the prosperity of farmers and ranchers. We can all agree that food should not be used as a tool of foreign policy. I especially welcome the administration's April 28 announcement regarding lifting of certain economic sanctions of food and agriculture.

Food should not, under nearly all circumstances, be used as a weapon. Such a policy ends up hurting our farmers and ranchers and all who are involved in agriculture production, processing and distribution. There are three things that can happen when agricultural sanctions go into effect, and none of them are good. Exports go down, prices go down, and farmers and ranchers lose their share of the world market.

For American farmers and ranchers, trade is an essential part of their livelihood. Currently exports account for 30 percent of U.S. farm cash receipts and nearly 40 percent of all agricultural production that is exported. U.S. farmers and ranchers produce much more than is consumed in the United States; therefore, exports are vital to the prosperity and success of U.S. farmers and ranchers.

For years, U.S. agriculture has provided a positive return to our balance of trade, and in order to continue this positive balance and to improve upon it, markets around the world must be open to our agricultural exports.

Embargoes and sanctions destroy the United States' reputation as reliable suppliers. U.S. agriculture remembers the 1980 Soviet grain embargo. Not only did our wheat farmers lose sales, but markets as well. France, Canada, Australia and Argentina stepped in and sold wheat to the former Soviet Union. The only people hurt by those sanctions were U.S. wheat farmers. The one lasting impression left of that embargo was that the U.S. could not be considered a reliable supplier of wheat. The past 19 years have been spent attempting to reverse that opinion.

Therefore, because of the importance of assuring the reliability of the U.S. as a supplier of food and agriculture product, we must address the effects of embargoes on U.S. agriculture, and I urge support of H.R. 17.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak here today on H.R. 17, the Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999.

The farmers of Oregon work hard to actively market and promote the sale of agricultural goods throughout the world. Approximately 80 percent of all agriculture production in our State of Oregon is shipped out of State, with nearly half of that going to foreign markets. Wheat, potatoes, hay and pears are just some of the products farmers in my district produce, which are dependent on foreign markets for their success.

Oregon's producers have long been recognized for their initiative in expanding foreign trade. Sanctions on foreign nations that disallow the importation of U.S. agriculture products interfere with the ability of Oregon's farmers to sell the quality goods that they produce. Once U.S. agriculture loses its ability to compete in the market, it is very difficult to regain that market share. America's farmers and ranchers cannot afford to be used as pawns in foreign policy battles.

H.R. 17 would simply give Congress the ability to review these agricultural embargoes imposed by the President. This legislation would then allow Congress 100 days to approve or disapprove of the President's decision to impose an agricultural embargo.

□ 1030

Should the Congress agree with the President's actions, then the embargo will terminate on the date determined by the President or 1 year thereafter. Should Congress disapprove this action, then the embargo will terminate at the end of the hundredth day after the congressional review period.

This is commonsense foreign policy that our farmers deserve. Our Nation's farmers deserved the ability to compete fairly in the international marketplace. With farm prices at their lowest levels in years, U.S. agriculture needs to be promoted, not unilaterally restricted.

This is particularly relevant to the State of Oregon, where 36 percent of all of our agriculture products are exported abroad. The farmers in the Second District of Oregon can ill afford the devastating effects that agricultural embargoes cause.

I commend my colleague the gentleman from Illinois for introducing this legislation, and appreciate the opportunity to speak on this matter today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is very appropriate that a Republican speaks from the Democrat side of the isle to talk about this issue because it is a bipartisan effort that represents fairness.

We have heard how it disrupts agriculture and causes great stress for the survival of the family farm in the United States. I think what also needs to be said is sanctions on food exports does not work. We have had embargoes and sanctions for several reasons. The fact is that in the end another country will sell their agricultural products when we stop selling to a particular country. Those countries still get food & fiber products, and the loser is the United States' farmers and ranchers.

We have sanctions for a couple of reasons. Both administrations have made the mistake of doing it. We had a sanction under the Nixon administration because there was a shortage of soybeans. There were cries from consumers and millers calling on the President to, shut off the export of soybeans because prices are going too high in this country and shutting off exports would increase domestic supply and reduce price.

That is fine, but of course, we all know what happened. Japan, who was dependent on the United States for their soybean needs, decided to look for a more dependable supply and eventually went to Brazil. They bought and cleared land. They found that they could develop and grow soybeans down there very, very well. Brazil's soybean agriculture has expanded. Now they are one of the major competitors to the United States soybean market.

