

first television broadcast test in the U.S. took place during the 1920s, this medium has evolved and grown from approximately 36 broadcast television stations in 1948 to more than 1,550 stations across the country today. According to the National Association of Broadcasters, 98 percent of U.S. households currently own television receivers. And television is the main news source for 70 percent of the American public.

Mr. President, many of our country's radio and television stations have participated in public service to their communities, not only out of statutory obligation for the licenses they receive, but because they have become part of their communities' way of life. I am proud of a recent Minnesota Broadcasters Association survey of station executives in which all 16 commercial television stations and 50 percent of the 242 radio stations responded. As impressive as these findings are, I am sure they represent only a microcosm of the public interest contributions of our nation's broadcasters.

I was pleased to learn that radio and television stations across Minnesota raised more than \$19.4 million for charities between June 1996 and June 1997, including \$65 million in donated air time for Public Service Announcements. The hundreds of public service announcements broadcast each week highlighted such issues as AIDS awareness, disaster relief, safety campaigns, drunk driving, and drug and crime education programs.

Additionally, of those stations surveyed, 100 percent of television stations and 95 percent of radio stations have helped charitable causes or needy individuals through fund-raising and other types of support.

I know my constituents who suffered through the midwest floods of 1997 are grateful to those stations in Minnesota who were involved in local news broadcasts, public service announcements, public affairs programming, and off-air campaigns to aid disaster victims.

A typical example of the Minnesota broadcasters' efforts during last year's spring floods is how Minnesota radio and television stations worked together with their listeners to raise \$1.6 million to help and assist the flood victims. These stations also produced a video titled "Beyond the Flood," donating the profits to the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who had their lives disrupted by the floods.

Mr. President, the statistics I have cited do not tell the whole story. There have been hundreds of examples of how Minnesota's broadcasters have provided extraordinary local public service to communities around Minnesota.

Additional past noteworthy accomplishments that come to mind include efforts by WJON-AM and its two sister stations in St. Cloud to raise money to buy bulletproof vests for the police departments. Its goal was \$50,000, but ultimately raised \$75,000. And stations 92 KQRS-FM and 93.7 KEGE-FM in Min-

neapolis have worked with Minnesota Job Services to set up a free interactive telephone hotline to connect employers with qualified applicants. Amazingly, this service registers 10,000 calls each month.

Finally, some of my colleagues in the Senate have advocated that Congress or the Federal Communications Commission mandate "free" or further discounted air time for political candidates. While I share the concern of many of my colleagues over the decreasing level of voter participation over the last few years, I believe proponents of this idea should more closely examine the level to which broadcasters are already raising the political awareness of the electorate through news coverage and free debate time. In 1996, two-thirds of Minnesota radio stations and four in ten television stations offered free air time to political candidates, with many of those stations actually holding the events.

Many more stations aired a local political affairs program or segment dealing with the local elections, and special segments profiling candidates and their positions on the issues. And nearly all of the stations surveyed appealed to their audiences to vote, whether through public service announcements, public affairs programming or the news. These efforts by Minnesota's broadcasters have helped to restore the people's faith and participation in our democracy.

Through disaster relief efforts, holiday safety initiatives, fund-raising drives, school announcements, public affairs programming, and weather emergency information, Minnesota broadcasters have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to public service.

I am proud to say that in some instances, these efforts have been recognized by the Minnesota Broadcasters Association through their "Media Best Awards" and by the National Association of Broadcasters annual "Crystal Radio Awards."

I applaud the leadership shown by all of Minnesota's stations, and am pleased to have shared their accomplishments with the Senate.

OMB'S STUDY OF THE NORTHEAST DAIRY COMPACT

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to express concern at the continued efforts of some Members of Congress to use dairy farmers and consumers as vehicles for political manipulation.

Late in the day on Friday, February 12, the Office of Management and Budget released a study requested by Congress which is reported to be an analysis of the economic effects of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. Unfortunately, it appears only to be a masterful work of political manipulation that skillfully avoids answering the core question of what actually is the impact of the Northeast Dairy

Compact. As a watered-down compromise, the report sheds little light on the plight of dairy farmers both inside the Compact region and around the nation. Meanwhile, the New England milk tax continues to take its toll on the most vulnerable consumers.

