

Following the deregulation of the Staggers Act, a dramatic shift has occurred in the railroad industry in Kansas. Class I railroads have gone from operating over 6,500 miles of track in 1986 to 3,800 miles today. Short line carriers now have over 30% of the track in Kansas and make up an even greater percentage in the First Congressional District. Kansas still ranks fourth in the nation with over 5,500 miles of rail; however, we have lost nearly 700 miles of track through abandonments just since 1991.

These changes have left Kansas with fewer Class I carriers and back-to-back years where large harvests have crippled the grain transportation system in Kansas. While no single solution exists to cure all of the problems facing the industry, the federal role in regulating this industry can and should be improved.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is responsible for approving railroad mergers, approving abandonments, and mediating rate disputes. The agency is currently being considered for reauthorization. Earlier this year, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a series of hearings on the state of the railroad industry and the regulatory functions of the STB.

As a result of those hearings and my own experiences in dealing with the railroad situation in Kansas, I am introducing legislation aimed at improving the ability of the STB to address the critical transportation issues facing rural America.

Specifically, this legislation would:

Reduce the likelihood of additional abandonments by providing states an other small railroads an additional year to acquire an abandoned line;

Provide an expedited rate case procedure;

Provide direction to the STB to devote resources to promoting competition and reasonable rates; and

Direct the STB to place a priority on improving the economic viability of abandoned lines.

Maintaining an efficient transportation system has long been a key to the success of U.S. agriculture. As agriculture becomes more export dependent, rail transportation is more important than ever. As a member of the Railroad subcommittee of the House Transportation Committee, I am eager work to improve rail transportation.

The changes proposed in this bill would assist in solving the current rail transportation issues by quickly resolving shipper complaints and taking steps to ensure that over the long haul, rail transportation remains an option for America's agricultural producers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow colleagues to support this legislation and urge its early consideration and passage.

CRIME DOES NOT PAY ACT

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce the Crime Does Not Pay Act on behalf of Margie Nolan Cowles of Richmond, Virginia. Margie Nolan Cowles wrote a letter to the editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch decrying the fact that criminals were receiving payments from injuries received during the

commission of a crime. I agreed and have introduced the Crime Does Not Pay Act to correct this injustice. This legislation prevents convicted felons from collecting damages for injuries incurred while committing the felony. It closes a loophole that permits criminals to get rich while committing a felony.

For example, in California, a jury awarded more than \$100,000 to Brian Forrett, a career criminal who broke into a home and tied up the residents. He then fired at one of the residents and missed, and shot at the other resident, blinding him. Forrett was shot by police officers while trying to escape and is now receiving \$26,183 from each of the four officers that fired on him while he serves a 32-year prison sentence for robbery.

It is not right that criminals can receive damages when they are injured in the commission of a felony. This is a travesty of justice and this bill will prevent such miscarriages of justice in the future. I look forward to earning the support of my colleagues and the American people for this legislation because Crime Does Not Pay and my legislation will correct this injustice.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, AND JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 5, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4276) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations bill.

There are many reasons for my opposition to this bill.

First and foremost, is the atrocity of this body's inability to pass the Mollohan amendment to restore full funding for a fair and accurate census.

At this time, however, I would like to address a matter which has not been discussed on the floor: The dramatic reduction in funding in the bill for the Small Business Administration.

The bill reduces funding for the Small Business Administration's *regular operating expenses* by 27 percent, or \$75 million less than the President's request.

The Committee directs that reductions should come from "overhead" functions and primarily headquarters staff.

According to the SBA, this reduction "would literally shut down the Agency."

The cut is so extreme that, if enacted, it would result in the elimination of more than 1,200 Federal employees, or 40 percent of SBA's workforce.

But the situation gets worse!

The Committee Report language on the funding cuts prohibits staff reductions from SBA district offices.

However, of the approximately 3,000 Federal employees of the SBA, 2,000 are located in district offices.

In other words, even if the SBA eliminated every employee in its DC headquarters, it would still not generate the savings required under the legislation!

Thus, whether intended or not, this appropriations bill will de-fund the SBA.