President Carter decided to punish Russia in 1981 by cutting off much needed wheat from the U.S., Russia started looking for a more reliable supplies and again American farmers again were the losers.

Mr. Speaker, I hope everybody will move ahead, not only on this bill, but even a more aggressive bill that simply provides we will stop embargoes and sanctions on agricultural products for any reason. Number one because it is disrupting American agriculture, and number two, it does not work.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BARRETT), my colleague and cochairman of the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, foreign policy and international trade can sometimes be a very complicated topic for farmers and ranchers. But what is not confusing is the overseas markets that are so vital to our agriculture economy. This is especially true I think in my State of Nebraska.

Unfortunately, agriculture often gets caught up in a sanctions policy that

does not work as intended. Sanctions usually end up hurting producers far more than they influence the behavior of other countries or effect any real change.

As agriculture continues to suffer from low prices, Congress needs to examine every policy to make sure that we are not standing in the way of recovery. We are doing that on the Committee on Agriculture, and I am glad to note that our colleagues on the Committee on International Relations are joining us in this effort, as well.

A re-examination or rationalization of sanctions policy is an absolutely necessary part of this effort. H.R. 17 is a minor, reasonable change in sanctions policy. It only requires Congress to approve or disapprove future embargoes on farm products within 100 days. It will not inhibit the President's ability to conduct foreign policy.

Agricultural embargoes are not put in place lightly, but only at the highest level of provocation. Congress will not ignore an international crisis that requires our president to act in a serious way. I believe that the Congress will follow the President's leadership.

Sanctions unfairly hurt agriculture. The House's passage of H.R. 17 will tell producers that Congress recognizes the poor economy that they are facing and their concerns with how foreign policy is conducted. Let us respond to their need with this very small change in policy. Please support H.R. 17.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PHELPS).

(Mr. PHELPS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 17, which requires congressional approval of any agriculture-specific embargo on a foreign Nation. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation, and I hope my colleagues will join me in voting for its quick passage.

For those who represent rural agricultural districts, agriculture is always a priority issue. But with the crisis now facing our farmers, this issue should be a priority for every Member of this House.

The bill of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) represents an important step in alleviating the hardships in the agriculture community. H.R. 17 would require the President to submit a report to Congress laying out the reasons and a termination date for any proposed agriculture embargo. A 100-day period would follow during which Congress could approve or disapprove the embargo.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to overstate the importance of foreign markets to American agriculture. When our farmers are singled out to pay the price for punishing a foreign country the impact can be enormous, especially in times like these, when every opportunity for income is critical.

This bill seeks to address only those embargoes which are agriculture-specific, and would not affect cross-sector sanctions such as those against Cuba and Iraq. There would be no question that this legislation is good for America's farmers, and if there were ever a time we need our help, it is certainly now. I hope every Member will join me in supporting H.R. 17.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to another gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 17, Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999, as introduced by my colleague and friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING). To put it very simply, embargoes can be the death knell for agriculture. We have seen it many, many times.

This bill is simple and straightforward. It simply requires the approval of both Houses of Congress if the President ever decides to impose an agriculture-specific embargo on a foreign country. However, Mr. Speaker, the bill in no way impedes the President's authority to impose cross-sector embargoes, it only attempts to single out agriculture.

With the enactment of Freedom to Farm, our farmers and ranchers have become increasingly reliant on foreign markets for a significant percentage of their income. In our global marketplace, the importance of being a reliable supplier of food and fiber cannot be overstated.

The U.S. agricultural economy is more than twice as reliant on exports as the overall economy. Congress should have input when the President decides to use American agriculture as a foreign policy tool.

For American farmers and ranchers, trade is an essential part of their livelihood. Currently exports account for 30 percent of U.S. farm cash receipts, and nearly 40 percent of all agricultural production is exported.

Past experience has shown the weakness in using sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy. Unfortunately, it may be politically impossible to entirely eliminate the use of economic sanctions. The President needs to be able to waive those impositions when he believes sanctions will have a negative impact on U.S. interests, especially on American agriculture.

Rather than continue policies that withhold sales of U.S. food and fiber as punishment, H.R. 17 would urge that food and agricultural trade be encompassed in U.S. diplomacy. Such a move would contribute to world security, help feed the engine of economic growth, and build the lines of communication that allow engagement with these countries with whom we have disagreements.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this important legislation.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague and friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the chairman for using for his superb leadership in bringing this bill to the floor.

