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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
August 2, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CLIFF STEARNS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) for 5 minutes.

BETTER AMERICA BONDS, H.R. 2446

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, it has been said that the only means of conservation is innovation, and I believe that is what Vice President GORE had in mind in recommending an innovative proposal called Better America Bonds. I joined him back in January of this year over at the American Institute of Architects with a number of outstanding planners and conservationists to announce this initiative. Now, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the gentleman from California

(Mr. MATSUI), the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) and I, along with a number of our colleagues, have filed this legislation to establish the Better America Bonds program.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the Federal Government should be an active partner with local communities supporting their efforts to build more livable communities as we approach the 21st century.

I believe that there is strong, broad-based support for these locally developed, "smart growth" or sustainable growth initiatives. The Better America Bonds program would assist State and local governments in their efforts to plan for their future growth and development.

Through the issuance of this new type of bond, one that carries a Federal tax credit as opposed to a small amount in interest payments, local governments would be enabled to make purchases to preserve green space, create or restore urban parks, or simply to clean up land or water.

I believe that the preservation of more open space, more green space in which families can enjoy life, is becoming a leading environmental issue across this country. Both property values on homes and the basic quality of life that we all expect are improved with additional open space and parks.

It really is not that hard to understand why that is so if we are coming or going from Washington, D.C. along the George Washington Parkway or the Rock Creek Parkway. Or if, as my wife and I like to do, one is enjoying bicycling along the trail that leads beside the parkway down to Mt. Vernon, one recognizes how much the beauty of the green space and the opportunity to walk and play in that green space adds to the quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, the Better America Bonds legislation has some 110 Members of this House now as cosponsors. We would provide up to almost \$10 bil-

lion in bonding authority for communities across the country to buy up threatened farmland or to purchase downtown waterfront property to convert into a park perhaps, like the great hike and bike trail we have along Town Lake in my hometown of Austin, Texas. In Austin, we have a number of new projects that are under consideration, including a project along Waller Creek, and a project for an additional Town Lake park, both to preserve green space. Additional green space provided through these projects means not only more fun but more opportunity for economic development in some areas that have been neglected and not properly used in the past by the city.

My constituents back in central Texas have realized the importance of additional green space acquisition and of clean water by approving local bond initiatives through which the City of Austin has already purchased some 15,000 acres of land towards this objective. These new land purchases will protect our sensitive environment in central Texas and provide additional parks.

They have also provided a unique opportunity for some groups that have warred against each other to work together. In Austin, the Save Our Springs Alliance, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce and the Real Estate Council were once opposing each other over some of the environmental efforts in the community. Now they have united in what is called a "Vast Open Spaces" project to acquire additional land and in the process of uniting over this issue, they have come to achieve some common ground on a number of other issues toward improving the quality of life in central Texas as well. I believe that the Better America Bonds program, by supporting that kind of effort, will allow them to do an even better job, reach more parts of our community, and provide more

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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



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parks and green space, not only along Town Lake but throughout central Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I think the same kind of thing can happen around the country, whether it is along the Anacostia here in Washington, the Chattahoochee in Atlanta, or along the Los Angeles River, these bonds provide the opportunity to reinvigorate downtown areas, make them more livable, and reinvigorate the economy in some of these areas.

The Better America Bonds initiative has received support from the American Institute of Architects and the National Realty Committee because they support strong neighborhood planning and this program provides the means for communities to do just that. Communities and local governments are also supporting the Better America Bonds program because these bonds are much less costly to a local government for them to use than the traditional interest bearing ones.

As Vice President GORE said earlier this year, "Plan well, and you have a community that nurtures commerce and private life. Plan badly, and you have what many of us suffer from firsthand: Gridlock, sprawl and that uniquely modern evil of all, too little time."

We incorporated this concept of Better America Bonds in the Democratic tax substitute. It received a substantial number of votes, and I hope that we can come together in a bipartisan effort to support Better America Bonds in the future. I believe that we must all be active participants in preserving our livable communities for our children and grandchildren. Through innovative conservation programs like Better America Bonds, we can ensure this legacy.

OCALA, FLORIDA POLICE DEPARTMENT
CRIME PREVENTION:
"WEED AND SEED"

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MICA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues a report that was issued this spring of this year from the Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs called "Weed and Seed Best Practices." I thought this was a very interesting report and in this report is featured an officer from my hometown of Ocala, Florida.

For many of my colleagues, the "Weed and Seed" program, as they know, is a community-based crime prevention program. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, community support services, local businesses, and ordinary citizens get together to weed out violent crime and drug use and plant the seeds to foster new community growth and, of course, stability in that community.

