

and enriching the lives of youths. Mr. Reemstma graduated from Sioux Falls College in 1967 and took his first job at Melcher-Dallas. In 1970 he took a science teaching position at O.B. Laing Middle School in Algona, where he remained until his retirement. He actually hated science classes while growing up but began to enjoy science during his senior year high school biology class. During his time as a teacher, he especially enjoyed taking Washington, DC, trips with students. In addition to teaching, Mr. Reemstma is the music director at First Presbyterian Church in Algona and the president of the Water's Edge Nature Center Foundation. In all, Mr. Reemstma has helped shape the lives of thousands of students.

Mr. Reemstma's leadership will be missed, but he leaves a lasting impact on the Algona community and everyone he has been involved with. I consider it an honor to represent Mr. Walter Reemstma in the United States Congress, and I wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE
OF CONNECTING FOSTER YOUTH
TO THE WORKFORCE THROUGH
INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1332, "Recognizing the importance of connecting foster youth to the workforce through internship programs, and encouraging employers to increase employment of former foster youth". First, I would like to thank my distinguished colleague, DENNIS CARDOZA of California, for introducing this important piece of legislation. This resolution will recognize the significance of creating links between foster youth and the workplace through internship opportunities while also urging employers to pursue former foster youth. The creation of internship and employment opportunities for current and former foster youths has the potential to dramatically shape the lives of thousands for the better. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this act.

There are over 500,000 children and youth in foster care. As the youth age out of the system, 50 percent become homeless within the first 18 months of emancipation. Less than half of these youth are employed 2.5–4 years after leaving the system. Only 38 percent remain employed for over a year. Former foster care youth are twice as likely to have children in foster care. This problem is systemic, yet through opportunities and internships we can break this cycle of impoverishment and failure.

This bill is an appeal to our Nation's employers to help us address this issue by providing internships for disadvantaged foster youth, and by providing employment once they "age-out" of the foster care system. Such action will instill knowledge and work-ethic. These experiences will open up a new world of opportunity to a group that was struggling, not due to a lack of inherent qualifications, but rather due to the misfortunes of their upbringing.

This resolution will express the desire of Congress to address the problems of foster care youth, and this resolution will express Congress' widespread support of partnerships and initiatives between businesses and foster care programs, to help better prepare foster care youth for the working world.

This resolution seeks to benefit the over 500,000 foster care children and youth by providing them with the opportunity to further themselves through educational and work experiences. As these experiences accrue, they will present the foster youth with an idea of the opportunities latent within their world, and will hopefully inspire them to move forward in pursuit of job and educational opportunities.

As of 2003 there were 26,133 children in the Texas foster care system. Since then, the number has only risen. For many of these children the future will include stints in jail, poverty, and homelessness, yet strong action on the part of businesses and foster care programs in creating internships and partnerships may save many from this fate, leading them to secure jobs and successful lives. I have often concerned myself with issues regarding the safety and success of our future, our Nation's children. By preventing toxic lead levels in houses, by ensuring the safety of children in schools, and by encouraging businesses to form partnerships with foster care, we take small, but significant, steps toward guaranteeing the well-being of our children and the security our Nation's future. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

EMPLOYEE VERIFICATION
AMENDMENT ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the extension of the e-verify program, which I have supported since it was initially created under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. Since that time we have continued our fight to strengthen our immigration laws.

Unfortunately when we had the debate in 1996 my colleagues did not approve an amendment to make our Social Security card counterfeit-proof. Since that time, I have worked with my colleagues in a bi-partisan way to ensure that we improve our employment verification system and Social Security cards so that neither is susceptible to fraud. To achieve this goal I have introduced H.R. 98, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Social Security Protection Act with my colleague from Texas, the distinguished chair of the House Intelligence Committee and former Border Patrol Agent SILVESTRE REYES. This bill would go a long way to address the employment magnet that draws illegal immigrants to the United States.

