IN HONOR OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE CITY OF PICO RIVERA

---

## HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 1998*

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in honor of the 40th anniversary of the City of Pico Rivera. On Thursday, January 29, 1998, residents from the City of Pico Rivera came together at a ''City Birthday Party'' celebration in honor of this milestone and to inaugurate Pico Rivera's yearlong 40th anniversary festivities.

Following a grass roots movement for incorporation, the neighboring communities of Pico and Rivera decided to join together as an incorporated city. On January 7, 1958, an election was held to select the name of the 61st city incorporated in the County of Los Angeles and to create a City Council-City Manager form of government. On January 29, 1958, the Secretary of State received and filed the election results of the residents of this newly formed city and by resolution of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors the City of Pico Rivera was born.

During the past four decades, the residents of Pico Rivera have grown together as a strong family oriented community. The City's residents are highly motivated, faithful, and unselfishly willing to share their talents and time to build a brighter future for their community. The City provides a variety of programs and services to its residents, who take full ownership in its success. Over the years, citizens of Pico Rivera have remained steadfast and strong in their belief in civic duty. With many proactive youth, senior, veteran and civic groups, Pico Rivera is proud of its over 60,000 friendly citizens.

The City of Pico Rivera has made substantial and significant contributions to the progress and development of Southern California. Located in the center of the City is the former site of the once thriving Ford Auto plant. Now, in that same location is one of our nation's critical links in our national defense, the Northrop-Grumman B–2 Division. Truly the City of Pico Rivera has a long and rich history of local, regional, and national significance.

The birthday celebration was a kick off for the City of Pico Rivera's yearlong family oriented festivities. Entertainment was provided by children and youth groups in the community. The Ladies Vocal Ensemble from El Rancho High School performed ''Las Mañanitas,'' a Mexican birthday folk song as the community joined in the chorus of ''Happy Birthday.'' Other performances were provided by the nationally acclaimed North Park Middle School Marching Band, a participant in the 1997 Tournament of Roses Parade, South Ranchito Elementary and El Rancho High School Folklorico Dancers, and the Pico Rivera Football for Youth Donnas. The Colors were presented by my fellow veterans of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7734, led by Commander Joe Perez.

In February, banners emblazoned with the colorful 40th Anniversary logo will be installed on street lights along major city thoroughfares. In March, the City's annual ''Youthfest'' will tie in its art celebration with the City's 40th birthday. A city-wide tree planting program will be kicked off in April, tying in the anniversary celebration with ''Earth Day.'' Discussions are underway for planning a parade and family festival in May. The July 4th fireworks display will carry the anniversary theme as will the ''Concert in the Park'' summer series in July and August. Junior and business golf tournaments for charity have been proposed as well as a Hispanic cultural event in October. The 40th Anniversary will conclude with the New Year's Gala entitled ''The Next Best 40 Years.''

Planning the events is the mayor's Select Anniversary Steering Committee chaired by Ms. Terri Bodadilla. Others on the committee who have dedicated their talents and time are Armando Abrego, Stephen Chavez, Charmaine Garcia, Bea Palomarez, and Gregory Salicido.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mayor Bea Proo, Mayor Pro Tem Garth Gardner, Council members Pete Ramirez, Carlos Garcia, and Helen O'Hara, the City staff, community leaders and residents on the occasion of the City of Pico Rivera's 40th Anniversary and send our best wishes for its continued success and prosperity.

---

THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY SYSTEM

---

## HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 1998*

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation to improve the competitiveness of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system and restore its vitality.

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system is a vital transportation corridor for the United States. The Seaway connects the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean and makes it possible to ship manufactured products from our industrial Midwest directly to overseas markets. Benefits of efficient operations of this transportation route are not limited to the Great Lakes region but extend throughout the United States. Congress recognized the broader impacts and, accordingly, designated the Great Lakes as America's fourth sea coast in 1970.

The Great Lakes region, and international markets, recognized the system's potential, as evidenced by the sharp rise in vessel and cargo traffic through the Seaway immediately after its opening in 1959. Unfortunately, that potential was never fulfilled. The upward trend in cargo traffic peaked around 1977–79. It has since declined in part as a result of a nationwide economic recession that hit the manufacturing sector particularly hard, and in part due to capacity constraints imposed by the Seaway.

Locks on the Seaway and the Great Lakes were built as long ago as 1895. New locks constructed for the Seaway between the mid- and late-1950s as authorized by Congress in 1954 were built to the same size as those completed in 1932. Locks and connecting channels were limited to 27 feet of draft. Because vessel size has grown over time, Seaway facilities were too small on its opening day to service the commercial fleet then in existence. Today, they are capable of accommodating only about 30% of the world's commercial fleet. An undersized Seaway that denies large, specialized, and efficient vessels access to the system will prevent U.S. products, especially those from the Great Lakes region, from competing effectively in the global economy.