Our farmers in this country have a lot of challenges. Many times we can do nothing about those challenges here in Congress. We can do nothing about too much rain or lack thereof. Often times there is very little we can do about the price of commodities that is so important to the farmers. One thing we can do is everything possible to open up trade opportunities so our farmers can export their agricultural commodities.

We have in Illinois the distinction of exporting about 47 percent of our farm products. That is, almost half of the farmers in the State of Illinois are dependent upon exports. We are presently involved in a battle with the Europeans over their acceptance of cattle that have the growth hormone, and also involved in a battle with them battle over their acceptance of genetically-altered grains and things of that nature.

One thing we can do is get the government out of the way of hindering markets that already exist for the purpose of allowing exports by our farmers. We only have to look back to the days of the Russian grain embargo, which was disastrous. Russia ended up buying their grain from other sources, and this country has never recovered from the loss of sales to Russia, simply because Russia looked to Argentina and other countries that do not use trade embargoes as a method of foreign policy.

The purpose of H.R. 17 is to eliminate that, to open up these markets. I would encourage my colleagues to vote for H.R. 17.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I think we have an opportunity to recognize is that sanctions may indeed be for worthy goals, or we intend them for worthy goals, but the impact of sanctions has not been proven to be effective. Certainly the sanctions on food and drugs not only are ineffective, but in terms of the humanitarian point of view, it certainly is inappropriate.

Additionally, sanctions on food are counterproductive to our commercial interests, particularly when we consider in many of these countries we are now giving food where we are not even allowed to sell food. So it is not consistent with our understanding that we should be humanitarian, and yet at the same time we will not allow our commerce to sell these very basic goods of food and medicine in those areas.

In my State, the products that we produce in abundance indeed are dependent upon trade. Having these sanctions certainly poses an economic threat, and indeed impacts them economically. But more importantly, sanctions as a whole are ineffective.

This particular bill does recognize that having sanctions on food products is inappropriate and not in our best interests. The sales of sanctioned products to these most egregious countries, when we think of them, really are not representing a large portion of our sales. It is the principle that this particular bill indeed addresses. It removes those sanctions for basic food.

When we begin to understand it, agriculture as a whole represents a significant part of our economy. So when we have sanctions on food used as a tool, we are indeed putting a deterrent on a significant amount of our economy.

In my particular State, we produce far more pork than anyone else. Over 75 percent of that must be dependent on trade in some form. Then when countries are no longer able to buy those particular products, or any other products that we have to sell in abundance, such as turkeys, cucumbers, chicken, any of those that we are very proficient in producing far beyond our domestic needs, it has a great impact.

I support this in principle, and I also support it in its specifics of looking at food as an area that should be barred from sanctions. The tools of food and medicine are not only inappropriate for us as a country, as a moral country, but it is inappropriate for us in a commercial way, and is counterproductive; particularly when we are going to give the food away anyway, why not have the opportunity to sell these very basic goods?

Again, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation. I want to commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) for his leadership in putting this forward.

□ 1045

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) for her support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT).

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation.

Let me say at the outset, hunger knows no politics; and we have seen down through the years that embargoes have very little positive consequences, either for whatever we are trying to achieve diplomatically but certainly for our farmers.

I want to share a story that every day in Mankato, Minnesota, there are more soybeans processed than anywhere else in the United States. We grow an awful lot of soybeans in our area; and something that many of the Members do not know is that literally over half of all the soybeans grown, at least in the upper Midwest, ultimately

wind up in some kind of export markets.

Now, soybeans should be selling for somewhere between \$7 or \$8 a bushel. Today, they are looking like they may test at \$4 a bushel. Here is an unvarnished fact, that whether one is talking about soybeans, whether they are talking about pork, whether they are talking about corn, name the commodity that we produce here in the United States, here is an unvarnished fact about it, we cannot eat all that we can grow.

If we are going to allow farmers to achieve the kind of income levels that they deserve for the work that they put in, we have to open markets. We cannot close them off. Using food as a political weapon has never worked. It is like holding a gun to the heads of our farmers. It has not worked in terms of achieving diplomatic ends. It has been a mistake. This is a very important step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, as long as I have the floor for just a moment I want to say that one day I hope that we in this capitol of Washington and capitols all over the rest of the world will embrace the idea of a world food treaty, because we ought to say that as long as there is not a declaration of war between two countries we ought to always say that we are going to be willing to sell food to those countries, regardless of their politics, regardless of what may happen within their borders in terms of their own political process, but we will never use food as a political weapon.