Mr. Speaker, the many programs operated by the SBA are critical to the people of my district and I am sure, to those of every Member of this Congress.

The SBA helps to ensure that America's small business opportunities are available to the majority of Americans.

America's 22 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private work force, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs.

In Maryland, SBA programs to encourage the establishment and growth of small businesses have proven invaluable:

In 1997, through its 7(a) program, the SBA made over 750 loans to Maryland small businesses, totaling over \$145,000.

The SBA's Small Business Investment Company program financed over \$19 million for Maryland small businesses in 1997, and

The SBA microloan program in Maryland financed over \$190,000 for African American small businesses and \$160,000 to 100% women-owned small businesses in 1997.

I hope that the Appropriations Committee did not actually intend to de-fund this vital agency and that this funding situation will be addressed in conference committee.

In addition to my concerns regarding the general operating budget, I am deeply troubled by the low funding levels for several key SBA programs.

Two of these programs, the National Women's Business Council and the Women's Development Projects, have been addressed by my colleagues Representatives MILLENDER-McDONALD and SANDERS in two amendments which receive my full support. I thank my colleagues for their efforts.

However, there are at least two additional programs that were under-funded in this bill that are of particular concern to me and my constituents:

The 7(j) Minority Enterprise Development program, for which the President requested \$9.5 million, was provided just \$2.6 million; and

The HUB Zone program, enacted last year, for which the President requested \$4 million, was provided only \$2 million.

Just two weeks ago in Baltimore, Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the SBA, signed an agreement with the Maryland Minority Contractors Association reaffirming SBA's commitment to double the number of SBA-guaranteed loans to African Americans.

Alvarez joined Allan Stephenson, Baltimore SBA District Director, and Arnold Jolivet, President of the Maryland Minority Contractors Association in Baltimore, in the signing of a partnership agreement between the two groups.

The agreement represents each organization's commitment to work together to increase the participation of Maryland's minority contractors in SBA's financial and technical assistance programs.

I ask my colleagues, what purpose does it serve for SBA to promise to work more closely with the people of my district if there is no money in the programs for which my constituents apply?

Additionally, Baltimore is the home of dozens of HUB Zones or "Historically Under-utilized Business Zones."

The HUB Zone Empowerment Contracting Program was enacted into law as part of the Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997.

The program encourages economic development in distressed communities through establishment of preferences for award of Federal contracts to small businesses located in these areas.

Such a program has immense potential to aid the residents of my district—both business owners and the employees they hire.

I would hate to think that after my colleagues demonstrated their wisdom in enacting the HUB Zone legislation, that just one year later they would provide inadequate funding to fully enact the program.

My constituents contact my office daily to learn of SBA programs that can assist them in their attempts to gain financial self-sufficiency and independence.

I urge the conference committee to fully fund both the Minority Enterprise Development and the HUB Zone Programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the Republican majority meant to accomplish when it so dramatically under-funded the SBA and restricted those funds in a manner that would cause the elimination of virtually the entire SBA headquarters' staff.

I therefore urge the members of the conference committee to act with a clear head and a clear conscience when they consider restoring full funding to the SBA.

FOREST TAX RELIEF ACT

HON. MARY BONO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to announce the introduction of the Forest Tax Relief Act, an important bill to let all our citizens enjoy the forests free from burdensome taxes. I am proud to announce that I have co-authored this bi-partisan bill with my dear colleague, Representative LOIS CAPPAS (D-CA.)

Due to enabling legislation passed by a previous Congress, the United States Forest Service has implemented a new pilot project charging day users a per car fee to park on public lands. Dubbed the "Adventure Pass" by the U.S. Forest Service, this is nothing but a new tax on using public lands. Many of my constituents question the fairness and merits of this tax, and I share their concern. This tax goes against the concept of experiencing our free and open land making it a hardship on locals and visitors alike.

Within the forest of the 44th Congressional district, the per car fee for an Adventure Pass is \$5. To residents in the communities of Idillywild, Anza, Hemet and San Jacinto and tourists who come to enjoy these precious lands, this fee is a source of much controversy. We have come to expect the freedom to enjoy this area without the inconvenience and tax imposed on us today.

