

to a very valuable tool to encourage conservation on many of these marginal agricultural lands.

In addition, as one of the most isolated land masses in the world, Hawaii has a wealth of unique animal and plant species; regrettably we are also the endangered species capital of the United States. Our 255 listed plant species represent approximately one-fourth of the total number of endangered species in the United States. They also comprise more than one-fifth of the entire Hawaiian flora. An Hawaii's endemic birds make up one-third of the list of endangered bird species. Our unique and beautiful endangered birds would benefit greatly from restoration and protection of native forests using funding from the Farm Bill programs. These programs would also help to control runoff into streams and coral reefs providing habitat for more unique endemic species.

Finally, Hawaii should receive special consideration out of simple fairness. Hawaii, especially my Second district, is a rural agricultural state. Despite this, in part because of the AGI limitation, Hawaii comes in dead last of all the states in terms of federal assistance received as a percentage of agricultural production. In fact, we receive less than 1 cent per dollar of production value compared with 17 cents for North Dakota and an average of 6 cents nationwide.

As a prime example, Hawaii has only ever had 21 acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, which covers some 39.2 million acres nationwide. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was enacted in 1985 and has grown to become the biggest USDA conservation program, costing just under \$2 billion annually in recent years. Under this program, producers bid to retire highly erodible or environmentally sensitive land from production during national signup periods. The Farm Service Agency ranks bids based on their estimated environmental benefits and cost to the government. (I have no doubt that Hawaii would deliver very high environmental benefits, especially when one considers the impact on coral reefs and endangered species.) Successful bidders receive annual rental payments, as well as cost sharing and technical assistance, to install conservation practices. Almost all the enrolled land is retired for 10 years. Enrollment is limited to 25 percent of the crop land in a county.

In July 2004, Hawaii's Governor Lingle submitted the "Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement and Coordinated Conservation Plan." The proposal is currently under review by the Farm Service Agency.

If approved, the plan will restore 30,000 acres of native forest—10,000 acres in riparian buffers along streams and 20,000 acres in large blocks in groundwater recharge and sediment source areas. The plan covers the islands of Maui, Hawaii, Molokai, Lanai, Kauai, and Oahu. The principal goals of the project are to improve water quality in streams, reduce flow of polluted runoff to near shore waters and coral reefs, and restore terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat.

Unfortunately, the proposal has been stalled because of concerns that not enough suitable land will be eligible under AGI limitations.

Hawaii's agriculture has many unique characteristics due to our isolated location, land use patterns dating from the days of the Kingdom of Hawaii, tropical climate, and year-

round growing season. Few USDA programs address our special needs, and we do not benefit from any of the general commodities programs. Hawaii has traditionally received relatively little assistance from the Farm Bill conservation programs, although they seek to address problems that are central to our islands: protecting water quality, preserving endangered species, and controlling invasive pests.

An AGI exemption for Hawaii would remove a barrier that effectively eliminates roughly 80 percent of Hawaii's agricultural land from participation in conservation programs. I ask my colleagues for their support for this exemption to help to protect Hawaii's special environment and vulnerable endangered wildlife both on the land and in our nearshore waters and to provide Hawaii with equal and full access to the great benefits of these programs.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PARISH OF ST. LOUIS THE KING

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker today to honor the parish of St. Louis the King Roman Catholic Church for 50 years of serving the communities of Marquette, Harvey, Lakewood, Hiawatha Shores, Sand River, Beaver Grove, Mangum, West Branch, Skandia, Dukes and Sands. The parish has provided opportunities for thousands of people to seek faith, conduct outreach, and engage in fellowship and worship.

On June 30, 1954, Most Reverend Thomas L. Noa D.D. announced the formation of the new parish, St. Louis the King. That day, Rev. David Harris was appointed Administrator. Less than a month later on July 18th Father Harris said his first mass in Chocoley Township Hall beginning one of many "firsts" to take place for the young congregation.

That first year, St. Louis the King would rejoice in their first baptism of Eileen Marie Williams, daughter of Albert Williams and Frances Casimir; mourn their first death of Larry Wayne Lajeunesse, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Lajeunesse; witness their first marriage of Leonard Lemieux, son of Wilfred Lemieux and Lorette Gauthier, and Marion Tounsignant, daughter of Alfred and Lucelle Santamore; and celebrate their first Holy Communion of thirteen boys and seven girls.