This is an important piece of legislation, a very important step in the right direction. It is good for farmers, and I think in the long run it is good for our diplomatic relations as well.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate the reason why we are here and to commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) for bringing this bill again to the floor, the reasons for passage are very, very clear. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) pointed out the recent activities or actions taken by the administration, along the same line of beginning to recognize that unilateral sanctions are not helpful, particularly when it applies to food and to medicine.

The administration supports the spirit of this legislation from the standpoint of continuing to work with the Congress to make those changes necessary to bring about an end to these very harmful actions, harmful to the producers of food and fiber in the United States.

I think I would be remiss if I did not also mention, though, we have some other actions that this Congress needs to take this year along the same line.

We have some very controversial actions coming up regarding normal trade relations with China, a country of 1,200,000,000 mouths to feed. This is something that also needs to be looked at in the same bipartisan spirit.

Fast track negotiations need to be brought before this Congress so that we might include sending our negotiators to the table to negotiate in areas in which perhaps we can avoid sanctions even being considered by any administration. We also have to acknowledge the fact of the disappointment of many in the agricultural appropriation bill that was passed just a few days ago. The lack of step 2 funding for cotton, for example, is going to make it extremely difficult for our cotton industry to participate in the international marketplace; China's ascension to the WTO; all of these need to be considered in the same spirit in which we are here today in support of H.R. 4647.

Again, I commend the leadership, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING), his leadership on this, and look forward to the passage of this, the passage in the Senate, a presidential signature and moving on to other very important activities regarding agriculture.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express, as the ranking member has, our great desire to work with the administration on this new and revised policy about sanctions and embargoes. I think it is very important and very timely, particularly with the problems in agriculture, that we recognize that some of these policies have not worked as we had hoped they would.

Some of the sanctions are put on by this body here, by the Congress, some by the administration. We need to approach that very carefully. In that regard, the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), a member of that committee, and the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), also a member of that committee, have worked very hard to get this bill, H.R. 17, out of the Committee on International Relations and here on the floor today, and I personally recognize them and thank them for their help.

Embargoes and sanctions are not effective. The solution is a bipartisan approach, and that is what we have here today.

With that, I want to thank the staff of the Committee on Agriculture, the staff on my committee, for all the work they have done. This is not a complicated bill, but it has taken some time to bring it here to the floor and to work through the channels.

I do very much appreciate the very strong support on both sides of the aisle of the Committee on Agriculture for this piece of legislation and particularly my thanks to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for his cooperation and help today.

Mr. Speaker, I would just close by saying that this bill is strongly supported by the Agricultural Retailers Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Soybean Association, Corn Refiners Asso-

ciation, Farmland Industries, Inc., IMC Global, Louis Dreyfus Corporation, National Association of Animal Breeders, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Chicken Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union, National Food Processors Association, National Grain and Feed Association, National Grain Sorghum Producers, National Grange, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Renderers Association, National Sunflower Association, North American Export Grain Association, North American Millers' Association, the Fertilizer Institute, United Egg Association, United Egg Producers and the U.S. Canola Association.

So there is strong support out there in the agricultural community for this bill, and I would now ask for its passage.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in supporting H.R. 17, the Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999, and I commend the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. EWING, and his cosponsors for their strong commitment to bringing this measure forward.

As a technical matter, what H.R. 17 says is that, in the future, if the President selectively embargoes the export of U.S. agricultural commodities to a foreign country, Congress can either pass a law authorizing that embargo, or pass a law disapproving that embargo. If Congress does either of these things, H.R. 17 specifies what consequences for the embargo will follow from that action. If Congress does neither of these things, nothing happens and the embargo will remain in effect.

Inasmuch as selective agricultural embargoes are extremely rare to begin with, and Congress is unlikely in any instance where the President imposes such an embargo to be able to enact a law with respect to that embargo, the practical impact of H.R. 17 will be limited.

As my colleagues know, we have had something of a debate over the last year or so regarding the wisdom and effectiveness of sanctions as a tool of United States foreign policy. I continue to believe that sanctions can be an effective foreign policy tool in appropriate cases, and I know that view is shared by the Clinton Administration, and also by the vast majority of my colleagues, if their votes on sanctions measures over the past several years are any indication of their position on the issue.

If I thought the measure before us today compromised the ability of the United States Government to promote our vital foreign policy interests by preventing the application of sanctions in appropriate cases, I would oppose it. I am satisfied, however, that H.R. 17 does not compromise the availability of this foreign policy tool, and therefore I am pleased to join in supporting it.

