

As Members of Congress, we have a significant opportunity to respond to the economic and political challenges facing the nations of the Caribbean, by encouraging educational exchange programs, promoting trade and supporting legislation that provides funding to address the HIV/AIDS situation in the region.

The issues I outlined today provide the foundation for a rich dialogue between the U.S. and the Caribbean Heads of State. I encourage my colleagues in Congress to play a significant role in fostering a mutually beneficial relationship with our friends of the Caribbean Community by supporting and participating in the CARICOM events that will be taking place on the Hill from June 19 through June 21.

CARIBBEAN AIMS TO CASH IN ON FACE TIME
WITH BUSH

(GEORGETOWN)

On Jun. 20, Caribbean leaders will sit down with George W. Bush for the first full summit meeting with a U.S. President in a decade, and from all indications, they have a plethora of issues to put on the table, chief among them trade and disaster preparedness.

Since Democratic President Bill Clinton flew to the eastern Caribbean island of Barbados for a day in May 1997, the two sides have not met for any length of time at the Heads of Government or state level, though they have formalized annual and sometimes twice yearly meetings with secretaries of state and other high-level officials.

Analysts say the June summit comes at a time of serious anxieties for the 15-nation Caribbean Community (CARICOM), 10 of which form a free trade bloc that has functioned smoothly over the years save for the odd row over some members' protectionist policies. High-ranking CARICOM officials like Assistant Secretary-General Colin Granderson and others agree that the region would be remiss if leaders do not jump at the chance of reinforcing their geopolitical importance to the United States, being right in its backyard.

For one thing, the Ronald Reagan era Caribbean Basin Initiative and its offshoot, the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, governing trade with the U.S., are now subject to annual unanimous approvals by each member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a development Governments say makes them feel very insecure. Washington has also expressed its discomfort with the fact that it has to ask every single country to say yes to renewing the preferential trade deal, which expires in two years.

Caribbean leaders and foreign ministers argue that trade worth an annual average of eight billion dollars is operating at the whims of WTO members and should have some formal, more structured cover.

They are considering asking Washington to negotiate and sign a U.S.-Caribbean free trade agreement, since it has become clear that efforts to forge a hemispheric umbrella agreement have collapsed under the weight of objections from regional Latin American powerhouses like Brazil and Venezuela, among others.

The region's Central American neighbors have already negotiated their own deal with the U.S., but a definitive position on the Caribbean may well emerge in the days leading up to the summit.

IN RECOGNITION OF JUDGE SEAN
C. GALLAGHER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Honorable Sean C. Gallagher as the 2007 recipient of the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Alumni of the Year Award, and to celebrate his efforts to make a safer and more just Northeast Ohio.

For over 25 years, Judge Gallagher has served the people of Northeast Ohio with dedication and distinction. Whether a juvenile probation officer, a prosecuting attorney, a court bailiff, a municipal court judge, or an Ohio Court of Appeals judge, he has always had the concerns and the safety of the community at hand. He has also dedicated his time to numerous boards and associations to ensure that the legal profession maintains its integrity and continues to produce thoughtful and dedicated young attorneys.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Judge Sean C. Gallagher as the 2007 Alumni Award recipient. May Cleveland continue to benefit from his leadership and vision.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S
100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, it is my honor today to submit into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the history of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church in Springfield, Massachusetts, as it celebrates its centennial anniversary.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church is the focal point of the Italian-American community in Springfield. I would like to take time today to acknowledge this important anniversary and to extend to the communicants of the Mount Carmel Church my best wishes for a strong and prosperous future.

