

House debate of this bill. If you have questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to call me. I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

TOM DAVIS,
Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 2119, legislation to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to convey to the State of North Carolina approximately 4.28 acres of Federal lands administered as part of the Oxford Research Station in Granville, North Carolina.

The bill addresses concerns raised by USDA with the original legislation. In a letter dated March 30, 2004, USDA acknowledged the strong, equitable interest the State of North Carolina has in the research station and stated it will gladly exercise the authority provided to convey the Oxford Research to the State of North Carolina once the legislation is enacted.

According to USDA estimates, the amendment will not significantly affect the Federal budget. In fact, the research station is currently unused and actually costs the USDA's property inventory funding to maintain it.

For all these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for bringing up this legislation today.

The Oxford Research Station was established in 1912 as a crop and forestry research station. The station facilities include computerized curing barns, office facilities, a shop building, several equipment shelters, a tobacco evaluation facility and underground irrigation systems.

For 92 years, the station's marquee programs have been tobacco-related. Accomplishments at the Oxford Tobacco Research Station include fertility investigations concerning tobacco plants' nutrition; development of the first tobacco varieties with resistance to Granville Wilt and black shank disease; the invention of tobacco bulk curing barns; genetic studies to develop new varieties resistance to Granville Wilt and black shank diseases; evaluation of crop breeding lines, curing experiments, computerized monitoring and control of humidity and temperatures; and many others.

As long as a list of accomplishments that the station has accumulated in its 92 years of service to American agriculture, the station now stands unused by USDA, and American taxpayers are still paying for upkeep and maintenance. An unofficial estimate, Mr. Speaker, from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for fiscal

year 2005 is that the station will cost \$227,000 for basic upkeep.

Mr. Speaker, one man's trash is another man's treasure. USDA does not want or need the Oxford Research Station, but the North Carolina Department of Agriculture does. If the facility is conveyed to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, the State will move its entire biological control program to the station. The State intends to use the quarantine facilities to research invasive species without risk of introducing them to the national environment of our State.

Among the species to be studied include the hemlock wooly adelgid, an insect that has been identified in Public Law 108-148, the President's Healthy Forest Initiative, as a forest-damaging insect. The facility will also research control methods of the Sudden Oak Death Fungus.

The people of North Carolina, Mr. Speaker, would be grateful for the passage of this legislation.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the gentleman from North Carolina on bringing forward a fine piece of legislation. I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the ranking member, for his work on this and other bills that we brought before the House tonight. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2119, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to provide for the conveyance of Federal lands, improvements, equipment, and resource materials at the Oxford Research Station in Granville County, North Carolina, to the State of North Carolina."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2119.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for coordinating a discussion of a very important topic as we ask ourselves, "In the arena of health care, are we better off now than we were 4 years ago?"

In order to answer this question, are we better off, I need look no further than the innumerable, and often heart-breaking, letters and calls that I receive from people of Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District every single day.

I get letters from seniors who detail the unbelievable choices they are forced to make, deciding whether to use their limited and fixed incomes for food or prescription drugs.

I get letters from small business owners who are agonizing over the fact that they can no longer afford the costs associated with offering insurance to their employees.

I get letters from countless people who have lost their health care coverage and are wondering where they can turn for the needed care or how they will once again be able to get coverage, given a preexisting condition.

I get letters from young mothers who spend sleepless nights worried that the rising health care premiums are fast becoming unaffordable and they might soon join the ranks of America's 45 million uninsured.

I get letters from parents, frustrated that their children's treatment for a mental illness is not covered by their insurance.

I get letters from parents of children with diabetes who cannot believe that their own government's restrictive stem cell policy is standing in the way of a possible cure.

So when asked, "Are we better off now than we were 4 years ago?" the answer is a resounding no. But if these personal stories are not enough proof for my colleagues, let us look at some recent statistics.

Today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, a record-breaking 45 million Americans do not have health insurance coverage. Millions more are underinsured. This is the highest level of uninsured in our Nation's history, and it grew by 5.2 million people over the past 4 years.

Health care costs have continued to skyrocket during the last 4 years as well. The prices for prescription drugs have seen double-digit increases in the last 4 years.

The average family's share of health insurance premiums has risen by almost \$1,000 in the last 4 years, a shocking 57 percent increase. In fact, just recently, the Kaiser Family Foundation reported that health insurance premiums rose again between 2003 and 2004, the fourth straight year of double-digit increases.