Senator FEINGOLD and I were the authors of the amendment which directed OMB to undertake an unbiased, independent study of the direct and indirect economic effects of the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact. Did we receive an unbiased study? Hardly. I was informed that Compact supporters had plenty of input. Lacking the same political clout, opponents did not. What the American people have received is a sanitized product of regional politics. It's one more example of this administration's failed dairy policy.

The OMB has made it painfully clear that they had neither the time, data, nor resources to produce a meaningful analysis. This is not a legitimate excuse for producing a report with exorbitant levels of "statistical uncertainty." We attempted to work with OMB in addressing the issue of the inadequate time frame for conducting a meaningful study. At the beginning of the year, OMB asked for my assistance in requesting a time-extension before the release of the report. I worked with them to obtain the short extension they requested, in the interest of not rushing through the project. This was the only time an extension was requested even though I made it clear I would work with them in obtaining further extensions as necessary.

So, why did OMB wait until the week before the initially scheduled release of the study to inform us that not enough time had passed to produce a significant, decisive report? If OMB could see there still was a problem with insufficient data due to the limited time the Compact has been in effect, they should have made a formal request for an extension.

There was no attempt to seek an extension to allow a meaningful study, only a veiled attempt to get this request off their plate—even if it resulted in an inferior product compromising the integrity of OMB. Aren't the best economists in the government at OMB? This study questions that presumption.

The attitude in a staff briefing conducted by OMB three weeks ago was that it did not want this task, and sought to get rid of it as soon as possible. We expect OMB to conduct professional and unbiased studies. Apparently, that is not possible.

Even without a decent report, we all know the Compact hurts consumers. Milk prices have increased an average of 17 cents a gallon throughout New England. Those most adversely impacted include low-income families, children, and elderly residents on fixed incomes.

Over the past year, a number of newspaper articles have appeared in the New England region that have questioned the legitimacy of the Compact. I ask unanimous consent that a

sampling of these be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Legislative Gazette, Nov. 3, 1997]

GROUP CONCERNED ABOUT RAISING MILK PRICES

(By Elysia Nest)

Cookies will just have to go without it. And morning coffee just won't be the same.

If Gov. George E. Pataki's newly appointed dairy task force agrees to artificially raise the price of milk to aid the state's ailing dairy farmers this week, low-income families will be hit the hardest, according to John Schnittker, senior economist for Public Voice for Food and Health Policy. Schnittker warned that boosting the price dairy farmers receive for milk will cost the state's consumers \$91 million over the next 12 months. That's an increase of 21 cents a gallon.

Also, the organization opposes the possibility of New York joining in the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact for fear that it would raise prices for consumers without enhancing the long-term viability of small dairy farmers.

The revenue would continue to flow to the largest producers, who would in turn produce more milk, further shutting out the smaller farms. The Compact allows New England to receive a price for milk that is about the price set by the federal dairy program. This price is currently \$16.94 per 100 pounds of milk.

Farmers are getting less for their milk. People are paying more. Schnittker sees danger signs ahead.

"The governor's dairy task force should reject attempts to get a quick fix to these problems," he said. "A price increase will harm the pocketbooks and the health of New York. The low-income consumer will be hit the hardest. It robs families of purchasing power. Dollars that are needed for groceries will be spent on milk."

But Rick Zimmerman of the New York Farms Bureau said Public Voice is a front group for dairy farmers. "They are farmer advocates," he said, "not consumer advocates." Zimmerman, however, said there is a short-term answer to the problem.

"This is an opportunity for the governor to institute an emergency price increase for fluid milk that could prove of some assistance." While the length of time that an artificial price increase may be implemented is dictated by state law at 90 days, Zimmerman said it may be just what the state needs to get the dairy farms back on track.

Peter Gregg, spokesman for the Department of Agriculture and Markets, said he has complete faith that the dairy task force will do what needs to be done.

