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Some form of the Economic Development Board has been a part of Sonoma County since the late 1950s. If you wanted assistance from Ben in the early days of his 20-year tenure, your first task would be to find his office, which moved four times in the first 10 years before finding a home on College Avenue in Santa Rosa. His long-time friends particularly recall his small office on Cleveland Avenue piled with filing boxes that a visitor clambered over to reach his desk.

A wall of certificates and plaques now greets visitors to his office, including a Grand Prize for Excellence from the California Association of Economic Development; four Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties; and six Innovation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations.

Madam Speaker, we want to honor Ben Stone today for his 20 years of service to Sonoma County and the Economic Development Board. He has made many friends in the many communities he serves and is always willing to give a boost to new arrivals or make that important contact for someone who needs assistance. As Ben always says to others, we wish him many more "Onward and Upward" years at the Sonoma County Economic Development Board.

INTRODUCTION OF LOWER BRULE AND CROW CREEK TRIBAL COMPENSATION ACT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Tribal Compensation Act. This bill would fully compensate the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota for the lands that they lost in the last century as a result of the federal government's construction of the massive dams on the main stem of the Missouri River.

The 1944 Flood Control Act cost these tribes much in terms of lost land. It also took an enormous toll on the people of both tribes and their economies. It is critically important that we seek to fully reimburse these tribes for the lands they lost.

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe are both constituent bands of the Great Sioux Nation. Both border on the Missouri River in central South Dakota and are connected by the Big Bend Dam.

Congress created a trust fund for the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in 1996, and a separate trust fund for the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in 1997. These trust funds sought to compensate the tribes for the value of their land that is now permanently inundated as a result of the construction of the Big Bend Dam. Unfortunately, the compensation amounts between different but similarly situated tribes varied greatly along the Missouri River. The result was unfair and inadequate compensation trust funds for these tribes. This act is designed to create consistency among the affected tribes and to bring some long-overdue closure to two tribes whose best lands were inundated decades ago.

This legislation already has a history that spans multiple Congresses. An earlier version of this bill was reported by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in the 108th Congress and ultimately passed the Senate. In the 109th Congress it was amended in the Senate after further hearings and then reported. I am hopeful that the House will move quickly in the 110th to Congress to advance this important legislation.

Compensation for these tribes would mean an ability to actively work for the betterment of their communities. It would mean adequate roads and improved community facilities. It would mean better health care and newer schools. It would mean attracting commercial business and improving the local economy. Most importantly, it would mean a real chance for these tribes to provide future generations with the tools that so many of us take for granted.

I would ask all of my distinguished colleagues to support the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Tribal Compensation Act and work with me to enact legislation that would fairly and appropriately compensate members of the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Sioux Tribes. I ask you to do it because of the tremendous positive difference it would make in the lives of those affected—and because it is the right and fair thing to do.

HONORING BEN STONE OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I, along with my colleague Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, rise today to honor Ben Stone, who recently completed 20 years of service as head of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board. Under Ben's quiet but dynamic leadership, the Economic Development Board (EDB) has successfully implemented programs that have more than met the mandate of the County Board of Supervisors to enhance economic development by concentrating on new and innovative programs that enable businesses to remain competitive in a changing economy.

Ben came to Sonoma County from the Seattle area where he had been a county administrator in Port Angeles, Washington, a consultant with Arthur Andersen & Co. and a Special Projects Director with Scafco Corporation. He graduated from Whitman College in Walla Walla and received his Masters of Public Ad-

ministration from the University of Washington in Seattle.

Ben tells the story that, after coming to Sonoma County, he was informed that a decision had been made to close the EDB. However, he commenced creating programs atypical of economic development, which bolstered the local economy, and, 20 years later, the EDB is thriving under his leadership.

With the help of a small staff and interns, Ben has developed a number of award-winning programs in concert with local private and public sectors. Many of these programs have been successfully transitioned to community-based organizations.

Among them are the Sonoma County Tourism Program, which served to increase tourism 31 percent; two technology groups (SofTech, a trade group, and the North Bay Technology Roundtable, a policy group); Youth Business Week; the Business Environmental Alliance; the North Bay World Trade Association; the Small Business Center now operated by Santa Rosa Junior College; a home-based business project; and a business crime prevention program. Ben's office still operates the Sonoma County Film Commission.

Ben also initiated a broad-based strategic planning process resulting in the formation of bachelors and master's degree programs in Engineering Science at Sonoma State University, a new cooperative agricultural marketing program, and an economic research program. An EDB forum, the Business Regulatory Roundtable, involving elected officials, regulatory agencies, and business executives to improve local regulatory processes, resulted in Northern California's first multi-agency Permit Assistance Center.

By creating the Economic Development Board Foundation, the EDB is able to support research projects, bring expert speakers to discuss aspects of the economy at local presentations twice annually, present an annual State of the County program, and recognize local business men and women at the annual Spirit of Sonoma County Awards program.

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INTRODUCING THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Prescription Drug Affordability Act. This legislation ensures that millions of Americans, including seniors, have access to affordable pharmaceutical products. My bill makes pharmaceuticals more affordable to seniors by reducing their taxes. It also removes needless government barriers to importing pharmaceuticals and it protects Internet pharmacies, which are making affordable prescription drugs available to millions of Americans, from being strangled by federal regulation.

