

I look forward to your response and would be pleased to include it and this letter in the report on H.R. 3006.

Sincerely,

COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, July 27, 2007.

Hon. COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for the opportunity to review the text of H.R. 3006, a bill to improve the use of a grant of a parcel of land to the State of Idaho. As you know, the Committee on Natural Resources was granted an additional referral on this legislation due to provisions therein which fall under the Committee's jurisdiction.

Because of the continued cooperation and consideration that you have afforded me and my staff in developing these provisions, and knowing of your interest in expediting this legislation, I will discharge H.R. 3006 from further consideration by the Committee on Natural Resources. Of course, this waiver is not intended to prejudice any future jurisdictional claims over these provisions or similar language. I also reserve the right to seek to have conferees named from the Committee on Natural Resources on these provisions, and request your support if such a request is made.

Please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 3006 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL, II,
Chairman.

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

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3006.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days with which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just adopted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

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U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' CARE, KATRINA RECOVERY, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT AMENDMENT

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1716) to amend the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007, to strike a requirement relating to forage producers.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 1716

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONTRACT WAIVER.

The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110-28; 121 Stat. 112) is amended by striking section 9012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of S. 1716, legislation that would ensure that U.S. livestock producers will be able to utilize the vital disaster assistance recently approved by this Congress.

The effect of this bill is essentially identical to an amendment last week by my colleague and friend from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) to the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act, which I supported and which was unanimously accepted.

This legislation is critical to deliver on the promise we made to American livestock producers just this past May. After more than a year's effort and despite several veto threats from the President, we were successful in passing much-needed disaster assistance through this Chamber and enacted into law. Then, several months after the bill's passage, the Secretary of Agriculture determined that a certain phrase in the bill effectively denies aid to all livestock producers that didn't participate in the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance program or a crop insurance pilot program for rangeland.

I assure my colleagues that this was not the intention of this Congress and, regardless of the accuracy of USDA's legal interpretation, we need legislative action to fix it. This bill simply strikes the one sentence in the disaster bill that is causing the problem.

I appreciate the leadership of the Agriculture Committee in working with me to find a solution to this problem,

and I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer this legislation. I also shared this problem with the leadership of the Appropriations Committee to ensure that this year's Agriculture appropriations bill contains language to address this as well, and I am pleased to report that it does. That would be unnecessary, however, if we can pass this stand-alone legislation and get it directly to the President. Doing so will solve this problem in time to prevent any delays in delivering much-needed assistance to American producers. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of the bill to amend S. 1716, which previously passed the other body and is now before the House.

In May, Congress passed and the President signed U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007. This law included disaster assistance for crop and livestock producers for losses sustained between January 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007.

Producers were able to receive payments for losses sustained in only one of these years and were required to be in a county that was declared a disaster county in that same calendar year. This law also contained provisions found in section 9012 requiring that forage producers must have participated in a crop insurance pilot program or the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance program during the crop year for which compensation is received.

As a result of section 9012, very few livestock producers are eligible for the disaster relief passed by Congress because crop insurance is more widely used in crop production than in livestock production. The amendment before the House will strike section 9012 to broaden the eligibility requirements to allow more livestock producers that suffered loss to participate than were allowed under the previously passed disaster package. The amendment before the House will not change direct spending because this amendment re-confirms the assumptions made when the Congressional Budget Office scored the original bill.

I believe section 9012 establishes an appropriate incentive for producers to manage their risk using the available tools. However, it is not reasonable to put this policy in place without warning. To tell producers in 2007 that they should have bought crop insurance in 2005 to get assistance for losses incurred in 2005 is not fair. Livestock producers should know, however, that in the future, crop insurance or participation in similar risk-management programs will likely be required to qualify for future disaster assistance.

I commend the gentlewoman from South Dakota and others who have

worked for this legislation. I support the bill to amend S. 1716 and urge its adoption.