The "Weed and Seed" program began with three pilot sites in 1991. As of today, there are over 200 pilot sites and one of those, of course, Mr. Speaker, is in my hometown of Ocala, Florida, which is in my congressional district. The article, as I mentioned earlier, is written by Ken DeVilling, a lieutenant with the Ocala Police Department, the Crime Prevention section. I would like to share what Lieutenant DeVilling's observations were and actually the eminent success of the Ocala Police Department and the surrounding community in their fight against crime.

As Lieutenant DeVilling mentioned in his article, the City of Ocala was, of course, not immune to the effects of crack cocaine and the subsequent surge of crime. Additional resources were needed and the Ocala Police Department had the foresight to recognize the newly developed "Weed and Seed" program as a viable solution to rising crime in my hometown. So myself, and with the help of my other colleagues in Florida and the Florida delegation, they assisted me in getting Ocala as a site designated as a "Weed and Seed" program.

A number of initiatives were created by the Ocala Police Department using the funds that were provided by this "Weed and Seed" program. One initiative was the creation of a community organization called the Community Council Against Substance Abuse which was comprised of members of the local Community Commission, the city council, school board, State attorney's office and of course other community organizations.

As a result of these organizations getting together, Ocala recorded its lowest crime rate in 1998. Furthermore, in 1997, the city's homicide rate was only one, and in the previous decades it went as high as 20 per year.

Another program that is cited in this article is called "Problem-Oriented Policing." Under this program, officers identify possible areas which, quote, detract from good living conditions in the neighborhoods they patrol, end quote. These areas may be abandoned lots or houses that are abandoned or they might be areas that provide haven for drug trafficking and criminal activities.

Once they identify these areas, a form is completed by the officer and is sent through the chain of command. The identified site is then referred to the city department best able to handle the situation. Let me quote from Lieutenant DeVilling in the article when he says, "It is not uncommon for a police officer to identify a dilapidated building which is used as a crack House. Within a short time, the building is burned to the ground by firemen to practice and improve their skills. The property is then cleared and recycled. These recycled properties are frequently used for purposes such as building a brand-new home by Habitat for Humanity."

Other programs operated by the Ocala Police Department include drug

education for young people, drug abuse resistance education, and of course dealing with the gangs through education and training.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I am pleased to be here. I commend the Ocala Police Department, the local and State officials, and all the organizations involved in this dramatic, dramatic success achieved in crime prevention. As we here in Congress attempt to find solutions to the violence that is sweeping this country and this Nation, it is comforting to know that our local law enforcement and community organizations working hard to combat this problem at its source and it is happening in my hometown of Ocala. They are succeeding.

Mr. Speaker, I will submit to enter into the RECORD Lieutenant DeVilling's article as it appears in the Department of Justice's spring 1990 report, "Weed and Seed and Best Practices Report." For brevity, Mr. Speaker, I will submit only that section dealing with "Taking it to the Streets," which is a small part of this article explaining how the Ocala Police Department actually reduced crime in my hometown using the "Weed and Seed" program.

My efforts this morning are also to recognize the fine things being done by the Ocala Police Department to reduce and eliminate crime in my hometown of Ocala, Florida.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

The programs and projects conducted by the Ocala Police Department, Crime Prevention Section include:

Drug Education For Youth (DEFY): This program was developed by the U.S. Navy and offered through the Department of Justice to local law enforcement organizations. The program at our level reaches out to underprivileged children and offers one-on-one mentoring for a full year. Most of the mentors are police personnel. We conduct a summer day camp and the local Army Reserve personnel attend and provide various instructional topics for the kids. We take the children on field trips to places offering educational and inspirational experiences. We also arrange for them to conduct their own community programs such as delivering fruit baskets to the elderly.

DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education): DARE is a well-known elementary school program which we have implemented in all of the primary schools in Ocala with the assistance of the Marion County School Board. Our program reaches over 1000 school-children each year.

GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training): the GREAT program is similar in concept to DARE, but it is directed toward an older group of students and offers a different message. Street gangs are becoming a serious problem in the United States. Some cities are already overburdened with "after the fact" abatement programs and additional police efforts to cope with the violence, destruction, and crime created by these groups. The Ocala Police Department and the Marion County School Board, with the help of CCASA have implemented the GREAT program in all seventh grade classes in the city schools. The classes teach anti-violence, drug resistance, gang resistance, self-esteem, conflict resolution, and other important topics. This program will soon reach 1000 students each school year.