

REPEAL OF THE SPECIAL OCCUPATIONAL TAXES ON ALCOHOL

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I join my good friend and colleague, Representative DAVE CAMP, today in introducing legislation that will repeal the Special Occupational Tax (SOT) on taxpayers who manufacture, distribute, and sell alcoholic beverages. The special occupational tax is not a tax on alcoholic products but rather operates as a license fee on businesses. Believe it or not, this tax was originally implemented to help finance the Civil War. I began the fight to repeal this unfair tax back in 1992. This is an inequitable tax that has outlived its original purpose and is a clear example of an antiquated approach to federal taxation.

The SOT on alcohol was dramatically increased during a budget process in 1986 and has unfairly burdened business owners across the country. Repealing the SOT would provide immediate and visible relief to thousands of small businesses in every congressional district. According to the ATF, there are 480,427 locations nationwide that pay this tax every year, including 458,603 retailers. These retail establishments account for \$114 million out of \$126 million in SOT revenues.

In my district, repealing the SOT will save convenience stores approximately \$50,750 annually. Repealing the SOT will save California wineries approximately \$750,000 annually and California restaurants approximately \$20 million annually.

This tax is hardest on small businesses. A one-store operator pays the same SOT as a Wal-Mart Super center. In fact, a chain of four neighborhood food stores pays the same annual tax as the nation's largest single site brewery or distillery—\$1,000. This is not what Congress had in mind 150 years ago, and I don't believe it is a situation we want today.

Repeal of the SOT on alcohol is supported by a broad-based group of business organizations and enjoys widespread bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. Senators Max Baucus and Jim Bunning are introducing similar legislation in the Senate today. The Joint Committee on Taxation has examined the efficacy of the SOT several times and found it fundamentally flawed, and has recommended its repeal in its 2001 tax simplification report.

With small businesses being hardest hit by the recent economic troubles, repeal of the SOT will provide much needed assistance to these important employers. It is time for us to move forward and enact legislation to repeal the SOT on alcohol. We urge our colleagues to join us in this endeavor.

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY PAUL SPITALERI

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Anthony Paul Spitaleri who is retiring after a distinguished career in service to the City of

Palo Alto and its Fire Department for thirty-five years.

On January 1, 1967, Anthony "Tony" Spitaleri joined the Stanford Fire Department as a Firefighter. The Stanford Fire Department merged with the Palo Alto Fire Department in 1976, and Tony rose through the ranks to become Fire Captain. He has served his coworkers ably as President of the Palo Alto Firefighters Union (Local 1319) for more than a quarter century with professionalism and commitment. He helped recruit and retain a force of highly qualified firefighters and developed safe standards for staffing and equipment. He's been a tireless fundraiser for many community causes, and recently helped raise \$800,000 for the families of New York Firefighters following the tragedies of September 11th.

Mr. Speaker, Tony Spitaleri is known throughout our community as an unselfish, enthusiastic, thorough, fair, compassionate, courteous man and he's one of the best barbequers around! I salute him for his extraordinary leadership which has made our community safer and stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Anthony Paul Spitaleri for his outstanding service to our community and wishing him a retirement filled with every blessing.

TRIBUTE TO VIRGINIA "GINNIE" MUIR HIRSCH

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Virginia "Ginnie" Muir Hirsch. She passed away in the early morning of January 29 in her home in Santa Cruz, California. Her husband, Fred, and their three daughters Liza, Leslie, and Laurie were at her side.

Ginnie was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania on August 4, 1925. She came from a family of strong Democrats. Because of her father's leftist ideals, he had difficulty finding a job in Altoona. Eventually the family was forced to migrate to West Virginia so that Ginnie's father could find work.

Ginnie moved to New York in 1942, where she began working for the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born and for the American Slav Congress. Ginnie worked continuously during the period of anti-leftist hysteria in the nineteen forties, supporting many activists who were being deported for their progressive ideologies. While helping to organize a 1949 concert by Paul Robeson, her 1937 Oldsmobile was pushed over a cliff in what became known as the Peekskill Riot. The next day, in clothes bloodied by cross-burning Klansmen, Virginia testified with Paul Robeson about the attack.

Ginnie was married in 1952. In 1957 she and her husband moved to California with their children. Virginia held down two jobs, campaigned against the "right to work" law, and fought against the deportation and abuse of Mexican immigrants. In San Jose, Ginnie became an active member of the Office of Professional Employees International Union, and for a number of years she worked for the local Retail Clerks Union. She was also a founding member of the Friends of the Stu-

dent Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which involved traveling to Mississippi and bringing supplies to SNCC.