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

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished ranking member of the full Committee on Agriculture, Mr. GOODLATTE, for his support of this bill. We have Senate colleagues who we have served with here in this body previously who have already been working hard on this legislation. I am pleased that we have bipartisan agreement on our intention in providing this disaster assistance and certainly acknowledge and agree with the gentleman from Virginia's statements as it relates to future disaster assistance and the importance of further developing the pilot project programs for livestock producers to have adequate coverage for their losses.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1716.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just adopted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

LIBERIA DESIGNATION EXTENSION

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3123) to extend the designation of Liberia under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act so that Liberians can continue to be eligible for temporary protected status under that section.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3123

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DESIGNATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The designation of Liberia under section 244(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)) is extended through September 30, 2008.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (a) shall be applied so as to render eligible for temporary protected status and work authorization, in accordance with subsections (a), (e) and (f) of section 244 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a), an alien who is a national of Liberia (or in the case of an alien having no nationality, is a person who last habitually resided in Libe-

ria) and is otherwise eligible under subsection (c) of such section, if the alien—

(1) was granted such status under the designation of Liberia that is effective until October 1, 2007 (71 Fed. Reg. 55000);

(2) applied for such status under such designation, and such application is still pending; or

(3) is eligible for late initial registration under section 244(c) of such Act and the regulations implementing such section.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall publish in the Federal Register procedures for aliens to register for temporary protected status under the extension made by this Act, and to apply for any applicable work authorization or extension of work authorization. Such registration period shall be not less than 60 days long.

(d) EXTENSION OF CURRENT WORK AUTHORIZATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any work authorization provided under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act pursuant to the designation of Liberia that is effective until October 1, 2007, is extended until not earlier than April 1, 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3123 extends Liberia's current temporary protected status designation, which is due to expire on September 30 of this year, for 1 year.

As many of us know, Liberia was founded by former American slaves with the help of our government. Since 1989, however, the country has been ravaged by two brutal civil wars which have displaced hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed Liberia's economy and infrastructure.

In recognition of these intolerable conditions, the United States for the past 16 years has accorded special protection status to prevent approximately 3,600 Liberians residing in our Nation under temporary protected status from having to be returned to their homeland in the midst of those wars. Recently, the Department of Homeland Security has determined to terminate these temporary protections in light of the fact that Liberia's civil wars have finally ended and in anticipation of the political stability that Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, its newly elected President, will bring.

While there is no question that President Johnson-Sirleaf has put Liberia on the road to recovery, that road will

unfortunately be rather long. Currently, 85 percent of Liberians are unemployed. The country is suffering from severe shortages in electricity and running water. As for medical care, Liberia has only 26, yes, that is only 26, physicians who must serve a population of 3.4 million people.

Recognizing her country's fragile state, President Johnson-Sirleaf has acknowledged that Liberia is unable to accept and absorb the 3,600 Liberian nationals currently residing in the U.S. under TPS. I am sure we all recall President Johnson-Sirleaf's visit and address to this body and our interest in making sure that she succeeds in bringing peace and democracy to her country. Accordingly, we are deeply concerned about the consequences that could result if thousands of Liberians in the United States are forced to return to their homeland before it is ready and able to accept them.

For these reasons, I ask that you join me in supporting H.R. 3123, which simply extends this protection status for 1 year. I should also note that this bipartisan measure is supported by President Johnson-Sirleaf and the Liberian Government.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to Republican Whip ROY BLUNT who, in talking to Democratic Whip JIM CLYBURN last week, agreed that we should proceed in this manner. Mr. BLUNT is a cosponsor of this bipartisan bill, along with the prime sponsors, Representatives KENNEDY and JIM RAMSTAD, Representatives PENCE and TIBERI, myself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. McCOTTER, TIM WALBERG, JOHN CONYERS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, and Representative WYNN. So this is a thoroughly bipartisan bill, and I would urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Congress has granted the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to grant temporary refuge to aliens from particular countries under temporary protected status. If there is an ongoing armed conflict in the country and the return of nationals would pose a serious threat to their security, if there has been a natural disaster in the country resulting in a substantial but temporary disruption of living conditions, or if there exists extraordinary temporary conditions in their country that prevent aliens from returning in safety, the Secretary can grant TPS status to the nationals for as long as 18 months. He can later extend the TPS period for additional periods of as long as 18 months.

Nationals of Liberia have been granted TPS because of civil unrest in Liberia; however, that status expires on October 1 of this year. This legislation would direct the Secretary to extend TPS to nationals of Liberia through September 30, 2008. I support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.