It is important to note that the bill before us commissions further studies on the e-verify program. We know from a 2005 GAO study on e-verify that the system is still susceptible to fraud and cannot identify when multiple people are using the same Social Security number. The raids conducted of Swift Meatpacking plants in 2006 showed the ease with which

fraudulent Social Security numbers were used to gain unlawful employment. Swift was an e-verify participant and yet was found to have been employing several hundred illegal immigrants.

While I support this measure to extend the program, I hope very much that we can have a more open debate on the need to prevent fraud in our employment verification system. Only when we address the need to improve the security of the Social Security card and employment verification system will we be able crack down on the employment magnet that draws people to this country illegally.

CONGRATULATING ALBANIA AND
CROATIA ON BEING INVITED TO
BEGIN ACCESSION TALKS WITH
THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY
ORGANIZATION

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as we now consider and certainly will adopt House Resolution 1266, congratulating Albania and Croatia on being invited to begin accession talks with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and expressing support for continuing to enlarge the alliance, I would like to express my support for these countries as they move forward.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I convened a hearing on NATO enlargement in early March, where we examined the respective NATO prospects not only of Albania and Croatia but also of Macedonia, Georgia and Ukraine. While some of these countries must still contend with outstanding issues, whether of their own making or not, I strongly support their NATO aspirations and encourage them to move forward as well.

I am well aware of the many hurdles Albania has faced in recovering from decades of extremely repressive communist rule. Albania has also had to confront an often undeservedly negative image in the rest of Europe. Receiving its invitation at the Bucharest summit in April, therefore, was an amazing achievement of which every Albanian citizen, regardless of their political affiliation, should be proud. It is my hope, however, that the sense of accomplishment will encourage the country's leaders to continue the transition to a state based on democratic norms and the rule of law, especially as Albania prepares for elections next year and continues its investigation of the March tragedy at Gerdec.

Croatia also has had to address many challenges prior to receiving its invitation, although in its case those challenges related to the very violent conflicts associated with Yugoslavia's demise in the 1990s. It was clear that Croatia always had the potential to recover quickly, and it fortunately did just that.

The challenges Albania and Croatia have faced, in my view, will ultimately make them better allies. Their citizens have an appreciation of freedom and a desire for protecting freedom that many living in more established democracies may have lost. And as countries who can recall their dependence on European security structures to help them in their times

of need, they now are committed to becoming contributors to those same European security structures.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4040
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008, and applaud the members of the conference committee for their work in reaching an agreement on this very important legislation.

I also would like to congratulate the coalition of consumer groups for their efforts, including: Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, Kids in Danger, National Research Center for Women & Families, Public Citizen, Union of Concerned Scientists, and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. These groups were instrumental in urging the conference committee to adopt the best provisions from the House and Senate bills.

After 2007 became the "Year of the Recall" due to the numerous recalls of toys and children's products, it was imperative that Congress act to stem the flow of unsafe products into our stores and homes. That is why I introduced legislation that would, among other things, ban lead in children's products, enhance recall and inspection authority of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC, and expedite recall disclosure to the public. This bill was cosponsored by 167 of my colleagues.

I am pleased that some of the important ideas and provisions in this bill were included in the final conference report, including language that would: essentially ban lead in toys and children's products; require CPSC to establish a publicly-accessible database to inform consumers about unsafe products; require third-party testing of certain children's products; and ensure that the CPSC does not preempt State or local laws.

I am especially pleased that that this legislation includes provisions to provide the CPSC with the new authority to cease the distribution of toys that pose an imminent hazard from the outset. This is a provision that I worked on with Congresswoman ESHOO, and I am proud to see it in the conference report.

The conference committee should be commended for insisting that the final conference agreement include a ban on toxic phthalates from children's products. Earlier this year, some of the country's largest toy sellers, including Wal-Mart, Toys-R-Us, and Babies-R-Us notified their suppliers that they would no longer carry products containing phthalates beginning in 2009. It would have been senseless if Congress had allowed for the continued use of phthalates in children's products even though the market already has essentially banned it.