In addition to declining traffic, inadequate investment in Seaway infrastructure caused the mix of cargoes shipped through the system to be transformed from one that was diverse to one composed largely of low volume commodities. Although the trend of cargo tonnage through the system turned up once again in 1993, current cargo mix consists of essentially steel coming to the Great Lakes region from abroad, grains going overseas, and iron ore moving from one port to another within the region. Since the late 1980s, industrial manufacturing in the United States has recovered through investment in technology and corporate restructuring. Industrial production is flourishing once more in the Great Lakes region; Midwest economies are booming. Yet, only a small volume of high value finished goods move through the system. The Great Lakes region, therefore, is unable to fully participate in this resurgence of economic strength due to limitations in the Seaway's capacity.

For the past year I have been working closely with interested parties in the Great Lakes maritime transportation community and the infrastructure investment finance sector throughout the United States and Canada to develop a proposal to allow the Seaway to reach its full potential, to guarantee the future viability of the Seaway, and to continue the economic development of the Great Lakes region.

The bill I am introducing today, the Binational Great Lakes-Seaway Enhancement Act of 1998, developed in concert with the Honorable Joe Comuzzi, a dear friend of mine and a member of the Canadian Parliament whose district (Riding) is adjacent to mine, would establish the foundation, create the conditions, and provide the resources to permit the system to achieve its full potential. The bill would authorize the creation of a binational authority to operate and maintain the Seaway. It would also provide for the establishment of a nonfederal credit facility to offer financial and other assistance to the Seaway and Great Lakes maritime communities for transportation-related capital investments.

Specifically, the legislation would establish a binational governmental St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation by combining the existing, separate U.S. and Canadian agencies which operate each country's Seaway facilities. It would require the Corporation's top management to run the Seaway in a business-like manner. It would transfer Seaway employees and the operating authority of Seaway assets to the Corporation. It would provide labor protection for current U.S. Seaway employees, whether or not they transfer to the Corporation. It would offer incentives for employment and pay based on job performance. It would set forth a process for the Corporation to become financially self sufficient. At the same time, it would provide the United States with ample oversight authority over the Corporation.

Through merger of the two national Seaway agencies into a single binational authority, we could eliminate duplication and streamline operations. Improved efficiency would reduce government's cost of operating the Seaway. At the same time, a unified Seaway agency would reduce regulatory burden and help cut the sailing time of ships through the system. This latter efficiency improvement would positively affect the bottom line of Seaway users. All of these efficiencies would make the system a more competitive and viable transportation route for international commerce.

The Great Lakes and the Seaway should be considered as an integrated system in maritime transportation. Improvements to the Seaway infrastructure alone would not be sufficient to deal with the efficiency and competitiveness problems facing the Great Lakes-Seaway system. On the contrary, improvements to the Seaway for example, could stress the capacity of ports on the Great Lakes. A comprehensive approach is necessary to address the system's investment needs.

My legislation, therefore, would provide for the establishment of a Great Lakes Development Bank. It would outline in broad terms the structure of Bank membership. To insure no taxpayer liability, this legislation would prohibit the United States and the St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation from becoming members of the Bank. It would specify eligible projects for financial and other assistance from the Bank. It would define the forms of such assistance. It would require recipients of Bank assistance, states or provinces in which such recipients are located, contractors for projects financed with Bank assistance, and localities in which such contractors are located to become Bank members to broaden the Bank's membership base. It would establish an initial capitalization level for the Bank, and would provide as U.S. contributions $100 million in direct loan and up to $500 million in loan commitments that could be drawn upon to meet the Bank's credit obligations. It would set interest on U.S. loans to the Bank at rates equal to the current average yield on outstanding Treasury debts of similar maturity plus administrative costs to preclude taxpayer subsidy to the Bank. It would allow the United States to call loans to the Bank if the Bank is not complying with the objectives of this legislation and would provide specific limitations on United States' liability to protect our interests.

Mr. Speaker, my legislation is intended to make the Great Lakes-Seaway system a more efficient, competitive, and viable transportation route. Such a system will enable our manufacturers to bring their goods to the world market at reduced cost, making their products more competitive in the global economy. This is a sensible bill; it is a good-government bill. We should all support it. I will be sending out a Dear Colleague letter seeking co-sponsors for the bill. I hope members will offer their support and join me in moving this legislation forward. This proposal should be enacted this year.

## THE MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 1998 AND THE TAXPAYER CHOICE ACT OF 1998

**HON. JOHN R. THUNE**

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 3, 1998*

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, in 1994, the American public spoke loudly and clearly about their dissatisfaction with the direction Washington was headed. Their voice came in the form of an historic change of control in both the House and Senate from the Democratic, to the Republic Party. It was that election that brought the President to proclaim in his State of the Union in 1995 that the era of big government was over. But for how long?

