

species? Why it is so crucial to keep them out of the United States?" It is important that we understand these questions so that we can appreciate the scope of the threat that invasive species pose to our economy and environment.

The introduction of non-native species is not new to the United States. People have brought non-native plants and animals into the United States, both intentionally and unintentionally, for a variety of reasons, since the New World was discovered. Some examples include the introduction of nutria (which is a rodent similar to a muskrat) by trappers to bolster the domestic fur industry, and the introduction of the purple loosestrife plant to add rich color to gardens. Both nutria and purple loosestrife are now serious threats to wetlands. Non-native species may also be introduced unintentionally, such as through species hitching rides in ships, crates, planes, or soil coming into the United States. For example, zebra mussels, first discovered in Lake St. Clair near Detroit in the late 1980s, came into the Great Lakes through ballast water from ships.

Not all species brought into the country are harmful to local economies, people and/or the environment. In fact, most non-native species do not survive because the environment does not meet their biological needs. In many cases, however, the new species will find favorable conditions (such as a lack of natural enemies or an environment that fosters propagation) that allow it to survive and thrive in a new ecosystem.

Only a small fraction of these non-native species become an "invasive species"—defined as a species that is both non-native to the ecosystem and whose introduction causes or may cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. However, this small fraction can cause enormous damage, both to our economy and our environment.

Estimating the total economic impact of invasive species is extremely difficult. No single organization accumulates such statistics comprehensively. However, researchers at Cornell University estimate that invasive species cost Americans \$137 billion annually. This includes the cost of control, damage to property values, health costs and other factors. Just one species can cost government and private citizens billions of dollars. For example, zebra mussels have cost the various entities in the Great Lakes basin an estimated \$3 billion during the past 10 years for cleaning water intake pipes, purchasing filtration equipment, etc.

Beyond economic impacts, invasive species cause ecological costs that are even more difficult to quantify. For example, sea lamprey control measures in the Great Lakes cost approximately \$10 million to \$15 million annually. However, we do not have a good measure of the cost of lost fisheries due to this invader, which was first discovered in the Great Lakes in the early 1900s. In fact, invasive species now are second only to habitat loss as threats to endangered species. Quantifying the loss due to extinction caused by these invasive species is nearly impossible.

Given the enormous economic and environmental impacts these invaders cause, two clear goals emerge: First, we need to focus more resources and energy into dealing with this problem at all levels of government; second, our best strategy for dealing with invasive

species is to focus these resources to prevent them from ever entering the United States. Spending millions of dollars to prevent species introductions will save billions of dollars in control, eradication and restoration efforts once the species become established. In fact, one theme is central to both Mr. GILCREST's bill and this legislation. It is an old adage, but one worth following—"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

To successfully carry out this strategy, we need careful, concerted management of this problem underpinned by research at every step. For example, we know that we must do more to regulate the pathways by which these invaders enter the United States (ships, aquaculture, etc.), which is an important component of Mr. GILCREST's legislation. However, research must inform us as to which of these pathways pose the greatest threat and which techniques used to manage each pathway are effective. This legislation would help develop this understanding through the ecological and pathway surveys conducted under this bill. In fact, research underlies every management decision aimed at detecting, preventing, controlling and eradicating invasive species; educating citizens and stakeholders; and ensuring that resources are optimally deployed to increase the effectiveness of government programs. These items are also reflected in the legislation, which I will now describe in more detail.

The bill is divided into six main parts. The first three parts outline an ecological and pathway research program, combining surveys and experimentation, to be established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the United States Geological Survey. This program is focused on understanding what invasive species are present in our waterways, which pathways they use to enter our waterways, how they establish themselves once they are here and whether or not invasions are getting better or worse based on decisions to regulate pathways. In carrying out this program, the three principal agencies I mentioned previously will develop standardized protocols for carry out the ecological and pathway surveys that are called for under the legislation. In addition, they will coordinate their efforts to establish long-term surveys sites so we have strong baseline information. This program also includes an important grant program so that academic researchers and state agencies can carry out the surveys at diverse sites distributed geographically around the country. This will give federal, state and local managers a more holistic view of the rates and patterns of invasions of aquatic invasive species into the United States. Lastly, the principal agencies will coordinate their efforts and pull all of this information together and analyze it to help determine whether or not decisions to manage these pathways are effective. This will inform policymakers as to which pathways pose the greatest threat and whether or not they need to change the way these pathways are managed.