To tax the Great Outdoors is offensive to the very concept of the national forest system. The forests are for the entire nation and therefore should be supported through the traditional funding process. Under this plan, Con-

gress taxes Americans twice. It is now time to remedy this situation.

Mr. Speaker, not only are the fees unjust, but they are generating only half the projected revenue. I believe we are deterring individuals from discovering the wonder and beauty of our National Forest. We must encourage people to visit, not discourage them from doing so. When tourists go elsewhere, it hurts small businesses and it hurts our efforts to educate individuals on the importance of protecting this precious national resource. This tax serves as a barrier to working families, hikers, nature lovers and all those desiring access to our national forests.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this effort to return the forests back to the people.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3790.

The major beneficiary of this bill will be the National Digital Library. The "profits" from the bill will go to make millions of items available freely on the internet by the year 2000. It is a most fitting goal as the Library of Congress celebrates its 200th birthday in the year 2000. The Library will be using the world's most advanced technology for further education of all our citizens.

Already more than 500,000 items from the Library's incomparable collections relating to American history are on line, including Civil War photographs, presidential papers, documents relating to the civil rights movement, and women's suffrage. Nearly 62 million transactions are now being handled by the Library's on-line services.

These services are used by students, scholars and the general public in the U.S. and around the world. The Library's web site has been called a "publicly and privately financed funded taxpayers dream" by Wired Magazine and an "internet hit" by the New York Times.

We have more than the 290 co-sponsors required to bring this bipartisan bill to the floor. I applaud the Library and urge all my colleagues to support this worthy bill.

BIOMATERIALS ACCESS ASSURANCE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support H.R. 872, the Biomaterials Access Assurance Act. The broad consensus of support that the bill now enjoys is the result of many months of hard work by many, especially the bill's sponsor, Representative GEORGE GEKAS.

"Biomaterials" are the raw materials that are used to make medical implants and devices.

Examples of biomaterials include silicone, polyester, urethane, and polycarbonate. These materials have hundreds of non-medical uses, but their use in medical devices is one of the most important.

Despite having no role in the design, testing, or production of implantable medical products, biomaterials suppliers are exposed to millions of dollars in litigation costs from product liability suits. Courts have overwhelmingly found biomaterials suppliers not liable, but the costly litigation quickly overwhelms the relatively small financial benefits of selling to the medical device market. For this reason, many biomaterials suppliers no longer sell their products for medical use.

H.R. 872 would limit the liability of biomaterials suppliers to instances of genuine fault. It provides expedited dismissal for biomaterials suppliers, without extensive discovery or other legal costs, in product liability suits where plaintiffs allege harm from a medical implant.

Without congressional action, patients will lose access to life-enhancing and life-saving implantable medical devices and some device manufacturers will close their doors.

Passage of this legislation is critically important for the future of Millions of patients and the medical device industry. Anyone that uses a medical device or knows someone that uses a medical device should be heartened by the action of the House today. This bill is a victory for consumers and ensures that the United States' leadership in medical technology innovation will continue.

In closing, I want to emphasize how important it is that this bill remain narrow in scope. As written, it addresses a specific, well-documented public health problem. Any effort to expand the scope of the bill by our colleagues in the other body to include broader product liability reforms will seriously endanger passage this year. On behalf of the patients who depend on medical technology, we cannot afford to let that happen.

24TH ANNIVERSARY OF TURKEY'S INVASION OF CYPRUS

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 3, 1998

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to protest the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

Even though the international community has condemned the Turkish government's action as a brutal violation of international law, Turkey has yet to comply with international pressures and remains the only nation in the world to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as a sovereign entity. Since 1974, the United Nations and other international organizations have repeatedly attempted to find a solution to this dispute, but the border separating the Cypriot and Turkish forces remains one of the most militarized in the world. Currently, over 30,000 troops retain control over the northern third of the island. Tensions remain high in the region, and, with the recent Turkish threats of military action, the prospects for a peaceful solution in the near future have been furthering reduced.

The invasion of 1974 marked not just a defeat of Cypriot military forces, but the beginning of a policy of Turkish ethnic cleansing.