Ginnie has been a life-long activist in California labor politics. As a board member for the Central Labor Council, she consistently supported the United Farm Workers as well as a number of East San Jose labor organizations. In 1967 Virginia moved her family to Delano, California to open the first legal office for Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers. She was also an integral part of the jury investigation team for the 1971 trial of Angela Davis.

Ginnie continued through her years in San Jose, and later in Santa Cruz, providing for her family and working for peace, against racism, and for social and economic justice. She regretted that leukemia made her unable to take part in the January 18 anti-war actions in San Francisco and died less than two weeks later.

Mr. Speaker, Virginia Muir Hirsch will be remembered in the community for her years of service and the invaluable contributions she has made to the progressive cause.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

HON. ERNEST J. ISTOOK, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, today we are reintroducing the Balanced Budget Amendment for the U.S. Constitution. Although we recently enjoyed four years of balanced federal budgets, the results of 9-11, the fight against terrorism, and economic challenges have all pushed us back into a sea of red ink.

Although borrowing can be justified to protect America in a time of national emergency, deficits should not be acceptable in normal times. So, unless we first set a goal of balancing the budget again, it will never happen. And recent experience once again proves that we need the discipline that a Balanced Budget Amendment provides.

I'm especially happy for the support of Wisconsin's JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and also of the Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, STEVE CHABOT from Ohio. And, of course, the long-time leading Democrat on this issue, Congressman CHARLES STENHOLM of Texas.

I also want to acknowledge the pioneering work done by National Taxpayer's Union, the nation's largest organization representing the interests of taxpayers, and their work with Congressman STENHOLM and Senator LARRY CRAIG who have been working on this issue for the last quarter century.

It's time to set the standard, and show America what our goals are. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle you are on. Some people complain about the deficit, and say that's why they oppose tax relief. Others complain about the deficit and say that's why they oppose spending. But everyone who complains about the deficit should support the goal of balancing the budget again. It's hypocritical to say you oppose the deficit but don't support the balanced budget amendment.

With the expenses of the war on terrorism, we won't balance the budget in the next year or two. And it will take a couple of years for

this amendment to be ratified by the states. We have to set our goal NOW to balance the budget again. Unless we commit to it, we'll never get the budget balanced again. First we must set the goal, then we work toward it.

Our children and our grandchildren will pay a heavy price if we do not return to a balanced budget. They not only would face the high taxes of big government, but they would bear the extra expense of paying off the bills that we are running-up today.

This Balanced Budget Amendment is identical to the language passed by a vote of 300–132 in 1995, as part of the original “Contract With America,” and then failed by one single vote in the U.S. Senate in 1997. Neither the House nor the Senate have voted on it since then. Obviously, we now have many new faces in Congress; we now have 212 House Members who have never been held accountable, because they have never had to vote on a Balanced Budget Amendment. We believe the time has come for every Member of Congress to address this issue head-on.

The amendment includes an exemption for times when Congress declares a national emergency. But during peacetime, it would require a supermajority of Congress for the federal government to operate at a deficit.

No ordinary law can restrain Congress, because Congress has the power to remove that safeguard whenever it wishes by a simple majority vote. The only real protection against deficit spending is constitutional protection. In light of the current national emergency, we need this amendment more than ever to ensure that deficit spending will end.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BILL “TO PROVIDE FOR AND APPROVE THE SETTLEMENT OF CERTAIN LAND CLAIMS OF THE BAY MILLS INDIAN COMMUNITY”

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, for more than 100 years, the Bay Mills Indian Community has sought justice for the illegal sale of over 110 acres of Chippewa County lands which, prior to the sale, had been homeland to a large group of the Tribe's ancestors. Today I am introducing legislation that finally brings relief to this group of Michigan's Native people.

The legislation I propose today also brings too-long awaited relief to the non-Indian citizens of Michigan who live within the Tribe's Chippewa county claim area. Because the Indian claim has remained unresolved for many years, innocent homeowners have watched their property values plummet to 90 percent below what that property would otherwise be worth on the open market. This legislation accomplishes these ends by ratifying the Land Settlement Agreement signed by the Bay Mills Indian Community and the State of Michigan on August 23, 2002.

This Land Settlement Agreement is the product of a long and careful negotiation process between the Tribe and the State. It calls for the extinguishment of all of the Tribe's title and right to the Chippewa County disputed lands and in return provides for the Tribe to

receive replacement land in Port Huron that will be put into trust (and therefore protected by federal law from illegal sale) by the Secretary of the Interior. Further, the settlement is structured in such a way as to ensure that neither the taxpayers of Michigan nor the taxpayers of the United States will ever be saddled with the cost of paying a monetary damage award, which otherwise could be quite substantial, to the Tribe.

