

and effective one-stop delivery systems with streamlined access to training programs. In addition, core, intensive and training services provided under the law have been invaluable in assisting adult workers in areas of the country facing skill shortages. Such continued assistance is essential for enhancing the 21st Century workforce during this downturn in the economy.

I look forward to working with President Bush and my colleagues on the House Education and the Workforce Committee on both pieces of legislation to continue to strengthen our workforce development system to aid those Americans most in need of help getting back to work.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BACK TO
WORK INCENTIVE ACT OF 2003

HON. JOHN BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to co-sponsor the "Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003," sponsored by Congressman JON PORTER, to create personal re-employment accounts to help put unemployed Americans back to work.

During his State of the Union Address, President Bush laid out a comprehensive plan to speed our economic recovery and promote long-term job growth and investment. His economic stimulus plan also provides specific assistance—in the form of personal re-employment accounts—to help unemployed Americans who are struggling to return to work.

The Back to Work Incentive Act reflects the President's plan to create these accounts and aid unemployed workers who need the most help getting back to work. By introducing this measure, we are taking an important step toward making his plan a reality.

The President's proposal—which is reflected in this bill—represents a new and innovative approach to helping the unemployed get back on their feet. As President Bush has said, one worker out of work is one too many, and his plan will help working families in times when they need it the most.

States will be able to target this flexible benefit to help the unemployed who are most in need of help in the form of \$3,000 Back to Work accounts. Recipients will be able to keep the balance of the account as a cash reemployment bonus if they become reemployed within 13 weeks, creating an important incentive to return to work quickly. The more quickly a job is obtained, the larger the reemployment bonus will be.

Workers can use their Back to Work accounts for a variety of different services to help them find a good job, including job training, child care, transportation, and other expenses to help in finding a new job. These reemployment accounts give the unemployed the flexibility and resources they need.

One of the exciting aspects of the new Back to Work accounts is that they empower individual recipients to make choices appropriate for their own circumstances. Recipients will be able to create reemployment plans that help them navigate all the options available—such as career counseling or training for a new profession in which they can become employed.

By providing choice and flexibility, we can get people back into steady, good-paying jobs.

This new benefit supplements and enhances the services that are already available for those who are most likely to face obstacles in finding and keeping new employment. Back to Work accounts will allow the nationwide One Stop Career Center system to offer another important benefit to the unemployed, in addition to the array of employment services these centers already provide.

A number of states have experimented with personal re-employment accounts and the results have been very positive. For example, Iowa has used a similar approach with reemployment accounts of up to \$5,000 a person, called the New Employment Opportunities Fund. Richard Running, the director of Iowa Workforce Development, recently said, "It has worked a lot better than we had imagined it would."

This proposal is a compassionate one because it provides workers with the flexibility and resources they need to help them get back on the job quickly. I look forward to working with President Bush, Subcommittee Chairman MCKEON, and Congressman PORTER to move this proposal quickly and make this innovative plan a reality for working families who need the help the most.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DUTY
PARITY ACT OF 2003

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise before the House today to express my sincere concern for the severe economic conditions faced by the U.S. lumber industry. For nearly two decades our lumber industry has been at odds with the provincial governments of Canada over heavily subsidized softwood lumber. We've implemented numerous quick fixes to provide relief for our domestic industry, but since the expiration of the last U.S.-Canadian Softwood Lumber Agreement in 2001, lumber prices have continued to drop. If current market conditions continue, many lumber manufacturers will not survive the next 6 months.

I represent the Piney Woods of Mississippi. The timber industry is the second largest sector of our economy behind the poultry industry. My constituents depend on the production of lumber and timber harvest for jobs and economic stability. We are losing jobs and our economic base in the Third Congressional District of Mississippi because heavily subsidized softwood lumber imports are being dumped in the United States by the provincial governments of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I realize the benefits of open markets, and my record clearly reflects that I am not against free trade. I am, however, opposed to unfair trade practices sometimes implemented by some of our trading partners. I oppose dumping, and I oppose the practice of the Canadian Government practically giving away trees to its mills for processing.

The Department of Commerce knows that the provincial governments of Canada are engaged in unfair trade practices. This is reflected by the countervailing duties and antidumping duties imposed on Canadian

softwood lumber imports. Our hope was that these duties would level the playing field between our two countries. But that effort has failed because the Canadian provincial governments have simply expanded their subsidies to offset our duties.