After a year of memorable firsts, the parish would also celebrate the ground breaking for the new church on July 20th, 1955 on land obtained from Fred Greenleaf, a member of the parish. While the congregation patiently waited for the completion of the new church, St. Louis the King would continue to evolve confirming their first class of fourteen boys, twelve girls and nine adults by Bishop Thomas Noa on November 5th, 1956.

The fruits of their labor and reward of their patience was realized on December 25th, 1959 when members of St. Louis the King heard their first mass in the new church. Solemn High Mass of the Nativity was delivered with a sermon given by Rev. Mr. Allen Mayotte of the parish. He would be ordained six months later becoming the first parish son ordained to the priesthood from the St. Louis the King Parish.

Many improvements have been made to the church through the years, but the most important development has been the learning experience parish members have gained from the past 50 years of growing together. As people who started as individuals and families bound together by their faith, they have now created a larger body of Christ united in their Catholic faith. Mr. Speaker, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the St. Louis the King Roman Catholic Church on their first 50 years as a parish and in wishing them success in the future as they continue to grow, love, and live their faith.

THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the significance of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Next week will mark the fortieth anniversary of the passage of that historic act of Congress and there will be commemorations and remembrances of this anniversary throughout the nation, including a march in Atlanta being led by our colleague, the Honorable John Lewis—a civil rights legacy in his own right. While August 6th will signify prominent strides that this country has made in terms of equal rights, the 40th anniversary of the Act's passage will also highlight considerable room for improvement and work to truly guarantee that right to vote to all Americans.

The Act is a reminder of the oppression suffered by the Black community between Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement that Blacks could be utterly denied the most basic constitutional right to vote without any recourse to assert and obtain that from any of the branches of the United States government, including the Judiciary. The right to vote is fundamental to political empowerment under our Constitution and democratic form of government. Its denial effectively deprived citizenship to African-Americans in the Jim Crow era.

Despite the promises of the Fifteenth Amendment, most Black Americans were routinely denied the right to cast ballots in federal and state elections, particularly in the South. This denial was a function of both the state government and of local individuals determined to maintain their hold on political power in this country. It was another element of the fear and torture that existed throughout this country to intimidate and discourage Blacks from pursuing their most basic rights in this country.

Individuals were denied the opportunity through official and unofficial channels to cast their ballots. Literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and gerrymandering were but a few of the mechanisms used by the state to prevent Black Americans from voting and electing leaders to represent their interests while lynchings, threats and intimidations, and Ku Klux Klan marches asserted the will of bigots to oppose the equal treatment of all Americans.

Faced with these startling realizations and a mobilized Black community, President Lyndon Johnson advocated for the Voting Rights Act

of 1965. Despite the perceived political disadvantages for himself and his party, Johnson's efforts were important to securing the rights of Black Americans throughout the country. His efforts opened the doors of electoral influence and power for Black Americans in this country.

Thanks to the efforts of the Voting Rights Act, poll taxes that charged certain Americans for their right to vote were eliminated. Literacy tests which were selectively applied to Blacks were banned. Individuals who stood in polling sites intimidating minorities from voting were committing federal crimes. Federal agents were deployed to protect and guarantee the rights of these Americans to vote.

Today, we can enjoy the fact that African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, and other minorities are guaranteed the right to vote in every state and federal election, that the legislative bodies of this country are more representative of the diversity of the nation than of the rich and powerful, and that the power of the people to elect their leaders is guaranteed in both the 15th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, the right to vote—the most important obligation of our citizens—is not universal to our citizens. There remain a number of barriers to full voting rights of this country and this Congress should look into addressing those challenges when we renew the Voting Rights Act next year. Some of these barriers are intentional; others less so. Regardless, the right to vote should be undeniable to a democracy's citizens. It should be undeniable to the citizens of the United States.

As we approach the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, an ever-increasing number of Americans are being permanently denied their right to vote in federal elections for their past criminal behavior. Based on Justice Department figures from 2000, an estimated 1.6 million ex-offenders in 14 states are denied the right to vote after paying their debt to society. These ex-offenders are continually denied their right to cast votes for these past actions. We should allow these individuals who have fulfilled their sentences to vote in federal elections.

Purging of voting records, targeting and intimidation in minority voting sites, the absence of reliable voting machines, circulation of false and misleading information, and long lines in polling sites have all been recent examples of the challenges to creating a fair and justice electoral system. There is clearly more work that needs to be done and I look forward to working with my colleagues in securing legislation that will tackle this challenge.

