

Margaret was born and raised in Belmont, Massachusetts and graduated from St. Patrick's High School in 1956. She attended Boston University's Medical Center where she majored in Nursing and graduated in 1960 to begin her distinguished record of public service.

With Michael, her husband of 37 years and graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Margaret spent much of her career serving the soldiers of the United States Army. As a military spouse, she volunteered in various capacities for the Army and Red Cross worldwide. Her service includes work in the Fort Meyer emergency room as well as employment as the Occupational Health Nurse for the 3rd Infantry motor pool soldiers and employees serving Arlington National Cemetery.

Her life as a military spouse included 23 moves across the world in 18 years. Margaret and Michael O'Neill are the proud parents of Kathleen, an attorney in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Although she retires as the Occupational Health Nurse of the Longworth Building after 12 years of service, Margaret O'Neill will never slow down. She plans to take time to travel and attend Theology classes at Trinity College. In addition, Margaret will continue her volunteer work at St. Peter's in the District of Columbia assisting the poor and homeless.

Mr. Speaker, Margaret O'Neill leaves behind many friends in the Halls of Congress. We are lucky to have experienced her compassion and will miss her dearly. Her wisdom, kindness, and abilities are attributes to which all public servants should aspire. She has set an example for everyone on how to live a life of service, putting the greater interests of the community before one's own.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to Margaret O'Neill. Our nation is served well by having such honorable and giving citizens, like Margaret, who care about their health and well being. We wish Margaret, her husband, Michael, and their daughter, Kathleen, all the best as we honor one of our dear friends.

SPECIALTY CROP COMPETITIVENESS ACT OF 2003

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to become a cosponsor of the "Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2003," H.R. 3242, legislation designed to maintain a viable and competitive specialty crop industry in the United States.

It is important to first note that an abundant, affordable supply of highly nutritious fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops is vital to the health of all Americans. Increased consumption of fresh produce will provide tremendous health benefits to consumers, as well as economic benefits to American farmers.

It follows that a competitive specialty crop industry is necessary to produce and sustain a safe and nutritious domestic food supply. A competitive specialty crop industry is also necessary to sustain the economic vitality of rural communities in northern California, and indeed throughout the entire nation.

Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult for U.S. producers to compete against heavily subsidized foreign producers in domestic and international markets. For example, the European Union provides subsidies of about \$11.7 billion per year to its specialty crop growers, while U.S. specialty crop growers receive no subsidies. In addition, U.S. specialty crop growers continue to face tariff and non-tariff trade barriers in many export markets, thus making it virtually impossible for our growers to improve sales through increased exports. In turn, production costs have escalated due to increased environmental and other regulations, and important crop protection tools have been lost, thus making it increasingly difficult to operate profitably.

Specialty crop growers from California and across the country believe federal agriculture policy must address the myriad of unique challenges facing their industry to assure its long-term viability. As such, they have joined together to craft H.R. 3242, and have requested my support.

The bill is designed to increase exports of U.S. specialty crops, improve efforts to protect agriculture from damaging pests and diseases, and provide funding for research necessary for improving the competitiveness of the industry. The activities authorized by this legislation represent a prudent investment in the future success of our \$58.7 billion specialty crop industry.

The cost of the bill is relatively modest when compared with other agriculture programs and most other federal programs. Nevertheless, it continues to be critically important, especially during this period of budget deficits and increased spending for our ongoing War on Terrorism and homeland security, for Congress to restrain federal spending. As such, I want to work with the bill's supporters to find acceptable offsets and/or savings from other federal programs that will ensure that the funding authorized under this legislation fits within the existing budget.

I look forward to working with the sponsors of the bill, Congressman DOUG OSE and Congressman CAL DOOLEY, toward future House consideration of this important bill for California agriculture.

INTEGRATING THE GULF OF MEXICO BORDER REGION

HON. KATHERINE HARRIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that on November 5, 2003, the Gulf of Mexico States Accord and its business counterpart, the Gulf of Mexico States Partnership, Inc. signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on Short Sea Shipping with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration. The Gulf of Mexico States Accord comprises a partnership between my home state of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and the six Mexican states that border the Gulf of Mexico.

The signing ceremony for this Memorandum of Cooperation took place at the MARAD Short Sea Shipping Conference, which occurred in Sarasota, Florida, a city which is located in my District. Over 200 maritime indus-

try professionals from the United States, Mexico, Canada and the European Union attended this event. In recognition of the outstanding work of the Maritime Administration, the Accord and the Partnership, I request that the English version of the agreement be inserted, with my comments, into the RECORD.