The first provision of my legislation provides seniors a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their prescription drug costs. While Congress did add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare in 2003, many seniors still have difficulty affording the prescription drugs they need in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. One reason is because the new program creates a "doughnut hole," where seniors lose coverage once their prescription expenses reach a certain amount and must pay for their prescriptions above a certain amount out of their own pockets until their expenses reach a level where Medicare coverage resumes. This tax credit will help seniors cover the expenses provided by the doughnut hole. This bill will also help seniors obtain prescription medicines that may not be covered by the Medicare prescription drug program.

In addition to making prescription medications more affordable for seniors, my bill lowers the price for prescription medicines by reducing barriers to the importation of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals. Under my bill, anyone wishing to import a drug simply submits an application to the FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S. or is adulterated or misbranded. This process will make safe and affordable imported medicines affordable to millions of Americans. Madam Speaker, letting the free market work is the best means of lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

I need not remind my colleagues that many senior citizens and other Americans impacted by the high costs of prescription medicine have demanded Congress reduce the barriers which prevent American consumers from purchasing imported pharmaceuticals. Congress has responded to these demands by repeatedly passing legislation liberalizing the rules governing the importation of pharmaceuticals. However, implementation of this provision has been blocked by the federal bureaucracy. It is

time Congress stood up for the American consumer and removed all unnecessary regulations on importing pharmaceuticals.

The Prescription Drug Affordability Act also protects consumers' access to affordable medicine by forbidding the Federal Government from regulating any Internet sales of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals by state-licensed pharmacists.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, the Internet makes pharmaceuticals and other products more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. However, the federal government has threatened to destroy this option by imposing unnecessary and unconstitutional regulations on web sites that sell pharmaceuticals. Any federal regulations would inevitably drive up prices of pharmaceuticals, thus depriving many consumers of access to affordable prescription medications.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to make pharmaceuticals more affordable and accessible by lowering taxes on senior citizens, removing barriers to the importation of pharmaceuticals and protecting legitimate Internet pharmacies from needless regulation by cosponsoring the Prescription Drug Affordability Act.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL DESIGNATED AS MAGNET HOSPITAL BY THE AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, December 20, 2006, the University of Kansas Hospital became the first hospital in Kansas to attain the coveted Magnet™ designation. The Department of Nursing began working toward this goal in 2002.

Since the American Nurses Credentialing Center developed the Magnet Recognition Program® in 1990, approximately 225 facilities—less than 3 percent of all hospitals—have attained Magnet designation. To join this exclusive group, both the nursing staff and hospital have demonstrated their ability to meet and exceed more than 150 professional standards of excellence.

Magnet designation recognizes the quality and importance of our nursing department. It also emphasizes the important role our nurses play in the hospital's success. Magnet hospitals exemplify the very best in patient care and outcomes. Just 3.5 percent of health care organizations are Magnet hospitals.

This designation proves the commitment of the University of Kansas Hospital to excellent patient care outcomes. Magnet designation means a hospital outperforms others and is statistically proven to have: higher quality care; better patient outcomes; lower mortality rate; significantly higher levels of patient satisfaction; salaries typically above average; excellent nursing recruitment; higher nursing retention; and greater consumer confidence. Madam Speaker, I am proud to have the opportunity to bring this noteworthy designation to your attention, and to the attention of the House of Representatives as a whole.

PROTECTING IMPACT AID FOR NORTH SUBURBAN SCHOOLS

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to ensure the federal government fulfills an important obligation to the families of servicemen and women in my district. In 1950, President Harry Truman established the Impact Aid program to assist school districts and communities that lose their property tax base because of the presence of the federal government. Without this federal money, the burden would fall to the remaining residents whose property taxes would continue to rise while impacting the quality of education which can be provided. The Impact Aid program helps to alleviate this problem by directly reimbursing public school districts for the loss of traditional revenue sources.

For years Impact Aid was fully funded and offered some of the strongest direct assistance to military families across the nation. Unfortunately, over the last decade we have fallen behind on this commitment, and it is time to reverse this trend.

While I support fully funding the Impact Aid program, I believe the situation in my district warrants special attention. In order to ensure that our students most in need continue to receive necessary resources, I have introduced this bill to help North Chicago to continue to qualify for heavily impacted payments, and Glenview and Highland Park receive fair compensation.

Due to a unique housing situation for the Great Lakes Naval Training Facility, Impact Aid funding should be higher in five of my school districts. This Naval base is located in North Chicago, one of the poorest school districts in my state. However, some service members and their families live in Navy housing obtained when Ft. Sheridan and Naval Air Station Glenview, located in other suburbs, were closed in the 1990's. These former bases are located within the boundaries of other school districts that now must bear the economic cost of educating children from a base, but receive none of the economic benefits a base provides. Thus, it is vitally important that we both ensure North Chicago continues to receive heavily impacted payments for the benefit of students living there, and that the surrounding communities are more fairly compensated for their loss of property taxes.

By passing this bill, the federal government will be fulfilling its responsibility to these communities, and giving our military families the support they deserve.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND RETIREMENT OF CHARLES E. COOKE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of a valued staff member—Charles E. Cooke—who retired this month from the