

embodies the Unico motto, "Service Above Self."

RECOGNIZING COOPER BARNES, TUCKER BARNES, CONNOR MAGID, AND STEVEN PARKER OF VENETA, OREGON

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Cooper Barnes, Tucker Barnes, Connor Magid, and Steven Parker of Veneta, Oregon. These Veneta Elementary School students are 2008 National ExploraVision winners. The team earned first place in the grade 4–6 division for designing an underwater energy generator to harness the power of ocean waves.

The team accepted the challenge of this extracurricular activity with enthusiasm, determined to create a technology for clean energy generation that was simple and cost-effective. They were supported and encouraged by their teacher and project coach, Michelle Beller, and Mentor Scottie Barnes. Their working prototype, the Wavemaster, successfully fused science, technology, and imagination, and it worked!

ExploraVision, now in its sixteenth year, is sponsored by the National Science Teachers Association and Toshiba. The competition highlights the natural curiosity and creativity of kids. The student projects showcase their innate desire to explore, experiment, invent, and ask really good questions.

Congratulations to Steven, Connor, Tucker, and Cooper for their outstanding achievement. I am proud to represent these young Oregon scientists and excited about the potential of the Wavemaster.

HONORING THE WORK OF WELCOME HOME TROOPS

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of the efforts of the Welcome Home Troops, a Southern California based organization dedicated to "Returning the Hearts of Our Soldiers to our Homeland."

Welcome Home Troops is a non-profit organization based in Lake Elsinore, California. Its efforts extend beyond California to Texas, Kentucky, and future expansion to additional states. Dedicated to the reintegration of The Global War on Terrorism veterans back into the community, Welcome Home Troops provides support services to help servicemembers transition comfortably from combat to home, restore personal relationships, and encourage a productive and positive life after military service.

Welcome Troops sponsors job fairs, college fairs, financial aid counseling, relationship counseling, drug abuse counseling, Vets to Vets mentoring, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling. According to the National Center for PTSD, at least 18% of

those serving in Iraq and at least 11% of those serving in Afghanistan will suffer from PTSD. Welcome Home Troops aspires to provide services that will lessen the effects of war time stresses.

In honor of Memorial Day, Welcome Home Troops will involve the community with a Military Appreciation night in Lake Elsinore, California on May 24, 2008. This full afternoon and evening will be filled with assistance outreach opportunities and family fun activities to be capped with an evening game of baseball.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to please join me in congratulating Welcome Home Troops for their dedication this Memorial Day and beyond to our returning servicemembers and their families.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF CEDAR HILL CITY SECRETARY FRANKIE LEE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Frankie Lee on the occasion of her retirement as City Secretary for the City of Cedar Hill.

Frankie Lee began her service to the City of Cedar Hill on September 20, 1977, when she joined the City as the Purchasing Agent/Secretary. She is currently the longest serving employee of the City of Cedar Hill, holding a 30 Year Service Certificate.

Frankie was Appointed City Secretary on April 1, 1984, upon the retirement of then-City Secretary Marie Vincent.

During her tenure with the City of Cedar Hill, Frankie has been associated with seven Mayors, four City Managers and numerous Council Members. She has been a first-hand witness to the growth and progressiveness of Cedar Hill, growing from a population of approximately 6,800 in 1980 to 46,000 in 2008.

In her early years as City Secretary, Frankie was in charge of Human Resources, insurance, payroll and zoning. Her current role as City Secretary includes Official Meeting Notices, Minutes, City Public Information Coordinator, Records Management Officer and numerous other duties. For several years she was one of Cedar Hill's Alternate Members of the North Central Texas Housing Finance Corporation.

She has also been responsible for the City's general and special elections and has worked closely with the Dallas County Elections Department to insure the proper management of ballots, early voting, Election Day Voting, and results. It is estimated that in her over 24 years as City Secretary, Frankie has overseen approximately 50 elections.

Frankie has been an active Member of the Texas Municipal Clerks Association, North Texas Municipal Clerks Association, and International Institute of Municipal Clerks. Through the years she has attended many Training and Certification Courses and Professional Seminars presented by these organizations, as well as the Texas Attorney General and Secretary of State.

In 2005, she was a Texas Municipal Clerks' Honor Roll "Honoree".

Frankie attended the University of Texas at Arlington and is a Graduate of the Leadership Southwest Class of 1996–97.

She is an active Member of the Cedar Hill Lions Club, serving on the Board of Directors, and has Chaired the Annual Pancake Breakfast for the past three years. Lion Tamer-Elect for 2008–09, she was recently Honored at the Lions District Convention as the Cedar Hill Lions Club "Grass Roots Lion" for 2007–08.