THE CENTENNIAL 1907-2007 HISTORY OF OUR
LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH

In the late 1800s, the Italian community in greater Springfield, Mass., held religious services in the basement chapel of St. Michael Cathedral. A separate church in the South End, where most of the immigrants had settled, was an increasing need. Bishop Thomas Beaven placed this hope in the hands of the Stigmatine Congregation of Verona, Italy. Frs. Anthony Dalla Porta, first pastor, and Alfred Ballestrazzi came to the United States in May 1906. In 1907, a new Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church was named. The building, seating 500 worshippers, cost \$35,000. It opened on December 24, 1911. Nearly 1,000 families were members of the infant parish. In 1919, five religious sisters, Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy, arrived from Savona, Italy. They opened a day nursery, sewing classes, and children's catechism instruction. The church building was expanded in 1932.

Stigmatine Fathers William Ludessi, Erminio Lona, Charles Zanotti, Peter

Toretta, Paul Zanini, Camillo Santini, Carmen Russo, Richard Scioli, and currently Robert White, have served as pastors.

Mt. Carmel Church survived the Great Depression, the flood waters of 1936, and the hurricane of 1938. Church societies' fund-raising liquidated all debt by 1946. An elementary school, staffed by the sisters, opened in 1948. In 1959, a second major renovation of the church took place. The parish entered its Diamond years with hope and pride in the future.

Weekly St. Anthony devotion remains steadfast. In 1991, the new position of Pastoral Minister, open to a qualified non-ordained person, was filled by Sister of St. Joseph Elizabeth Matuszek. The quality of education, which the Daughters of Mercy established, has kept the school open as one of five Catholic schools left in Springfield. Its first lay principal was Mrs. Claire Cote, who in 2002, achieved the maximum ten-year accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and opened a Preschool, an after-school program, and a computer laboratory. Mrs. Carol Raffaele succeeded Mrs. Cote in 2003, completing its interim evaluation for accreditation. The computer lab went state-of-the-art wireless. Library cataloging was computerized, and offices were connected to the Internet. The school developed a web page, www.mountcarmelschool.org. OLMC graduates consistently score in the top percentile in standardized tests. They thrive in high school, college, and beyond.

In Religious Education for our public school students, 26 CCD volunteers have been awarded the diocesan St. Pius X Medal, every year since the inception of this honor. Intergenerational Religious Education began with this Centennial Year Generations of Faith. Families with children, and adult households, came together for religious formation sessions.

Lay ministry has expanded far beyond our worthy list of certified lectors, special ministers of the Eucharist, choir, and ushers. Women and girls have joined men and boys as altar servers. Qualified laity help prepare candidates for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, and Marriage.

Members continue fundraising efforts in this age of rapidly escalating expenses. Bingo was a lucrative source of funds from 1967 to 1997. The October Taste of Italy became a new social focus and important fundraiser, first held in 1992. "Bring your best Italian foods to serve at least 100" was the request. Participants respond to the zealous leadership of Chairperson Rosemarie Costa. Hundreds come to affirm and enjoy the culinary achievements of dozens of Italian cooks.

Clerical tasks have become computerized. Clubs and Societies remain a consistent base of spiritual, social, and economic vitality. The Women's Guild is an important body of support for the parish. The Ministry of Caring of St. Vincent DePaul extends the Works of Mercy to and beyond our parish parameters. The Men's Retreat League continues its annual weekend at Holy Family Retreat Center in E. Hartford, CT. The parish Knights of Columbus are St. Gaspar Bertoni Council 5037. The Holy Name Society hosted the last of its coffee hours in 1999. Youth Ministry proudly donated a \$700 replacement tree to the church, and sent a contingent to the Catholic Youth Conference in St. Louis in 1996. They donated half their treasury to the Centennial Renovation Fund.

For the 90th anniversary in 1997, a \$300,000 capital campaign restored the slate roof and stained glass and alabaster windows. New entrance doors were installed.

Centennial plans began in 2002, for spiritual renewal, communications, and a \$1.6

million capital campaign for physical renovations. Peter Zorzi of Studio One Architects, of our South End parish neighborhood, said, "I can't count how many Sundays I sat at 8:30 Mass imaging what I would do to restore this church!" With well-established competence and experience, Studio One brought us an enduring enthusiasm and a church of renewed beauty. Our gratitude for their services is beyond measure.

