

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–

1997, Treasurer, 1994–1995; Health Partnership of Johnson County, 1994–1995, Treasurer, 1994–1995; Blue Valley School District Board, Member 1995–2003, President 1998–2000; Blue Valley School District Bond Campaigns, Campaign Co-Chairman 1998, 2005; Johnson County Sales Tax for Benefit of Public Schools Campaign, Campaign Co-Chairman 2002, 2005; Menorah Medical Center Foundation, 1998–2003; Enterprise Center of Johnson County Board, 1998–2006, Vice Chairman, 2002–2003, Chairman 2003–2005.

Overland Park Chamber Research & Development Foundation, 2000–2004; Health Midwest Johnson County Board, 2001–2003; United Community Services “Navigating the Future” Task Force, 2002–2003; Salvation Army Christmas Campaign Chairperson, 2003; Honorary Co-chairman Ronald McDonald Hope Is Building Campaign, 2003–2006; Honorary Vice Chairman Avila College Capital Campaign, 2003–2006; Menorah Medical Center Board of Trustees, 2003–2007, Vice Chairman, 2005–2007; Menorah Legacy Foundation Board, 2003–2006; Co-Chairman of Development Committee, 2004–2006; Truman Medical Center Foundation, Co-Chairman, Capital Campaign for Behavioral Health Network, 2005–2007; Honorary Dinner Co-chair 30th Annual Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee Human Relations Dinner, 2006; Arts Council of Johnson County, Shooting Stars Gala, Honorary Chairperson, 2007.

CIVIC—PRESENT COMMITMENTS

Johnson County Community College Foundation Board, 1996–Present, Some Enchanted Evening Scholarship Dinner, 1996–2001, Executive Committee, 1999–Present, Some Enchanted Evening Chair Couple—2000, Chairman Technology Center “Blue Ribbon Task Force”—2002, Chairman Business & Technology Center Capital Campaign, 2003–Present, Vice Chairman 2005–Present, Chairman 2007–Present; Kansas University Edward’s Campus Board of Advisors, 2000–Present; Greater Kansas City Chamber Johnson County Leadership Council, 2001–Present, Chairman, 2004–2007; Community Foundation of Johnson County Board, 2002–Present, Vice Chairman, 2005–2006; Union Station Kansas City Board, 2003–Present, Vice Chairman, 2005–Present; REACH Foundation, 2003–Present, Secretary 2003–2006, Chairman 2006–Present; Greater Kansas City Chamber Board of Directors, 2003–Present, Co-Chairman of Annual Meeting, 2004, Vice Chairman & Treasurer, 2004–2005, 2nd Vice Chairman, 2005–2006 1st Vice Chairman, 2006–2007; Chairman 2007–Present.

Civic Council of Kansas City, 2003–Present, Regional Infrastructure Task Force, 2003–Present, P-12 Education Task Force, 2004–Present, Board of Directors, 2004–Present, Vice Chairman, 2007–Present; Arts Council of Greater Kansas City, 2004–Present, Vice Chairman, 2005–Present; Greater Kansas City Community Foundation Board, 2005–Present; Midwest Research Institute, Board of Trustees, 2005–Present; University of Kansas Medical Center & Hospital Advancement Board, 2006–Present; United Way of Greater Kansas City, Board of Directors, 2007–Present, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Board of Trustees, 2007–Present; University of Kansas Hospital Authority, Board of Directors, 2007–Present.

PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC RECOGNITION

UMKC Block School Alumni Achievement Award, 1996; Ernst & Young Financial Entrepreneur of the Year, 1998; Overland Park Chamber of Commerce “OP Award”—2002, 2004, 2005; Wayside Waifs “Fur Ball” Honoree, 2003; Johnson County Community Col-

lege “Johnson Countian of the Year,” 2004; Johnson County Housing Coalition Sunflower Award for Community Service, 2004; Salvation Army “Others Award,” 2005; Jewish Family and Children’s Services Alfred Benjamin Award, 2005.