While health care costs have been growing, the percentage of Americans receiving health care coverage through their employers has dropped.

What has been the Republican response to this health care crisis of rising numbers of uninsured and rising costs? Unfortunately, the Republican response has been to put forward the same old proposals as they have in years past: tort reform, association health plans, the health savings accounts, proposals that study after study have shown to be ineffective in holding down health care costs and also ineffective in providing coverage to the uninsured.

Republicans have ignored the pleas of our seniors, calling on us to stop skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs, and have instead created a prescription drug benefit in Medicare that does more to help drug companies than it does to help senior citizens.

The Republicans have failed to stop \$1.1 billion in State child health insurance program funding from being taken from the States, funding that could have been used to provide health insurance to 750,000 children in America.

Given this dismal 4-year track record, it is obvious that we need a new approach to address this health care crisis, one that would truly control costs and expand access.

I join my fellow Democrats in telling America that we are ready to lead in a new direction, one that would make quality health care affordable and available and assure health care security for every American.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I request to address the House for 5 minutes out of turn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

DEMOCRAT NOMINEE FOR PRESIDENT CONTINUES TO DEBATE WITH HIMSELF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, as I contemplate the debate from last week, I realize that again the Democrat nominee for President, Mr. KERRY, continues to debate with himself.

I was very amazed to learn throughout the debate that he was talking about the need for multilateral action, until it came to the one circumstance where we are engaged in multilateral action in which he felt we should go back to bilateral action. Now, that is, of course, in the case of Korea, and we found that the Mainland Chinese have been very, very effective at working with us to back the North Koreans down from the bluster and the rhetoric that they have thrown in front of the world stage for the past couple of years. Amazingly, in that circumstance, Mr. KERRY wants the Chinese to be quiet, and he wants the U.S. to go back to bilateral negotiations with the North Koreans.

What that accomplishes is to give the North Koreans standing which they have not had in the past 2 years under the Bush doctrine. We give a terrorist state, a state that is starving its own people, a state that is incapable of making the changes in the government that are required to bring the nation into this century, and he would give them standing while moving the Mainland Chinese and our other allies off to the side.

He did not explain that, and it was in complete contradiction with every-

thing else he brought up during the debate. So, again, we find that the gentleman from Massachusetts continues to debate himself.

I contemplated also his need for a global test. From my own perspective, when the President says that we will not ask permission to defend America, that is the clarity and plainness that most Americans want, and so this global test for me is fraught with questions. Which test would we apply? Which of our allies? Would it be France? We want France's approval before we go and do some action that would prevent attacks on U.S. citizens here on American soil? Again, I have very deep questions about the gentleman from Massachusetts' plan.

One of the most stunning things that I watched in the debate, Mr. Speaker, was the assumption that Mr. KERRY has to sell, and that is, that the war in Iraq is a mistake. He says, on the one hand, it is a mistake, and on the other hand, he is going to win it. But I will tell my colleagues, if you convince enough people in this country to vote for the gentleman who says it is a mistake, those people have to believe the war is a mistake because much of his campaign is based on that presumption and that willingness to change the course in this country; but if he convinces the Americans that it is a mistake, how then is he going to turn on his heels against the will of the American public who has sided with him and then win the war?

Mr. Speaker, I would say that he has no intention of winning the war, that instead he is going to go to those allies who say that the war is a mistake, whether it be Syria, whether it be France, whether it be Russia, whether it be any of the nations who were involved in the Oil-For-Food scandal that took \$10 billion out of money that should have bought food for hungry Iraqis, and he would go to them and ask them their opinion for this global test that he has suggested.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that within weeks the gentleman from Massachusetts would unilaterally pull out of Iraq, leaving all of our allies in that region in very deep distress.

If the United States pulls out of the Middle East, I think that we stand to lose our friends, the Saudi Arabians; our friends, the Kuwaitis; the Jordanians. I think Pakistan would be at risk. I think Syria would be at risk.

I think that the gentleman from Massachusetts has not clearly contemplated the effects of declaring that this war is a mistake and being willing to ridicule our friends, being willing to ridicule the prime minister from that war-torn region who is putting his neck on the line every single day, and the gentleman from Massachusetts declares him to be a puppet.

We have seen in Pakistan the President, Musharraf, has twice just barely escaped assassination attempts. That region is very unstable, and we have one of the candidates for President of