The Memorandum of Cooperation, which constitutes the first such agreement in the Gulf of Mexico region, calls for information exchange, technical assistance and collaboration on issues related to the development of short sea shipping in the Gulf of Mexico. It represents a significant step toward full U.S.-Mexico collaboration on this vital trade issue.

The adoption of an enhanced regional emphasis on the Gulf of Mexico border states is vital as the NAFTA enters its second decade. The initiatives set forth in the Memorandum of Cooperation will leverage resources to develop this "water border," bolstering homeland security, spurring trade expansion, relieving transportation bottlenecks, and reducing pollution through the increased utilization of the Gulf of Mexico's ports and intermodal infrastructure.

The Memorandum of Cooperation also calls for support of the "Gulf of Mexico Trade Corridor Transportation Study", which is being spearheaded by the business Partnership in collaboration with the Accord and its Working Group on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communications. The study is based on the premise that the development of the Gulf of Mexico border, with its 62 million inhabitants in eleven U.S. and Mexican states, will have immediate and enduring regional impact on efficient investment in homeland security, identification of and investment in "critical" physical infrastructure, tourism and educational development, environmental sustainability, and overall community and international economic development.

The Gulf of Mexico basin constitutes a natural North American economic sub-region, comprising a seaborne NAFTA "super-highway" trade corridor, a common sustainable resource for tourism, agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, and a common homeland security zone. The Gulf represents the ideal location for deepening and broadening the benefits of the NAFTA in preparation for the new flows of two-way trade that I believe will occur under the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION AMONG THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES, THE GULF OF MEXICO STATES ACCORD, AND THE GULF OF MEXICO STATES PARTNERSHIP, INC.

I. PARTIES

a. The party to this agreement representing the Maritime Administration (MARAD), is the Maritime Administrator or his designated representative.

b. The party to this agreement representing the Gulf of Mexico States Accord (GOMSA) will be the President of the Accord or his designated representative. GOMSA is a forum that was created to foster, promote and implement cooperative relationships between and for the eleven U.S. and Mexican border states that adjoin the Gulf of Mexico.

c. The party to this agreement representing the Gulf of Mexico States Partnership, Inc. (the Partnership) will be the President of the organization or his designated representative. The Partnership is a non-profit private sector Gulf States group that shares the GOMSA goal of fostering and promoting interests of the member states and region.

2. PURPOSE

a. The purpose of this agreement is to recognize and enhance the communications and working relationship among MARAD, GOMSA, and the Partnership in order to address the common goals of advancing short sea shipping in the Gulf of Mexico and ensure that it is safe, secure, efficient and environmentally sound.

b. The agreement serves to facilitate periodic meetings among MARAD, GOMSA and the Partnership to identify ways the respective organizations can assist in the sharing of short sea shipping policy, experience and related information.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. MARAD will share with GOMSA and Partnership MARAD's short sea shipping

i. goals, policies, and experience so as to allow these organizations to use their extensive

ii. state and business networks to improve maritime efficiency, commercial viability, and

iii. short sea shipping opportunities as they arise.

b. GOMSA and the Partnership will share information and experience with MARAD so that they can assist in the accomplishment of MARAD objectives to ease traffic congestion, improve transportation safety, and elevate the quality of life in the Gulf States region through cooperative short sea shipping efforts.

c. MARAD, GOMSA and the Partnership will consult and share information in support of a "Gulf of Mexico Trade Corridor Transportation Study", a long-range Partnership project to highlight new commercial opportunities, inventory Gulf of Mexico infrastructure assets, and to identify and assess gaps in existing transportation infrastructure.

d. This agreement is effective upon the signature of the parties. It is informal in nature and may be modified by mutual agreement or terminated by any party at any time. The parties pledge to act in good faith at all times and to use their best efforts to accomplish the purposes summarized herein. This partnership does not obligate MARAD to expend any funds.

Signed the 5th day of November 2003 in triplicate, in Sarasota, Florida in the English and Spanish languages, each version being equally valid.

[Capt. William Schubert, Administrator, for the U.S. Maritime Administration] [Gary L. Springer, Secretary-General, Gulf of Mexico States Accord] [Robert Hendry, Director, Gulf of Mexico States Partnership, Inc.]

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF CATHERINE FUREY

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of Catherine Furey, a constituent of mine who recently passed away, and was proud to call Long Island home. She lived to mark a landmark occasion that many of us strive for but very few of us reach: Catherine lived to celebrate her 110th birthday.