For today, we can look back on the hopes and promises of a more open society and see the fruits of our labor: A citizenry that participates at all levels, a Congress that reflects and represents the country's diversity, and a country that is opening doors and opportunities for the voices of all Americans. Tomorrow, we should take up the challenges of opening this society even more to the inclusion of all our citizens.

A TRIBUTE TO ST. RITA OF CASCIA HIGH SCHOOL HONORING OF ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a fine educational institution in my district, St. Rita of Cascia High School, as the community, families and friends of the high school gather to celebrate its 100th Anniversary.

Founded in 1905 by the Very Reverend James F. Green, O.S.A. on the south side of Chicago, St. Rita's High School was founded in the spirit of St. Augustine and of the Catholic Tradition. The mission of this institution was to form the whole student—spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially—to excel beyond the classroom and in their life experiences.

With the rapid growth of its student body population, St. Rita's quickly became recognized as one of Chicago's outstanding secondary schools. St. Rita's commitment to providing a well-rounded education, based on ancient knowledge which still holds true today, has created an environment in which the students experience fulfillment and exemplify the qualities of truth, honesty, integrity, moderation, responsibility, self-discipline, self-worth and a desire to serve society.

It is my honor to recognize the community of St. Rita of Cascia High School for its many achievements both academic and athletic, and for fostering the growth of those individuals who will help create change and promote progress in today's society.

CONGRATULATING THE LAKE HOPATCONG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, today to honor the Lake Hopatcong Historical Society, in my Congressional District. The Historical Society is celebrating fifty years of protecting documents and artifacts for the community and promoting education and historic preservation.

The actual creation of the Lake Hopatcong Historical Society occurred on August 10, 1955, at the Langdon Arms Restaurant with eight people in attendance. From the beginning, the members' goal was to establish a museum for the lake.

From the original eight individuals who attended the first meeting in 1955, the society grew to 150 members by the time the museum opened in 1965. In the early 1960s the State of New Jersey moved forward with plans for a new administration building at Hopatcong State Park. The park was on land which was previously owned by the Morris Canal and Banking Company. When the canal was abandoned in the 1920s, the 98 acres around the Lake Hopatcong dam were set aside as a state park.

Today, with nearly 800 members, the organization continues to follow its mission "to col-

lect, house, and preserve artifacts and documents relating to the civil, political, social and general history of Lake Hopatcong and to encourage the education and dissemination of information about Lake Hopatcong's history."

Mr. Speaker, I urge you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Lake Hopatcong Historical Society, its trustees and all of its outstanding members and volunteers, upon celebrating its 50th Anniversary.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a crucial and long-overdue measure to address directly what is far and away the most serious threat to my Hawaii's unique and treasured environment: The escalating introduction and establishment of invasive species.

Non-endemic species have done great damage to Hawaii's exposed and non-resistant plants and animals for a long time now. But the sheer rate at which it is now accelerating presents a true crisis, threatening now to completely overwhelm and permanently preclude our ability to provide any modicum of protection, and demanding that we go in a whole different direction of affirmative prevention.

Hawaii is the most remote populated land mass on our planet. Our islands' native species thus evolved in isolation, which led to the generation of species entirely unique to particular islands and found nowhere else in the world. In fact, such species are still being discovered in Hawaii. For example, the current issue of the journal Science reports on a unique web-spinning caterpillar recently discovered in Hawaii that stalks and eats snails.

But more than 5,000 species of non-native plants and animals have become established in the Hawaiian islands in the past 200 years, a rate of successful colonization of a new species every 18 days. This is in astonishing contrast to the estimated rate of introduction to Hawaii through natural evolution of one species every 25,000 to 50,000 years.

Not all of these new species become pests, but too many do and the consequences are devastating given Hawaii's globally unique and fragile natural environment. As a result, non-native invasive species and diseases represent the single greatest threat to Hawaii's endangered species and the health and viability of our natural systems. Because of the islands' geographic isolation, many species do not have natural predators, and so defense mechanisms like thorns, odors, or toxins have disappeared through the process of evolution. If an aggressive non-native species becomes established in Hawaii, it can easily overwhelm native species and be very difficult to eradicate because of our hospitable climate and lack of natural competitors.

Thus, Hawaii is most regrettably the undisputed endangered species capital of the United States, if not the world. Our 255 listed plant species represent approximately one-fourth of the total number of endangered species in the United States. They also comprise