The fourth part of the bill contains several programs to develop, demonstrate and verify technologies to prevent, control and eradicate invasive species. The first component is an Environmental Protection Agency grant program focused on developing, demonstrating and verifying environmentally sound technologies to control and eradicate aquatic

invasive species. This research program will give federal, state and local managers more tools to combat invasive species that are also environmentally sound. The second component is a program to develop dispersal barriers—administered by the Army Corps of Engineers—which have been a critical issue in the Chicago Sanitary Canal where Great Lakes managers have been desperately trying to keep the Asian Carp from entering Lake Michigan from the Mississippi River system. The third component is expansion both in terms of scope and funding of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Fish and Wildlife Service program geared toward demonstrating technologies that prevent invasive species from being introduced by ships. This is the federal government's only program that is focused solely on helping develop viable technologies to treat ballast water. It has been woefully underfunded in the past and deserves more attention.

The fifth part of the bill focuses on setting up research to directly support the Coast Guard's efforts to set standards for the treatment of ships with respect to preventing them from introducing invasive species. Ships are a major pathway by which invasive species are unintentionally introduced; the ballast water discharged by ships is of particular concern. One of the key issues that has hampered efforts to deal with the threats that ships pose is the lack of standards for how ballast water must be treated when it is discharged. The Coast Guard has had a very difficult time developing these standards since the underlying law that support their efforts (the National Invasive Species Act) did not contain a research component to support their work. This legislation provides that missing piece.

Finally, the sixth and final part supports our ability to identify invaders once they arrive. Over the past couple of decades, the number of scientists working in systematics and taxonomy, expertise that is fundamental to identifying species, has decreased steadily. In order to address this problem, the legislation sets up a National Science Foundation program to give grants for academic research in systematics and taxonomy with the goal of maintaining U.S. expertise in these disciplines.

Taken together, both my legislation and Mr. GILCREST's represent an important step forward in our efforts to prevent invasive species from ever crossing our borders and combat them once they are here. New invaders are arriving in the United States each day, bringing with them even more burden on taxpayers and the environment. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer to deal with this problem, and so I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

ESTABLISHING AN ANNUAL VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION WEEK

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2003

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support for National Visiting Nurse Association Week. As a nurse

for over thirty years, I am always proud to celebrate what I still consider the best profession in the world.

Today we are here to commend a very special type of nurse, those that specialize in home health care. For more than 100 years, Visiting Nurse Associations (VNAs) have been providing home health care to the communities they serve. Beginning in the late 1800s, VNAs provided critical home-based care for the homebound, the impoverished, the frail elderly and children at-risk.

Over a hundred years later, not-for-profit VNAs continue their unparalleled, selfless tradition of offering quality of life and independence to all Americans through comprehensive home health care. Today, guided by their charitable missions, VNAs care for nearly 10 million people annually.

VNAs provide home health care for patients of all ages—from infants to elderly. They are the educators of disease prevention and health promotion. Physicians are confident when referring to VNAs because of their high level of quality standards and clinical excellence. Patients are extremely satisfied with the care they receive from VNAs as shown by a 99 percent customer satisfaction rating.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to show their support for Visiting Nurse Associations everywhere by voting for this wonderful resolution.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS DAY

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Peace Corps Day, and in support of our nation's enduring commitment to progress, opportunity, and expanded development at the grassroots level throughout the developing world.

Since 1961, more than 168,000 Americans—including over 5,000 Minnesotans—responded to our nation's call to serve by becoming Peace Corps Volunteers in 136 countries. Today, more than 7,000 Americans currently serve in the Peace Corps, providing valuable assistance to developing countries, contributing their skills to support programs in education, health, business, agriculture and the environment.

Peace Corps volunteers have improved the lives of communities throughout the world by responding to real global crises such as poverty, hunger and HIV/AIDS. They have strengthened the ties of friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries, and have brought back to the U.S. a deeper understanding of other cultures and nations.

National Peace Corps Day recognizes the work of returned Peace Corps Volunteers as they bring their experiences to work, school, places of worship and recreation, sharing with colleagues, friends, and community members how their volunteer service changed and shaped their lives. Today, across the nation, we honor the spirit of these Volunteers and reaffirm our country's commitment to helping people help themselves throughout the world.