In that light, Mr. Speaker, we are obliged to go a step further in our actions to promote fair trade. Today, I am introducing the Duty Parity Act of 2003. This legislation will clarify U.S. statute and ensure that our trade laws fully offset the values of unfairly traded products. My legislation will treat countervailing duties imposed by our government as costs of production when antidumping duties are calculated by the Department of Commerce. Not including these duties as costs of production will only permit continued unfair pricing by our trade partners at the expense of U.S. companies and workers. The Duty Parity Act will give the Commerce Department the authority to accurately account for all subsidies and impose properly valued duties. The EU and Canada treat countervailing duties as costs of production when determining antidumping duties. Why should we act differently?

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation to provide parity to our domestic lumber industry. We can ask our lumber mills to compete within the free market. But we can't ask them to compete against the treasuries of the Canadian provincial governments.

REINTRODUCTION OF INDIAN PRO-
GRAMS REAUTHORIZATION AND
TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce legislation, which I originally introduced in the 107th Congress, that declares that the United States holds certain public domain lands in trust for the Pueblos of San Ildefonso and Santa Clara in New Mexico.

Senators PETE DOMENICI and JEFF BINGAMAN sponsored the Senate companion bill during the 107th Congress, and were successful in incorporating it into S. 2711, the Indian Programs Reauthorization and Technical Amendments Act of 2002, which I strongly supported, during the closing days of the 107th Congress. However, the House was unable to take up this legislation prior to its adjournment.

I would also like to note that both Senators are reintroducing, in the Senate today, the companion to this bill.

Accordingly, today I reintroduce this legislation, which will formally restore control and tribal authority of nearly 4,500 acres of culturally significant ancestral lands. Located in the eastern Jemez Mountains, roughly 2,000 acres of land located within the aboriginal domain of the San Ildefonso Pueblo will be transferred to that Pueblo; similarly, approximately 2,484 acres of Santa Clara Pueblo's aboriginal lands will be transferred to that Pueblo.

This transfer is the result of years of negotiations between the two Pueblos, and between the Pueblos and the Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Land Management. The Pueblos intend to maintain the natural

quality of the land and restore the health of the ecosystem of their traditional ancestral lands. In addition, the lands will be used for ceremonial and other traditional purposes.

Finally, Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties in New Mexico, the National Congress of American Indians, and the National Audubon Society's New Mexico State Office, the Quivira Coalition and the Santa Fe Group of the Sierra Club support the acquisition and transfer of these lands.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Resources Committee to pass this important legislation for the people of San Idefonso and Santa Clara.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
TO CHANGE HOPE SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, the passage of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 represented a watershed event in the relationship between student support and tax policy. The Act's signature initiative, the Hope Scholarship Program, provides annual benefits to students and the families rivaling the support provided through Pell Grants and other long-standing forms of federal aid. However, many of the students who need help the most do not benefit from the Hope Scholarship Program.

Today, Congressman JIM MCGOVERN and I are reintroducing legislation that would address these shortcomings. Currently, the Hope tax credit can be used for only tuition and related expenses when college students must pay for much more than just tuition. Our legislation would allow Hope Scholarships to cover required fees, books, supplies and equipment. Additionally, a student's eligibility is currently reduced by any other grants they receive—federal, state or private. As a result, benefits have been limited primarily to middle and upper-middle income taxpayers and explain why less than one-fifth of all full-time students attending community colleges qualify for maximum Hope Scholarship benefits. Our legislation would ensure that any Pell Grants and Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants a student receives are not counted against the student's eligible expenses when the Hope Scholarship is computed.

This legislation has bi-partisan cosponsors and support from numerous higher education organizations. I urge the House to bring up this legislation in the near future. I yield back the balance of my time.

INTERFAITH CAREPARTNERS

HON. JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, February 2, 2003, Interfaith CarePartners will celebrate the unprecedented milestone of one million hours of volunteer community service. On behalf of the people of Texas' Congressional District Seven, I want to congratulate

and honor Interfaith CarePartners for their incredible accomplishment and for their remarkable service to our community.