I also have received assurances from the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Mr. COMBEST, regarding the manner in which he will proceed if H.R. 17 is amended by the Senate. I appreciate Mr. COMBEST's willingness to provide these assur-

ances, not least of which because they were critical to my ability to schedule this measure for action in the Committee on International Relations and to support the measure today. I insert the letter I received from Mr. COMBEST to be reprinted in the RECORD at this point.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 17.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, June 9, 1999.

Hon. BEN GILMAN,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations, Washington, DC.

DEAR BEN: This correspondence is in regard to H.R. 17, the "Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999." The Committee on Agriculture approved this legislation on February 10, and as you are aware the bill was referred additionally to the Committee on International Relations. I understand that your committee will consider H.R. 17 on June 10, 1999, and that you do not anticipate any changes to the bill.

Subcommittee Chairman Ewing and I are eager for prompt floor consideration of H.R. 17. As H.R. 17 relates to an area of special concern to the Committee on International Relations, I support your determination that changes to the bill which would be within the jurisdiction of your committee not be allowed to occur without your input and consent.

If, as expected, your committee reports H.R. 17 without amendment, let me assure you that in the event changes to the bill were proposed, either by the Senate or in the unlikely event of a conference, I will work with you to ensure that your committee's interests are protected. Because of the lengthy history of this legislation both in this session and last, I am eager to ensure that any concerns your committee may have concerning any attempts to modify this or similar legislation be thoroughly and cooperatively addressed in the same manner as was accomplished between our committees on H.R. 4647 during the 105th Congress. Should changes be made to H.R. 17 in the Committee on International Relations, I will reconsider the options available.

In the event your committee passes H.R. 17 without amendment I will seek to have the bill considered on the Suspension Calendar on the earliest available date.

I deeply appreciate your cooperation regarding H.R. 17. If I may be of further assistance regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

LARRY COMBEST,
Chairman.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as the Vice Chairman of the Committee on International Relations and an original cosponsor of the bill, this Member rises in strong support of H.R. 17, the Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999. This Member also wants to commend the distinguished gentleman from Illinois, Mr. EWING, for his initiative and his persistence in bringing this important legislation to the Floor as expeditiously as possible.

As has been noted, H.R. 17 is identical to H.R. 4647, legislation which passed the House by voice vote under suspension of the rules in the final days of the previous 105th Congress. Unfortunately, since the other body did not consider the measure before adjournment, it is necessary for us to again pass this bill.

House Resolution 17 takes the first step towards rationalizing our sanctions policy by requiring the President to report to Congress on any selective embargo on agriculture commodities. The bill provides a termination date

for any embargo and requires Congress to approve the embargo for it to extend beyond 100 days. House Resolution 17 also provides greater assurances for contract sanctity.

Unilateral embargoes of U.S. food exports do not hurt or effect any real change on the targeted country. All American farmers have a right to be angry that they are being used by both the executive and legislative branches to carry out symbolic acts so foreign policy-makers can appear to be doing something about our toughest foreign policy problems. Given the fact that in relative terms U.S. commodity and livestock prices are at the lowest level seen in years and that many American farmers are facing financial ruin, our agricultural sector can no longer bear this unfair discriminatory burden for our country.

There are three types of embargoes: Short supply embargoes, foreign policy embargoes, and national security embargoes. Unfortunately, the imposition of any these types of embargoes ends up hurting America's farmers and other Americans working in the agricultural sector of our economy while having little or no impact on the targeted country. Indeed, the people who the authors of these embargoes might intend to harm least, namely American farmers, are harmed the most.

For example, last year the United States nearly lost a 350,000 metric ton wheat sale to Pakistan because of our unilateral non-proliferation sanctions on that country. Seeing that unintended and futile effort a number of us in Congress rushed to reverse that sanction just hours before the bids for the wheat sale were received. Because of this quick action, American exporters and our farmers sold our wheat, but just in the nick of time. Had we not acted then, surely the Australian, Canadian or French wheat farmers would have gladly become Pakistan's new primary supplier of wheat.

Mr. Speaker, this Member also believes it is important to state what this legislation does not do in order to reinforce the balanced nature of the bill. House Resolution 17 does not alter any current sanctions because it would only affect embargoes that apply selectively to agriculture products like President Carter's ill-fated and totally ineffective unilateral grain embargo on the Soviet Union in 1980 or President Ford's unilateral, anti-farmer short-supply soybean embargo. The former embargo benefitted European grain farmers while having no impact on the Soviet Union or its invasion of Afghanistan. The latter short-supply soybean embargo devastated American soybean farmers while creating our major soybean export competition in Brazil.