In this spirit, and in honor of National Peace Corps Day, I have introduced House Concur-

rent Resolution 61, expressing the need to increase funding for the Peace Corps by \$550 million by 2007. This legislation reflects the President's commitment to double the number of Peace Corps Volunteers over the next four years, and recognizes the unprecedented funding challenges the Peace Corps will face as the President's initiative to expand the program moves forward.

As we gather today to honor the tremendous achievements of our Peace Corps Volunteers from the past, let us not forget the thousands that serve today, including the twenty-four volunteers from my Congressional District in Minnesota serving in such locations as Honduras, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and the Philippines. Now, more than ever, it is clear that the cross-cultural understanding developed through Peace Corps programs is invaluable to our nation.

HOUSING GROUPS OPPOSE ADMINISTRATION SECTION 8 PROPOSAL

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, one of the areas where national policy is weakest is that of affordable housing. The very prosperity of the nineties that so benefited most Americans in fact exacerbated the housing crisis for many, because of the unevenness of the housing market and of that prosperity. Sadly, recent proposals from this administration not only do nothing to alleviate these areas of housing crisis, they would worsen them. One of the areas where the administration's proposals would worsen an already bad situation is that of Section 8 Housing, the main program by which we help people rent housing when they cannot afford decent homes on their own. Not only has the program been insufficiently funded recently, the administration's new budget proposal seeks to make this a block grant, removing any federal protections for those in need, and subjecting them to the already strong pressures that many state budgets face. A coalition of some of the most important groups in the housing field, including many of those business organizations that seek to help us meet the need for affordable housing, recently wrote to Secretary Martinez expressing their strong opposition to this proposal. Their letter lists several reasons why this program would be harmful to our major current effort to help low income people meet their housing needs, and given the expertise and commitment of those who have signed the letter, as well as their reasoning, I ask that it be printed here so that the members may benefit from their very sound judgment.

FEBRUARY 25, 2003.

Hon. MEL MARTINEZ,
Dept. of Housing & Urban Development,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY MARTINEZ: The undersigned groups are writing to express our concern regarding HUD's FY04 Budget proposal to block grant the Housing Choice Voucher program.

The voucher program, created under the Nixon Administration, has become the cornerstone of federal affordable housing policy and has broad support among many constituencies.

In recent years, an increased number of conventional apartment owners have begun participating in the voucher program. While the program is not perfect, professional apartment owners in partnership with the current voucher administrators have made great strides in helping low-income families find quality affordable rental housing—a partnership that helps the community as a whole.

Apartment owners and managers look to uniformity and consistency of program rules and funding levels when deciding to participate as voucher landlords. HUD's proposal creates uncertainty in this regard, the result of which will have a chilling impact upon market participation in the program.

In addition, multifamily property owners often operate in multiple States. If each State creates its own program, it would necessitate the understanding of new rules created by up to 50 different administrators. Further, any shifting of federal funds to state block grants raises serious concerns about future funding availability, begging the question of why States would be interested in HUD's proposal.

A dramatic shift in program rules and administrators will also jeopardize the new homeownership voucher programs launched by local agencies in partnership with the real estate and lending community. This homeownership initiative holds promise for increasing opportunities for low-income families.

Devolution may have a place in any sound federal housing policy, but not in relation to the House Choice Voucher program. We stand ready to work with HUD on alternative approaches to strengthening its tenant-based assistance.

Sincerely,
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing.
Institute for Responsible Housing Preservation.

Institute of Real Estate Management.
National Apartment Association.
National Association of Realtors.
National Leased Housing Association.
National Multi House Council.

UNITING IN THE FIGHT TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on the 5th Annual National Lobby Day for The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to join my colleagues in speaking out against domestic violence, a brutal crime committed against millions of women. Domestic violence is the single largest cause of injury to women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four, more than muggings, car accidents and rapes combined.

Mr. Speaker, women are losing their right to safety in their homes and in their communities. Women account for an alarming 85 percent of the victims of domestic violence. Each year between two to four million women are battered, and a substantial number of these battered women will die of their injuries.

Devastatingly, because one in three women are likely to be abused by a partner or someone she knows, only half of all female victims report their injuries to the proper authorities. Women remain in grave fear of their lives and do not leave their violent relationships.

Domestic violence is increasing at a disturbing rate. In my home state of Florida,