Interfaith CarePartners, founded in 1985, has evolved into a national movement of faith-based volunteerism that promotes, sponsors, and conducts volunteer caregiving and associated activities in partnership with churches and synagogues. They are "Houston's caregiver," sponsoring the nation's original and largest faith-based caregiving program with 1,600 volunteers in 83 congregations who serve approximately 1,000 families per year, and providing 60,000 hours of volunteer service for frail adults and children. Volunteers also provide in-home care and caregiver respites to more than 3,600 Alzheimer's and dementia-affected families, frail elderly, and other chronically or terminally ill adults, severely impaired children, and people with AIDS. Partner congregations span the theological spectrum within Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism.

Interfaith CarePartners has earned the gratitude of all the families they have helped and the admiration of everyone who knows their work and the depth of their selfless devotion to improve the lives of their neighbors. Today, we honor and thank Interfaith CarePartners for their extraordinary achievement in reaching one million hours of volunteer community service. I would like also to congratulate Nancy Reagan, Dr. John McGovern, and Chip Carlisle and Wells Fargo for receiving the Sustaining Presence Award, an annual award presented to distinguished individuals and organizations whose commitments and activities constitute an exemplary contribution to the creation of caring communities. All of you exemplify the best of America.

INTRODUCTION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESSIBILITY ACT

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Instructional Materials Accessibility Act, which will ensure that, for the first time, blind students will be able to fully enjoy an equal opportunity to a quality education. This same bill attracted 88 bipartisan cosponsors in the 107th Congress, most notably my friend GEORGE MILLER, the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, who has worked closely with me on crafting this legislation.

Unfortunately, it is the exception rather than the rule that blind students have access to textbooks for a given class at the beginning of the school year. Because of the cumbersome process needed to translate a textbook into Braille or other specialized format, it can take up to six months for the blind student to have the same materials as his or her sighted peers. Only a heroic effort can save this student from being hopelessly behind in class.

This was not much of an issue before the 1960's. Before that time, most blind children attended centralized schools for the blind, and there was (and is) existing infrastructure, such as the American Printing House for the Blind in Kentucky, to provide support services such

as production of Braille textbooks. Beginning in the 1960's, though, blind children began attending schools in their home communities, and now the vast majority do so. As a result, every local school district which has one or more blind students must obtain or create the necessary specialized textbooks for these students. However, again this is a laborious process that is beyond the capability of most school districts to carry out quickly or easily.

Although states already have the obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other federal statutes to provide equivalent educational opportunities to disabled and non-disabled students, it has become apparent that specific and practical standards need to be put in place to anticipate and meet accessibility needs in this area. The Instructional Materials Accessibility Act (IMAA) takes several approaches that, taken together, will greatly reduce the waiting time for blind students to receive their textbooks.

This bill establishes a standardized electronic file format for instructional materials. Conversion into an electronic format is a necessary step in the process of creating a Braille version of a textbook. Twenty-six states currently require publishers to provide electronic copies of textbooks but have no agreed-upon file format. This drives up costs for publishers and often results in unusable electronic files provided. And it does nothing to reduce the months-long period needed for production of the specialized textbook.

Our bill requires statewide plans to ensure that students who are blind or visually impaired have access to instructional materials in formats they can use at the same time the materials are provided to all other students. Our bill will establish a national clearinghouse to provide "one-stop shopping" for local school districts to acquire the needed materials. In the future, publishers will be able to submit an electronic copy of a textbook to this clearinghouse, rather than having to deal with inconsistent state requirements. Finally, our bill authorizes a small capacity-building grant program to assist state and local educators in using electronic files supplied by publishers.

This issue has been a bone of contention between textbook publishers and the blind community for quite a while. However, working together over a period of many months, both communities finally arrived at a mutually agreeable and practical solution to this problem and the publishers and the blind advocates strongly support the IMAA as introduced in both Houses.

In the 107th Congress, the support and great need for this legislation prompted the Department of Education to fund the development of a voluntary standardized electronic format for specialized instructional materials. Once completed, this standardized file format would implement a significant piece of the IMAA. However, a standardized file format by itself will not solve all the problems which cause delays in the delivery of textbooks to visually impaired students. That is why this legislation is still needed. Once implemented, the IMAA will make life easier for states, publishers and most of all blind students, at a very modest cost.