A Member of First United Methodist Church of Cedar Hill, Frankie has two grown daughters and one grandson.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to commend and congratulate Frankie Lee on all of her accomplishments. Her numerous years of service and dedication to the City of Cedar Hill is worthy of recognition. It is an honor to represent Frankie Lee in the 24th District of Texas and I wish her continued success in the years to come.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419, FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND ENERGY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act. It has been a long road to this point, and while I must say that I am not entirely pleased with the final bill, I do believe that it makes important steps forward to reforming the priorities of our farm policy.

Michigan has had a tough go of things lately—and farming is no exception. Just last spring and summer Michigan experienced severe weather and droughts that caused enormous damage to local farms, leading the USDA to designate 83 Michigan counties as disaster areas. I have long said that farming is an inherently risky enterprise and with the recent downturn in the economy and fickle Michigan weather, it is clear to see why.

I will be frank and say that this bill is far from perfect. Personally, I would have liked to see greater reforms in the areas of conservation and fruit and vegetable programs, however, I do think Michigan will benefit from the bill. Like the farm bill the House passed last summer, I am pleased to note that most of our farmers in the 15th District of Michigan will not see any significant negative changes if the farm bill is enacted. All of the safety net programs from the 2002 farm bill are maintained with minor changes—including direct payments and the counter cyclical and the marketing loan programs.

However, the conference report does take measures to curb wasteful spending and distribute our resources to those in need. This bill places a cap on payments to those with an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$500,000 or more, and puts in place the first-ever cap for farm income at \$750,000 for fixed direct payments. In addition, the bill would eliminate the "3-entity" rule that allows producers to collect payments for multiple ownership interests.

As a diverse agricultural state, Michigan has the second-widest variety of farm products after California, this legislation will provide great support for specialty crops. In 2006 Michigan produced 825,470 tons of fresh market and processing vegetables and the state

ranks 5th in exports of fruits and 8th in exports of vegetables nationally. This bill creates a brand new section dedicated to fruit and vegetable producers and allocates a total of \$1.3 billion for new specialty crop programs including \$466 million over ten years for the specialty crop block grant program, which provides grants to states to support projects in research, marketing, education, pest and disease management, production and food safety.

The conference agreement will also create a pilot Farm Flex project that will allow farmers to switch base acres to specified fruits or vegetables for processing for 2009 through 2012 crop years. This pilot project is limited to seven Midwestern States, including Michigan which is allocated 9,000 acres. This planting flexibility pilot program provides an important opportunity for specialty crop producers and I am pleased Michigan is included. More importantly, this will help the 1.26 million Michiganders that are currently using food stamps.

Given Michigan's economic situation, I have advocated that a second economic stimulus package include an increase in food stamp benefits, and I am pleased that the Farm Bill has increased funding commitments for the Food Stamp Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The conference agreement includes \$7.8 billion for the Food Stamp program and would raise and index inflation for the program's standard deduction and minimum benefit. This is the first time since the program was created 40 years ago that the Food Stamp Program would fully account for annual inflation. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this will help 11 million low income people.

TEFAP, a program that has provided assistance to approximately one million people in Michigan, will see \$1.26 billion in funding that will benefit food banks and food pantries across the country. More importantly, this bill will increase annual funding for commodity purchases from \$140 million to \$250 million allowing organizations to meet the increasing demand for food services and the rising food prices. The CBO estimates that Michigan alone will receive \$45 million in additional TEFAP funding from fiscal year 2008 to 2017. This is critical to organizations in Southeastern Michigan such as Gleaners Community Food Bank, who just over the last holiday season provided over 34,000 meals using the TEFAP program.

Now while this conference agreement contains many benefits for my home state, as a lifetime conservationist I am extremely disappointed in the conservation title. I was displeased to see that the cap for the Conservation Reserve Program was lowered to 32 million acres. Both the Senate and the House had reauthorized the current enrollment level of 39.2 million acres. Lowering the cap would result in a cut of almost 7 million acres. Each year this program helps produce 13.5 million pheasants and 2.2 million ducks. As the largest land retirement program, lowering the cap will be devastating.

And while the Wetlands Reserve Program is continued through 2012, it is done so at a lower level than in the 2002 Farm Bill. This is extremely disappointing because 50 percent of Michigan's threatened or endangered species require healthy and functional wetlands. Michigan currently has enrolled 125 easements of

over 16,000 acres and has a backlog of close to 25,000 acres. This reduction will be extremely detrimental as it is the only conservation program solely dedicated to restoring wetland habitat.