We installed the Verdin Singing Tower Carillon from nearby St. Joseph Church which closed. Its seasonal hymns resound throughout the South End three times daily. All pews were removed for restoration and resizing. Artists Salvatore Degli Atti and Salvatore Rossi of Italy achieved the acclaimed renovations. From St. Polycarp Church in Somerville, which closed, we purchased marble altars and other appointments. Architects redesigned the sanctuary space, completing handicap accessibility.

Fifty travelers journeyed to Italy in honor of the Centennial. The Communications Committee reached out to our most senior members, inviting those 80 years of age and older to submit memories and photos for the Anniversary Book. 101 responded.

A Mass of Thanksgiving for the Centennial was celebrated in the renewed church on June 10, 2007. Principal Celebrant and Homilist was Most Reverend Timothy A. McDonnell, Bishop of Springfield. A dinner for 700 followed at the Castle of Knights in Chicopee.

Since the 1907 South End origin of the parish, Interstate highway configuration has dispersed members to many surrounding cities and towns. Blessed with their heritage of Catholic faith, a festive Italo-American spirit, and strong and extended family, Mt. Carmel parishioners remain a vibrant and proud witness to their heritage and faith in Springfield's South End.

2007 FARM BILL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, the 2007 farm bill is one of the most important pieces of legislation this House will consider this year. From such varied topics as rural development to nutrition to conservation to energy to research to disaster assistance, the farm bill will impact all of these issues and many, many more. In my district, Missouri's sixth, we have a lot of farmers diversified in different row crops and livestock. Many of my fellow farmers in Northwest Missouri are soybean producers, so it is with this in mind that I would like to draw this distinguished body's attention to a letter I have recently received from the United Soybean Board, an organization responsible for administering the soybean research and promotion programs of the soybean checkoff program. We've heard a lot about checkoff programs over the years, and I hope my colleagues will find the following correspondence useful as we move forward with the 2007 farm bill.

MAY 24, 2007.

Hon. SAM GRAVES,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE GRAVES: Thank you for your letter of May 10, 2007, regarding the soybean research and promotion efforts of the soybean checkoff program. I very much welcome the opportunity now and in the fu-

ture to provide you, other members of Congress, and the soybean farmers of Missouri's Sixth District and in other parts of our country, information about our soybean checkoff.

As you know, at the urging of the nation's soybean farmers, Congress created the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act in 1990. Since that time, the United Soybean Board (USB), of which I serve as Chairman, and 29 Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs), have invested soybean checkoff funds to provide profit opportunities for all U.S. soybean farmers.

Keeping in mind your suggestion for brevity, I am pleased to provide answers to the specific questions you posed in your letter about the accomplishments of the soybean checkoff:

1. Recently, biodiesel seems to receive a lot of news coverage. What role, if any, has the checkoff, national or state, played in the development or marketing of this product and what is the relationship of USB to the National Biodiesel Board?

Simply put, America's soybean farmers, through our soybean checkoff, established the biodiesel industry in the United States. The Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council (MSMC), a Qualified State Soybean Board (QSSB), funded the first significant biodiesel research back in 1990. The USB, MSMC and other QSSBs helped establish the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) in 1992. The soybean checkoff continues to fund most of the NBB-coordinated research and promotion that has made biodiesel one of the fastest-growing renewable fuels in the United States. According to NBB, biodiesel production in the U.S. has increased from an estimated 500,000 gallons in 1999 to 225 million gallons in 2006. Our biannual soybean farmer attitudes survey showed only 23 percent of all soybean farmers used biodiesel in 2002. Our latest survey shows more than 50 percent of all U.S. soybean farmers now use biodiesel in their operations.

2. I know that export markets for American agricultural products are very important to our nation's trade balance. How involved have USB or the QSSBs been, if at all, in developing these markets?

Since Congress established the national soybean checkoff program in 1990, U.S. soybean exports have doubled. U.S. Department of Agriculture figures show we exported 557 million bushels of U.S. soybeans in 1990. Last year, we exported a record 1.1 billion bushels of U.S. soybeans.