Still, Michele Mitola, director for New York Citizens for a Sound Economy, said an artificial price increase would barely help farmers at all. It would just be another consumer tax increase.

"It is bad enough that the federal government has set prices for milk; to allow the state to artificially raise the price higher amounts to nothing but a tax increase for the state's consumers," she said. "As with any consumption tax, the burden will be greatest on those at the lowest end of the income scale. The governor is trying to sustain an industry on the backs of the state's consumers. This is the equivalent of corporate welfare, and consumers should not be forced by the government to pay above-market process to sustain any industry."

In addition to the financial strain higher prices would cause, Public Voice estimates

the loss in purchasing power to New York food stamp recipients under the plan to exceed \$11 million over 12 months. Also, New York taxpayers will pay \$5 million more for school meal programs.

The assistance plans would also hit the New York metropolitan area hard, since it has a large urban population. Over the next 12 months, the analysis found, downstate residents can expect to pay \$49 million in higher milk costs under the plans.

The New York State Public Research Group (NYPIRG) is also concerned. It opposes "over-order" pricing, regardless of whether it is accomplished through administrative action by the Department of Agriculture and Markets or through participation in the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact.

"There is little reason to believe that an increase in dairy support will provide help to the small family farms that truly in need," said Russ Haven, legislative director for NYPIRG. "If anything, non-targeted assistance in the form of dairy price support will widen the disparity between large and small milk producers."

So while "milk may do a body good," unless the dairy task force can come up with a fair compromise between farmers and consumers, many consumers will just have to go without it.

"If the governor truly wanted to help family farmers without hurting consumers, he would focus more on further lowering their tax burden and removing unnecessary constraints that increase the cost of doing business in the state," said Mitola.

The 14-member dairy task force is expected to meet this week.

[From the Record, Nov. 31, 1992]

CONSUMER GROUPS: LET MARKET SET MILK PRICES

(By Kenneth Lovett)

ALBANY.—If the government sets higher milk prices for farmers, consumers are likely to pay more at the grocery store but New York's small dairies aren't likely to be any better off, two consumer advocacy groups charged yesterday.

"It would be nothing more than a milk tax on consumers," said John M. Schnittker, a senior economist with Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank.

Public Voice and New York Citizens for a Sound Economy, a Westchester-based advocacy group, said the industry and consumers would be better off letting the free market set the price of milk.

If really interested in helping small dairies survive, the state should continue to lower the cost of doing business in New York, offer property tax relief for farmers and other direct incentives, they said.

"Sixty years of federal intervention into milk pricing has done nothing but accelerate the trend of fewer farms and smaller farms that have been replaced by larger ones," Schnittker said.

Though declining, agriculture is still New York's and the Mid-Hudson's No. 1 industry.

Dairy farmers have long complained that the federally-set milk prices are too low to offset the steadily increasing cost of running their operations. The wholesale price of milk is about \$12 per 100 pounds for New York farmers or \$4.50 less than a year ago.

Gov. George Pataki last week formed a task force to develop recommendations to help farmers without hurting consumers.

Among the options being explored is whether the state should temporarily raise milk prices paid to farmers above the federally set rate. By law, New York's agriculture and markets commissioner can increase the

rate if petitioned by 35 percent of the state's milk producers.

Another option supported by many farmers is to have New York join the six New England states in the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, which would allow them to charge more for their milk. The states now in the compact are receiving \$1.31 more per hundred pounds for their milk than New York farmers.

Consumer groups are urging both options be rejected. The study that Public Voice released yesterday predicted raising the price paid to farmers would translate to about 21 cents a gallon more for milk. The average upstate milk price per gallon is now \$2.24.

But it's not just consumers who would suffer, he said. The higher prices would encourage larger farms to up production, thus allowing them to benefit significantly more than smaller farmers. According to the study, 53 percent of the revenue taken in from the increase in prices would go to only 18 percent of the producers. For the largest 400 dairies that would mean annual subsidies averaging \$45,000 per farm.