House Resolution 17 does not restrict the President's ability to impose cross-sector embargoes or apply to multilateral embargoes in which all of our agricultural competitors agree to the same export prohibitions we have imposed on our agricultural sector against the targeted country. This legislation reinforces the approach contemplated by this Member, that is that future export sanctions should be across the board and, whenever possible, multilateral, so that our competitor countries are also affected. And, if there is any room for any exception to that kind of embargo, it should be for food and medical exports. Food should not be used as tool of foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to thanking our colleague from Illinois for his outstanding work on this measure, this Member would also like to

thank the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the International Relations and Agriculture Committees, Messrs. GILMAN, GEJDENSON, COMBEST and STENHOLM, respectively, as well as International Relations Subcommittee Chairwoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member MENENDEZ for considering this legislation expeditiously. In the view of this Member, H.R. 17 is one of the more important steps the 106th Congress is taking on behalf of farmers and agricultural trade.

Mr. Speaker, the Selective Agriculture Embargoes Act is a measured and responsible bill that protects the American farmer and the American agricultural sector from unnecessary and unwarranted harm while at the same time preserving an important foreign policy tool. This Member, therefore, urges his colleagues to vote for H.R. 17.

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 17, the Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999. I commend Mr. Ewing for his leadership on this issue, and I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of this legislation.

H.R. 17 requires that if the President acts to implement an embargo of any agricultural commodity to any country, the President must notify Congress of the reasons for the embargo and of the period of time that the embargo will be in effect. Congress then has 100 days to approve or disapprove the embargo. The President's action is approved by Congress, the embargo will terminate on the date determined by the President or 1 year after Congress considered the embargo, whichever occurs earliest. If Congress disapproves of the embargo, it will terminate at the end of a hundred day period.

For well over a year, America's farmers have been suffering from prolonged low commodity prices and decreased export sales. In times like these, it is doubly important that food not be used as a weapon in political battles between nations. The grain embargo of the Soviet Union in the 1970s not only closed the door to one market for America's farm exports, but it also sent a loud message to our trading partners that the United States does not always deal in good faith. This legislation will help assure other countries that it is safe to do business with us, while also assuring our farmers that they are not being used as a foreign policy tool.

Another policy which need to be reformed, in order to stop the damage that it is doing to America's farmers, is the use of sanctions against foreign nations. Congress needs to take up sanctions reform legislation as soon as possible to provide our farmers with more markets for their products. Food should not be used as a weapon, whether it is in the form of a sanction or an embargo.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 17, the Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act, because it is a vote for the future of America's farmers.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 17.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 17, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER ESCALATING VIOLENCE, GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ONGOING ATTEMPTS TO OVERTHROW DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT IN SIERRA LEONE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 62) expressing concern over the escalating violence, the gross violations of human rights, and the ongoing attempts to overthrow a democratically elected government in Sierra Leone, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 62

Whereas the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military junta, which on May 27, 1997, overthrew the democratically elected government of Sierra Leone led by President Ahmed Kabbah, suspended the constitution, banned political activities and public meetings, and invited the rebel fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to join the junta;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF then mounted "Operation No Living Thing", a campaign of killing, egregious human rights violations, and looting, that continued until President Kabbah was restored to power by the Economic Community of West African States Military Observation Group (ECOMOG) on March 10, 1998;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF have escalated their 8 year reign of terror against the citizens of Sierra Leone, which includes heinous acts such as forcibly amputating the limbs of defenseless civilians of all ages, raping women and children, and wantonly killing innocent citizens;

Whereas the Kamajor civil defense group has committed summary executions of captured rebels and persons suspected of aiding the rebels;

Whereas the AFRC and RUF continue to abduct children, forcibly provide them with military training, and place them on the front-line during rebel incursions;

Whereas countries in and outside of the region, including Liberia, Burkina Faso, and Libya, and mercenaries from Ukraine and other countries, are directly supporting the AFRC/RUF terrorist campaign against the legitimate government and citizens of Sierra Leone;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that last year more than 210,000 Sierra Leoneans fled the country to Guinea, bringing the number to 350,000, most of whom have left Sierra Leone to escape the AFRC/RUF campaign of terror and atrocities, as have an additional 90,000 Sierra Leoneans who have sought safe haven in Liberia;

Whereas the refugee camps in Guinea and Liberia may be at risk of being used as safe