It seems clear here in 1998 that he would like to bring that era back. In his State of the Union address, the President outlined his policy goals. Now that his budget is out, we know his ideas translate into some $150 billion in new Washington spending. Most of us can agree with his goals. They include important priorities like caring for and educating our children, to providing health care for an aging population. These are important issues. On that we all agree.

However, the differences are clear in trying to determine how best to achieve those goals—particularly in the context of a potential revenue surplus. The President's programs mark an incredibly expansive reach by the federal government into the lives of Americans. At the same time, he seems remarkably inconsistent as he refers to reserving a potential surplus for Social Security, while on the other hand talking about increasing the size and reach of government by $150 billion in new Washington spending and bigger government. While I agree Congress must begin to restore the Social Security Trust Fund, the juxtaposition of saving and spending sends mixed signals to me and to the American public.

I believe there is a responsible public policy approach to dealing with any potential surplus. Accordingly, I am cosponsoring Congressman MARK NEUMANN's H.R. 2191, the National Debt Repayment Act, which is consistent with a number of important policy objectives. The Neumann legislation would apportion any potential surplus in three ways. First, it would allocate two thirds of any surplus to paying off debt and restoring the various federal trust funds—including Social Security, transportation and environmental trust funds. The final third would go toward reducing taxes on hard working Americans.

H.R. 2191 further puts into place a systematic plan to completely retire our $5.5 trillion debt over the next 30 years. The plan establishes that spending be 1 percent less than the government collects in revenue every year and applying that 1 percent surplus to paying down debt. Assuming moderate economic growth rates, we can be completely debt free by 2026. In addition to winning the war on drugs, that would be the most important thing we could do for our children and grandchildren. Paying down the debt also would free up the nearly $250 billion Congress appropriates every year just to pay interest on our $5.5 trillion debt.

Moreover, the National Debt Repayment Act would allow us to actually give something back to the taxpayers of this country. After all, it is their money.

The plan certainly seems reasonable. If the President is able to build $150 billion in new Washington spending into his budget, it would necessarily follow that Congress and the President could give that money back to the taxpayers. The best solution to helping working families deal with tough issues like child care is to let them keep more of what they earn, and allow them to choose how to address this important need. The President's proposal tends toward employing Uncle Sam as your children's nanny. His plan would have Washington determine which children and which child care providers receive Washington's assistance. Who would you rather have raising your kids, the federal government or the American family? The answer seems easy to me.

If you give some inside the Beltway long enough, they try to create a risk free society. They would have the government guarantee child care, education, health care, jobs, income, retirement, and big screen televisions. But the cost will be high. There will be a corresponding decrease in freedom and more and more taxes to pay for all that so-called security.

There is a better way, and that is to say to the people of this country: We trust your judgement. We believe you are capable of caring for your children and making good decisions about their future. We believe that as a matter of principle, America is infinitely better off when families are making decisions rather than bureaucrats. In the same way we believe that America is infinitely better off when parents are teaching values rather than bureaucrats.

The president was clear in his State of the Union address how he feels about tax relief. He wants relief targeted. I find that troubling. Why? Because targeted tax relief creates winners and losers. Every tax break he mentioned is targeted. However, we should strive toward a more perfect union by looking for ways to allow all Americans—irrespective of marital status, age, or heritage—to participate in the benefits of the greater freedom that comes with lower taxes. We should strive to make all taxpayers equal under the law.

Furthermore, we should take a consistent approach to making the tax code simpler. Too many relief proposals further complicate the tax code. Such efforts do not take us down the road toward making government less intrusive and more user friendly.

For these reasons, I am proud my friend from Washington, Congresswoman JENNIFER DUNN, has joined me in introducing two pieces of tax relief legislation that I believe will serve as alternatives to the new Washington spending in the President's budget. At the same time, these bills are consistent with the dual goals of distributing tax relief in a broad and even fashion, while not adding to an inordinately complicated tax code.

Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress that sincerely want to lower the tax burden on working families should be 100 percent behind these two bills. The bills do not target behavior and do not contain gimmickry or loopholes. The bills represent plain and simple common sense. The first bill addresses the issue of bracket creep by allowing working Americans to make more money before they fall into the higher tax bracket. It lowers taxes by raising the income threshold at which the 28 percent tax bracket would apply. Simply put, more income of working Americans would be subject to the 15 percent tax bracket rather than the much higher 28 percent bracket.

This legislation would help Americans who are achieving success and, as a consequence, have graduated from the 15 percent tax bracket to the higher 28 percent tax bracket. Due to bracket creep, 28 cents of each additional dollar they earn now goes to the federal government. Talk about a disincentive to improving your lot in life. Under our legislation, many of these hard working people