But farming interests say the consumer groups are only working to scare people. They say increased milk prices will be one way to make it easier for small farmers to compete.

They also argue that costs to consumers won't necessarily increase just because farmers are paid more.

Rick Zimmerman, New York Farm Bureau director of governmental relations, noted that the price of milk over the past year has not dipped as much as the price paid to farmers.

"It is unfortunate that the general public is being scared by a group that pretends to exist for the best interest of New York consumers," Zimmerman said. "The facts are clear. Public Voice is—merely a front for milk processors who find it in their best interest to keep the farmers milk price as low as possible."

[From the Boston Globe, Dec. 2, 1997]

N.E. MILK TAX HITS NEEDY HARD

(By Kevin G. Honan)

In the last several months consumers throughout New England have seen their milk prices increase an average of 17 cents a gallon. The reason for the increase is the Northeast Interstate Dairy Compact, which sets a minimum price that dairies must pay farmers. The minimum is currently \$1.46 a gallon, or 13 percent above the federally set national minimum.

Because of this surcharge on milk prices, New England consumers have paid an extra \$16 million for milk since July. Massachusetts consumers were hit hardest, paying \$7.4 million of the increase. According to a study by a Washington agricultural policy group, the compact's milk tax will add \$32 million to Massachusetts consumers' grocery bills by September 1998.

The compact is designed to protect New England dairy farmers, yet the benefits to the state are minimal, because Massachusetts has only about 350 dairy farmers, less than one-tenth of the New England total. Additionally, Massachusetts consumers will pay almost half of the entire New England milk tax, yet 88 percent of the state's \$27 million in milk tax revenues will benefit out-of-state farmers. By next September, membership in the compact will cost Massachusetts consumers more than \$90,000 in milk taxes per Massachusetts dairy farmer.

There must be a better way to help farmers in need than a milk tax that places financial stress and unfair burden on hundreds of thousands of working people, especially lower-income families, children, and elderly

residents on fixed incomes, who need milk at affordable prices.

At a time when many low-income families are being hurt by severe cuts in food stamp benefits, the compact's milk price increases are especially distressing. The purchase power for food stamp recipients decreased by more than a half-million dollars in the first three months after the compact's decision. Over the coming year, the compact will cost the state's poorest residents more than \$1 million in lost purchasing power.

Government programs that provide food benefits for children are also particularly vulnerable. National statistics show that children are the biggest milk consumers. In fact, while children constitute only 29 percent of the U.S. population, they drink 49 percent of all milk sold. In Massachusetts, over the first three months alone, the increased expense for school lunch programs, which provide many children with the one nutritious meal they have each day, was \$400,000. By September 1998, the compact will cost school lunch programs statewide almost \$2 million.

Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture Jay Healy, a member of the Compact Commission, recently proposed an amendment to exempt school lunch programs from the milk tax, but that attempt was rejected by other commission members.

I recognize that the compact's goal is to help subsidize New England dairy farmers, but penalizing the low-income, elderly, and children is not the best method. Increased training and tax relief programs are among the options we should consider. Alternatives to the compact are necessary and could involve initiating lending programs with banks for preferential interest rates to small farmers, or creating tax-relief initiatives on land transfers, so families are not penalized when farms are transferred from one generation to the next.

It is now in the hands of the five Massachusetts members of the Northeast Dairy Compact Commission. At the December compact meeting, the Massachusetts delegation should offer a motion to rescind their previous vote in favor of the milk tax. Low-income families, children, and senior citizens cannot afford to bear this burden.

Mr. GRAMS. Opposition to the Compact is growing among state legislators from the New England area. One state may even be attempting to pull out of the Compact. Those regions with the most to lose are densely populated and have fewer dairy farmers relative to other regions. The result is an effective subsidization by urban consumers.

A milk tax that burdens financially stressed working families—especially those of lower-income, who rely on reasonable and affordable milk—is wrong. It is high time we put an end to partisan, regional politics which block real, long-term, assistance for dairy farmers.