Catherine was born in County Roscommon, Ireland, on April 6, 1893. At age 20, Catherine left her family and friends in Ireland to make a better life for herself in America. When she arrived in Boston, she immediately moved to

Providence, Rhode Island where she joined an aunt to assist with the upkeep of the home of a Protestant minister. Later, Catherine traveled to New York City to serve as a caregiver for a sister struggling with tuberculosis.

After her sister passed away, she began working for a wealthy family in Manhattan, tending the family's summer home in Long Beach. There she met and married Simon Furey. They moved to Hempstead where they raised two children and became active members of this Long Island community.

In the 1950's, Catherine began an 11-year vocation with St. Joseph Catholic School in Garden City where she ran the cafeteria. She helped to see that countless schoolchildren were content and always received a warm meal. After her decade of service to the school, Catherine continued to work and to play an active role in the lives of children by serving as a babysitter for working families in our community, a job she happily performed until her early eighties.

Last April on her birthday, Catherine received a letter from Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, congratulating her on being the oldest living Irishwoman. Catherine Furey was not only the oldest living Irishwoman, but also the oldest living Long Islander at the time of her death on December 2nd at the age of 110.

It is amazing to think of the events Catherine experienced over the course of her lifetime. When she arrived in America looking for a better life, women could not vote and were not able to be full participants in society. She lived not only to see the role of women evolve, but to see this country emerge stronger than ever from World War I, World War II, and the Great Depression. New York was at the forefront of innovation during the past century, and she was right there to witness this tremendous transformation.

Her life is an inspiring story of both strength and wisdom. She is survived by her son and daughter, along with 9 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

RECOGNIZING MIGUEL ARIAS AS HE IS SWORN IN AS A UNITED STATES CITIZEN

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a young man who is being sworn in today as a citizen of the United States of America. Over the past 2 years, Miguel Arias has been a member of my staff in my Fresno, California and Washington, DC offices. Over that time, Miguel has shown that he is dedicated to his family, his friends, his community, and his country. I am honored to rise in this chamber and welcome Miguel as a citizen of the United States.

Miguel was born in Apatzingan, a small city in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. He and his mother, Teresa Arias, immigrated to the United States when he was 2 years old. The Arias family settled in Mendota, California, a small farming community on the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley. It was in Mendota that Miguel began working in the fields picking onions, tomatoes, and melons to earn extra money for his mother, sister, and five brothers.

In spite of his long and hard hours in the fields, Miguel excelled academically at Mendota High School and found time to participate in numerous extracurricular activities, including wrestling. Upon graduation from Mendota High School, Miguel enrolled at California State University, Fresno, where studied criminology while working for both the Mendota High wrestling team and the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission. In May 2001, he became the first person in his family to graduate from college, earning a Bachelor's degree in criminology from CSU Fresno.

Following his graduation, Miguel began working for me as a staff assistant in my district office, where he made a very strong impression both with me, and with the constituents contacting my office. He was promoted to caseworker, where he specialized in immigration issues facing the people of my district.

It was in this role where Miguel provided his most significant contribution to his community. Miguel has become an expert in the process of immigration to the United States by helping many people in my district obtain visas, work permits, and citizenship.

Miguel was a leader in developing and executing the Mendota Project, which counseled parents and students at Mendota High School on the timeline of the immigration process and advised students on how to continue their education in colleges and universities while they waited for their legal immigration papers. The Mendota Project provided significant assistance to many people in my district who were struggling with immigration issues. Because of Miguel's leadership and dedication to the people of his community, the Mendota Project was an incredibly successful immigration education venture. His expertise on immigration policy was also apparent when, earlier this year, he counseled a summer intern in my office through the process of obtaining citizenship. Miguel's commitment to improving and assisting the immigrant community has not only been important to my office, but to the residents of the San Joaquin Valley.

I want to express my congratulations to Miguel as he reaches the culmination of a very long process that required a lot of hard work. Miguel has set a tremendous example for many of the immigrants he has helped while working in my office. Because of his hard work, determination, and community involvement, I have no doubt that he will continue to be an important role model in his community.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Miguel Arias today as he is sworn in as a citizen of the United States of America.

LOCKPORT HIGH SCHOOL/CLASS 8A STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 8, 2003

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Lockport High School's football team, the Porters. Under the leadership of head coach Bret Kool, the Porters recently beat the Maine South High School Hawks, 48-27, to capture their second straight Class 8A state championship in football.