Many of us who support the final conference report would agree that it could have been stronger, but we also agree that it represent a solid first step. We should remain vigilant in

ensuring that our families and children are truly protected from harmful products and be prepared to make further improvements to these laws should additional problems arise in the future.

WATER USE EFFICIENCY AND
CONSERVATION RESEARCH ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3957, a measure aimed at increasing research, development, education, and technology transfer activities related to water use efficiency and conservation technologies at the Environmental Protection Agency.

It is evident that current water use and management practices are draining supplies and it is critical that we obtain knowledge of newer technologies that will increase sustainability. It is our hope that this legislation will promote technologies and approaches that will contribute towards ensuring a healthy and sustainable water supply.

EPA's research, development and dissemination of technologies that promote greater water use will also help to advance water conservation as a national goal.

More importantly, however, it is our hope that it will reduce the threat of a diminishing water supply and prepare us for water shortages that are increasing in frequency.

As the Chairwoman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, I am keenly aware of the need for increased Federal research on new and emerging technologies for water use efficiency and conservation. As noted in testimony before my Subcommittee, the growing water-related challenges facing our nation, including the need to repair and replace much of our antiquated water infrastructure, urban sprawl, and the threat of global warming, requires us to address these challenges in an integrated, comprehensive fashion—including the need to develop the next generation of water-related infrastructure.

I was pleased to work with Chairman GORDON and the sponsor of this legislation, Mr. Matheson, on an amendment to include within the scope of research and development program technologies and processes to enable the collection, storage, treatment and reuse of stormwater, as well as the creation of a publicly-accessible clearing house for information on technologies and processes developed under this program. This amendment was adopted during the Committee on Science and Technology's markup of this legislation.

In an effort to bring this legislation to the floor for consideration as quickly as possible, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure did not seek a referral of the bill. The Transportation Committee did this, however, with the understanding that this decision does not waive, reduce or affect the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I look forward to a continuing dialogue with both the Senate and the Committee on

Science and Technology in Conference as we work to resolve our differences in this important piece of legislation. Working together we will be able to advance sustainable water use and management practices that will contribute to the overall health of our nation.

I also look forward to the next Congress when I hope to work with my colleagues on both the Science and Transportation Committees on improving research of water quality, as well as on improving the nation's monitoring systems for all facets of our precious water resources.

I urge my colleagues to join with me to support this bill, and authorizing the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a research and development program that will promote water use efficiency practices and promote water conservation as a national goal.

COMMODITY MARKETS TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Commodity Markets Transparency and Accountability Act of 2008 (H.R. 6604). I commend Chairman PETERSON for his hard work on this legislation, which will help curtail the rising oil prices through curbing excessive speculation in commodity futures markets.

High gasoline prices are burdening American families every day. The conversation on addressing our energy challenge has focused largely around factors of supply and demand. However, the rise in the price of oil cannot be attributed to any one factor. Burgeoning world oil demand, collusive practices of OPEC nations, the weakening dollar, and possible excessive speculation in the energy futures market are all potential contributors to the problem.

Though we cannot say with certainty whether speculation is driving up the price of oil, Department of Energy officials have observed that the magnitude of price increases is unlikely to result from supply and demand forces alone. They have pointed to excessive speculation as a likely contributor to inflated oil prices. In the face of this possibility, Congress should act now, without disrupting healthy market activity, to close loopholes and prevent excessive speculation from driving up prices and increasing hardship for American families.

The Commodity Markets Transparency and Accountability Act enhances the regulatory capacity of the Commodity Futures Trade Commission (CFTC). Through increased staffing, closing corporate loopholes, and setting position limits for individuals, CFTC will be better equipped to address the problem of high energy prices that are burdening American families. The Commodity Markets Transparency and Accountability Act also directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a detailed study of speculators' effects on agriculture and energy futures markets and prices. Along with acting proactively to prevent potential excessive speculation today, this bill will allow for a better understanding of what the effects of speculation have actually been.