Finally, and of particular importance to my constituents in the 10th District, the settlement agreement will enable the City of Port Huron and the Tribe to engage in desperately needed and mutually beneficial economic development, of a casino. The people of Port Huron approved a June 2001 casino advisory referendum. This legislation is critical in allowing the residents of the Port Huron community to actively participate in its economic recovery through the establishment of a casino approved by the people. The Port Huron community has been brutalized by the loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs, a double-digit unemployment rate that doubles our state and federal average and a Canadian casino located just 500 yards from our border. That casino attracts more than 1 million American visitors per year, which is devastating to our tourism and entertainment business. A casino on the American side of the border would create 3,000 American jobs while providing competition to our Canadian neighbors at the only border crossing with Ontario where we have not responded by having a casino of our own.

Resolution of this land claim is long overdue. In sponsoring this legislation, I am proud to be part of a solution crafted to benefit the Tribe, residents of the claim area, and the taxpayers of Michigan.

I join with the members of the Bay Mills Indian Community, the Charlotte Beach landowners, my constituents in Port Huron, and my distinguished colleague Congressman DON YOUNG in support of this proposed settlement. This legislation provides a fair solution that is long overdue for many Native Americans.

COMMENDING FACULTY AND STAFF OF EDWARD J. BRISCOE AND VAN ZANT—GUINN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the faculty and staff of Edward J. Briscoe and Van Zant-Guinn Elementary Schools. The principals of these two schools, Dr. Jennifer Brooks and Mrs. Constance Goines, respectively, are to be commended for the work they have done to improve the educational opportunities for young people in their communities. Both schools received the Title I, Part A Distinguished Performance Award. The Title I Award is given to a select number of schools around the country that exhibit outstanding performance in the areas of academic performance and achievement.

At Briscoe Elementary, Dr. Brooks has been honored on numerous occasions for the work she has done to help broaden the horizons for the children that attend her school. Her dedication to improving the basic skills of school

age children helped secure a 5-Star Rating from Texas Monthly Magazine—the highest rating the statewide magazine gives to public schools. Most recently Briscoe received a TEA (Texas Education Agency) Exemplary Rating. The school also takes part in the prestigious Bass Performance Hall Program and encourages conversational Spanish with specially designed curriculum.

A few miles away to the north, children, parents, and the faculty of Van-Zant Guinn Elementary were also joyous in hearing the news that they too would be receiving a Title I Award. Their principal for the last nine years, Constance Goines, also deserves praise for the steps she has taken to make her school a success in the field of education. Van Zant-Guinn was also recognized by the TEA in 2002 as Exemplary and was given the agency's “2002 Gold Performance Award” for the progress that students made in Math and Reading. Mrs. Goines and her staff were also instrumental in initiating a program on campus called Homework Helper. Homework Helper provides kids who lack the ideal environment at home a more suitable place after school to do their homework.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the Title I, Part A Distinguished Performance Award will continue to help improve the lives of school children, not only in Fort Worth, but throughout the country. Once again, I congratulate Dr. Jennifer Brooks and Constance Goines for all they do in regards to the schools they represent, our country and their receiving this award.

INTRODUCING MELANIE BLOCKER-STOKES POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION RESEARCH AND CARE ACT

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Melanie Blocker-Stokes and all women who have suffered in silence from postpartum depression and psychosis. I am pleased that 47 of my colleagues have joined me in introducing the Melanie Blocker-Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act.

Chicago native, Melanie Blocker-Stokes was a successful pharmaceutical sales manager and loving wife of Dr. Sam Stokes. However, for Melanie, no title was more important than that of mother. Melanie believed motherhood was her life mission and fiercely wanted a daughter of her own. This dream came true on February 23, 2001 with the birth of her daughter, Sommer Skyy. Unfortunately, with the birth of her daughter, Melanie entered into a battle for her life with a devastating mood disorder known as postpartum psychosis. Despite a valiant fight against postpartum psychosis, which included being hospitalized a total of three times, Melanie jumped to her death from a 12-story window ledge on June 11, 2001.

Melanie was not alone in her pain and depression. Each year over 400,000 women suffer from postpartum mood changes. Nearly 80 percent of new mothers experience a common form of depression after delivery, known as “baby blues.” The temporary symptoms of “baby blues” include mood swings, feelings of