In addition, I have real concerns about the wisdom and merit of the agricultural chemicals tax credit provided in Section 15343 that allows a tax credit up to \$2,000,000 per year until 2012 for eligible agricultural businesses to pay for and offset the costs of security measures taken to protect pesticides and fertilizers used in agricultural operations. Fortune 500 companies that manufacture or retail agricultural pesticides and fertilizers should not need the taxpayer to help offset the costs of employee security training, installation of security lighting, computer security measures, locks and fences to protect their facilities, and other such security measures.

Finally, Section 7524 amends current law to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to issue a permit to the Department of Homeland Security to transfer live foot-and-mouth disease virus from Plum Island, New York, to the mainland United States. The majority of the research at Plum Island is concentrated on foot-and-mouth disease, which is very highly contagious, and which Federal law has for more than 50 years restricted to Plum Island. An accidental release of this infectious virus could have grave implications for the livestock industry and for the national economy. This issue is highly controversial, yet it has not been the subject of hearings nor open debate. I believe that it is a mistake to proceed with this until Congress has fully examined whether USDA and DHS have adequately assessed the health and economic risks, environmental impacts, and cost-benefit of this proposal.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not a perfect one, however, it has bipartisan support. I know from my years in this institution that compromise is necessary in order to be successful, and I know the conferees worked night and day to come to this agreement. I feel confident Michigan farmers and producers will benefit from this final bill, as will the folks in Michigan who have fallen on hard times, which is why I stand today to lend my support.

IN HONOR OF ARMED FORCES DAY

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor all branches of the military this Armed Forces Day. I speak for Kansas and for the United States when I say that the men and women who make our country safe have earned our respect and our appreciation.

Many are called upon to protect our towns, our businesses and our homes in times of crisis. When Mother Nature strikes, the National Guard absorbs the blow and ensures that life will go on as usual. Each of our military personnel has been tasked with the defense of our Nation. When terrorism, tyranny and injustice strike, the National Guard, the Army, the Navy, the Marines, the Air Force, and the Coast Guard absorb the blow so that we can remain free. Free to enjoy our values, to pursue our hopes and dreams.

These service men and women have been asked to travel to Iraq or Afghanistan, to be

away from their spouses, their children, their jobs—that's a lot to ask of anyone. Yet they go and they fulfill their responsibilities to their State and our country. Today we recognize these brave men and women. Every day we recognize those who serve. I want to thank them for their vital role in making this Nation the land of the brave and the home of the free.

TRIBUTE TO BOB REGNIER

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Bob Regnier, who recently was named Philanthropist of the Year by the Kansas City Council on Philanthropy. I was honored to attend a luncheon on May 9th at which he received this very well-deserved honor, which prompted me to consider Bob Regnier's lifetime of service to Johnson County and the entire Kansas City metropolitan area. Bob is the living embodiment of the anonymous saying, "Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer."

I have been privileged to know Bob Regnier for many years. He embodies the observation of leadership consultant Don Blohowiak: "A balanced life is the centered intersection of your values, time and action. That's where integrity resides." Starting in 1970 as a safe deposit clerk and teller at Baltimore Bank in Johnson County, he rose within the Boatmen's Bank organization and, in 1989, he left that organization following a merger and founded the Bank of Blue Valley, meeting with his first customers in a doublewide mobile home. The Bank of Blue Valley developed from its initial asset base of \$2,150,000 to an organization with total assets in excess of \$700 million total loans in excess of \$550 million and total deposits in excess of \$550 million.

Just as importantly, however, Bob Regnier has been a tireless volunteer and source of strength for the Kansas City metropolitan area. As he said in a 2006 column in the Kansas City Business Journal, "There is no question that Kansas City is a good place to live and raise a family. The question for all of us is, will this be a 'great' place to live? The choice is up to each one of us." Phrased differently by Dr. Seuss, the keystone of Bob Regnier's service to our community is based upon this idea: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Madam Speaker, a cursory review of the many, many ways Bob Regnier has served our Kansas City community as a dedicated volunteer simply would not do him justice. Below I've listed his past civic commitments and current civic activities, as well as the numerous other public recognitions he has earned over the years for his good works. I thank you and the U.S. House of Representatives for joining me in taking note of this distinguished history.

CIVIC—PAST COMMITMENTS

Heart of American United Way, 1977–1988; Member of Campaign Cabinet in 1987–1988; UMKC Banking Advisory Panel, 1986–2000; UMKC Bloch School Alumni Board, 1990–1996; Blue Valley Educational Foundation, 1993–