I intend to continue my efforts to oppose the Northeast Dairy Compact. This will include fighting to obtain a comprehensive, informative study on its effects and consequences.

Mr. CLELAND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia [Mr. CLELAND] is recognized.

Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. CLELAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 1664 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, February 20, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,518,340,599,802.18 (Five trillion, five hundred eighteen billion, three hundred forty million, five hundred ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred two dollars and eighteen cents).

One year ago, February 20, 1997, the Federal debt stood at \$5,340,668,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred forty billion, six hundred sixty-eight million).

Twenty-five years ago, February 20, 1973, the Federal debt stood at \$452,362,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-two billion, three hundred sixty-two million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,065,978,599,802.18 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-eight billion, nine hundred seventy-eight million, five hundred ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred two dollars and eighteen cents) during the past 25 years.

MEDICAL AID TO ETHIOPIA

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the achievement of Assist International, World Serv, the Hewlett Packard Foundation, and the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce in delivering medical aid to the people of Ethiopia. This group of organizations has worked to provide medical equipment to Ethiopia that can save hundreds of lives. This generous gift, valued at over one million dollars, will bring hope and health to many in Ethiopia.

These organizations and the concerned Americans associated with them have demonstrated the true spirit of charity. The group cooperatively has donated a state-of-the-art cardiac heart monitoring unit to the Black Lion Hospital—Ethiopia's leading teaching medical facility. In addition to the cardiac unit, beds, mattresses, and other system support equipment will be provided.

World Serv and Assist International have a strong history of providing humanitarian aid to relieve human suffering in needy countries. Assist International donated medical equipment to a site in Mongolia which was then approved by the World Health Organization to perform open heart surgery. The Hewlett Packard Foundation donated the medical equipment in the Black Lion Project in its goal to ease human suffering internationally. Finally, the Chamber of Commerce of Erie, Pennsylvania, has joined together with the other organizations and has raised the funding for transportation, installation, and training costs of this project. Specifically, I commend the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce for

this cooperative effort and for holding the third annual "Aid to Africa" banquet to raise funds for humanitarian projects.

The Black Lion project is an example of the compassion and generosity that other countries appreciate and admire in the United States. It gives me great pleasure as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Africa Subcommittee to know that Americans are finding ways within the private sector to aid other countries in Africa. It is my pleasure to ask the members of the Senate to join me in recognizing and honoring the work of the members and staff of Assist International, World Serv, the Hewlett Packard Foundation, and the Erie Area Chamber of Commerce.

JOSEPH CHESHIRE WEBB (1915-1998)

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, as I speak, the countless friends of Joe Webb have been sadly saying farewell to him at services today in Raleigh and at Saint Matthews Church cemetery in Hillsborough, Joe's final resting place.

Joseph Cheshire Webb, 83, died this past Friday afternoon after a distinguished career as trust officer for Wachovia Bank and Trust Company in Raleigh—which he had served for decades as head of that bank's trust department.

But it was not merely Joe's able service as a highly respected banker that earned for him the wide circle of friends who were saddened by the news of his passing.

Joe was thoughtful and caring without fail—and his sense of humor made him welcome everywhere he went.

In other words, he was a genuinely good guy, a sincere and honorable friend. His service in the Navy during World War II, his participation in the civic and business life of Raleigh and the State of North Carolina, and the sincerity of his friendly personality earned for him the respect and affection of all who knew him.

To all of us who knew Joe Webb well, he was what the late Senator Dick Russell of Georgia so often referred to as "one of Nature's Noblemen."

I am proud to have been his friend, Mr. President, and to have him as mine. I shall miss him.

ROGER STEVENS—A GIANT FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with the death of Roger Stevens earlier this month, the nation lost one of its greatest leaders in the arts. Roger Stevens was the Founding Chairman and unstoppable visionary for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Just inside the entrance of the Center is a bust of Roger Stevens with those words inscribed to him.

Roger Stevens was a real estate magnate who loved the excitement, energy and creativity of American theater. During his lifetime, he produced hundreds of plays and musicals, including