The growth of U.S. soy exports to China serves as an example of the kind of export development work accomplished by the soybean checkoff. State soybean checkoff programs funded the early reverse marketing activities in China to change the country from an exporter into an importer of soy. Shortly after Congress created the national soybean checkoff, USB also contributed to those efforts, such as providing technical information and support to China's poultry, livestock and aquaculture industries on how to use soy as a valuable protein source in animal feed. In 1995, these efforts, funded with soybean checkoff dollars and market development funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, helped turn China from being a soy competitor into a U.S. soy customer. China is now the biggest export customer of U.S. soy.

Most recently, working with soybean checkoff farmer-leaders and staff, a group of Chinese buyers signed contracts in the United States to purchase 211 million bushels of U.S. soybeans, worth more than \$2 billion. USDA projects when the marketing year ends later this year, China will buy over 400 million bushels of U.S. soy. In addition to building markets for U.S. soy in China, the soybean checkoff funds U.S. soy market de-

velopment efforts in 80 countries around the world.

3. As a nation, we are becoming increasingly health conscious, and I know that soy is regarded as having positive health benefits. What has the checkoff program done to help document these health benefits if at all? In addition, we are all aware of the issue of trans fats in the foods we eat. Is this an issue for soybeans and if so, what has been done to address it?

The soybean checkoff has been instrumental in funding the necessary research to document the health benefits of soy. Early on, state and national soybean checkoff organizations funded the scientific research that helped lead to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's health claim in 1998 linking the benefits of soy to reducing the risk of heart disease. Also, USB's Soy Health Research Program has invested about \$500,000 to assist scientists in submitting soy-related research grant applications, which has helped secure more than \$12 million in research funds from the National Institutes of Health. This 24-1 return on soy research investments seeks to document how soy's role in a healthy diet can reduce the risk of such diseases as breast cancer, prostate cancer and osteoporosis.

Second, in the late 1990s, USB identified trans fat as an issue that could have a major impact on the future utilization of soybean oil. The checkoff established an initiative to determine food industry trends and needs, which eventually led to the creation of QUALISOY in 2004. This collaborative U.S. soybean industry-wide effort helped accelerate the development of new soybean varieties with oil that requires little or no hydrogenation and, therefore, is free of trans fats and ultimately lower in saturated fats. This year, U.S. soybean farmers are expected to plant up to 1.75 million acres of these new varieties, which also provide additional profit opportunities to U.S. soybean farmers.

4. We are also aware of the threat of Asian Soybean Rust to the American soybean farmer. I am pleased that USDA so quickly responded with specific programs to counter this threat. How, if at all, were checkoff funds used to assist this effort? How else, if at all, have either state or national checkoff funds been used to benefit soybean production, either by increasing yields or dealing with pests?

Similar to our efforts to increase soybean exports, the challenge to minimize the impact of Asian Soybean Rust provides a good example of how checkoff investments made by soybean farmers can be leveraged with federal government dollars to benefit us—and ultimately all consumers—with a safe, abundant supply of soy. Beginning in 2005, the soybean checkoff helped coordinate and fund an early-warning system for soybean rust through a cooperative effort with USDA. The system includes an extensive series of sentinel plots planted to soybeans that receive regular monitoring for rust and other plant pests and diseases. This system keeps us well informed about the spread of rust and helps us scout, monitor and manage our crops to prevent or minimize yield loss from this potentially devastating disease.

More broadly, finding solutions to soybean yield-robbing pests and diseases traditionally has ranked as USB's second largest investment area. For example, in 2001, USB-funded researchers published breakthrough research identifying specific genes in the Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN), the leading cause of soybean yield loss from plant diseases. This helped serve as basis for more durable SCN resistance in soybean varieties. Just last year, researchers funded by the soybean checkoff published genetic markers for two rust-resistant genes. This allows soybean breeders to incorporate these genes into