Safehome “Jubilee Gala” Honoree, 2005; Health Partnership of Johnson County “Evening of Stars” Honoree, 2006; Johnson County Community College “Open Petal Award,” 2006; Midwest Christian Counseling Center “Ethics in Business” Award Finalist, 2006; Baker University “Distinguished Leadership in Business” Award, 2006; NAACP, Olathe Branch Martin Luther King Legacy Award, 2007; Shawnee Mission Educational Foundation Patron Award Recipient, 2007; Volunteer Center of Johnson County “Volunteer of the Year,” 2007.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MRS. MARY BAILEY WHITTINGTON “WHITT” DAVENPORT

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor posthumously Mrs. Mary Bailey Whittington “Whitt” Davenport for her invaluable contributions in the areas of education, the arts and historic preservation in Ulster County, New York. For more than 70 years, Whitt Davenport was the epitome of generosity and benevolence. Her pioneering spirit is directly responsible for the creation of a consolidated school system in the Rondout Valley and the construction of Marbleton Elementary School. One of her most notable efforts was advocating for the establishment of Ulster County Community College, where her husband went on to serve as its first president.

Whitt Davenport was born in Greenwood, Mississippi on June 3, 1911 to William and Anna Whittington. Her father, a lawyer and cotton planter, also had the distinct honor of being a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 28 years. Whitt met Kenneth Davenport during her tenure as a student at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie. They married shortly after her graduation in September 1933.

Once the Davenports took up residence in their historic home in Stone Ridge, Mrs. Davenport quickly become an active member of her newly adopted community. As a native Southerner, she retained her distinctive accent and brought a sense of Southern charm to all of her endeavors. Over the years, she opened her home for the many parties needed to support her philanthropic efforts and was often honored for her volunteerism.

Whitt Davenport was well known for her interest in books and volunteered at the Stone Ridge Library, going on to serve as both a librarian and president of the library board. Her commitment to the arts remains unparalleled, and she has even been called “Queen of the Arts.” She served on the Board of the Ulster Performing Arts Center, Music in the Mountains, and the Hudson Valley Philharmonic. After the death of her husband in 1982, she, along with her family, established the Kenneth Davenport National Competition for Orchestral Works.

Her drive and determination helped save the landmark Luke Kiersted House in Kingston’s Stockade District from the threat of Urban Renewal demolition and she planned the restoration of the gardens at the Senate House Historic site. Mrs. Davenport gave her time to many other organizations, lending them her sense of purpose, strength, and wisdom.

Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of knowing Whitt Davenport over the course of many years. Her work on behalf of her community was inspiring and commendable. In fact, Whitt Davenport was a force to be reckoned with. It is with sorrow that we mark her passing and with pride and gratitude that we remember her grand accomplishments.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 4040, CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to first state that it was a pleasure, in my former capacity as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, to work with my good friend from Illinois, Chairman RUSH, in crafting this important legislation. H.R. 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act, will greatly enhance the ability of the CPSC to secure the proper funding and sufficient number of employees to ensure that the products we import from abroad and manufacture here at home will not harm those who purchase them.

Millions of Americans are concerned with the safety of toys and other children’s products due to lead contamination found in millions of toys imported from China. I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for coming together and taking action to safeguard consumers from lead exposure, and to provide the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) with the tools and funding it needs to safeguard the public.

The House on December 19, 2007, overwhelmingly approved H.R. 4040, a bill that will change current law and add more stringent lead paint and lead content standards, making them the toughest in the world. It also requires testing of children’s products in accredited labs, and tracking labels on all children’s products.

Furthermore, the bill authorizes increased funding for the CPSC to hire more personnel, creation of a new state-of-the-art laboratory, and the institution of an expedited release of information on health safety risks to the public. All of which will make the CPSC more effective.

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce worked tirelessly to produce this bipartisan legislation and I now ask my colleagues to vote “Yes” on this Motion to instruct conferees and support this bipartisan House passed legislation and call for this bill to remain unchanged through the conference negotiations with the Senate.