

INTRODUCTION OF THE RICE
FARMER FAIRNESS ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 1998

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing the Rice Farmers Fairness Act H.R. 3339. This legislation would condition the continuation of farm subsidies on the maintenance of rice production. The 1996 Freedom to Farm Act allows for the continuation of subsidies to landowners who discontinue tenant rice farming on their land. In essence, this means that the subsidy will continue to flow in spite of an end to production.

Theoretically, the idea of the plan is to "wean" landowners off of subsidies over a transition period. In fact, what this program allows are "something for nothing" subsidies, which is the worst kind of subsidy. Moreover, as a result of this provision there is a very real threat to the agricultural infrastructure. With landowners receiving subsidies in spite of lack of production, the entire warehousing, processing and "value-added" industries are put at risk.

As grain elevators, processors and others see a reduction in demand for their services because of the diminution of production permitted by this legislation they have a disincentive to continue to provide said services, services which must remain in place in order for those who remain in production to be able to bring to market the rice which they continue to produce. Thus, by way of the decimation of the infrastructure, this subsidy to non-producers comes at the expense of those who continue to produce rice. Therefore, the provisions of the Freedom to Farm Act which provide this subsidy actually amount to another form of federal welfare, taking from producers and giving to non-producers.

My legislation is very simple and direct in dealing with this problem. It says that those who had tenant rice farmers producing rice when they began to receive this subsidy must continue to maintain rice in their crop rotation if they wish to retain the subsidy. In this way, we can remove the perverse incentive which the Federal Government has provided to landowners to exit the rice business and thereby put the entire rice infrastructure at risk.

America's rice farmers are among the most efficient, effective producers of rice in the world despite the many hurdles erected by Washington. Our rice producers can compete with anyone absent such hurdles and this bill will help remove one. In order to enhance our competitive position, we should also end our embargoes of other nations which would like access to rice produced in America. Further we should eliminate the burdensome taxes regulations on America's farmers to insure increased market access and a healthy farming community in the these United States.

TRIBUTE TO SARA AVIEL

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 1998

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sara Aviel, a dedicated community

leader who is being honored as a "Young Woman of Excellence" by the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame.

Sara Aviel has won several awards for her excellence in academics, debate, civic work and music. Her participation as an attorney on the Hillsdale Mock Trial Team helped them win the county championship in 1995, 1996, and 1997 and place second in California last spring. She has been a leader in Junior State of America for three years, as well as a reporter for her school newspaper, writing about issues such as the place of religion in public schools. Last summer, Ms. Aviel spent a month in Costa Rica where she communicated in Spanish while working in the rain forest and in an impoverished village. She plays the piano and has played the viola with the El Camino Youth Symphony. In addition to her extracurricular activities, Ms. Aviel has earned a 3.9 GPA, as well as being a National Merit Semifinalist while tutoring others in math and Spanish.

Mr. Speaker, Sara Aviel is an outstanding citizen and I salute her for her remarkable contributions and commitment to our community. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and congratulating her on being chosen a "Young Woman in Excellence" by the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame.

VICE PRESIDENT TO MEET WITH
RUSSIAN PRIME MINISTER

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 1998

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, March 10, 1998, Vice President Al Gore will be meeting with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin here in Washington. As a co-chairman of the House Republican Israel Caucus, I believe Russia's continued transfers of missile technology and expertise to Iran is a serious concern. At the current rate of transfer, Iran could have the ability to produce ballistic missiles capable of striking targets in Israel and parts of Europe and Asia within a year. I think the Prime Minister's visit is a great opportunity to force our Administration to confront the Government of Russia on this issue.

I'd like to share for the RECORD a copy of a letter that will be sent to Vice President Gore. In addition to expressing our serious concerns about the issue, it also includes some very tough questions that we would like the Vice President to ask of Prime Minister Chernomyrdin.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, March 4, 1998.

Hon. WILLIAM CLINTON,

President of the United States,

The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On the eve of Vice President Al Gore's very important meeting with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, we write to you to express our continuing concerns about Russian transfers of missile technology and expertise to Iran. At this time, we feel the need to re-emphasize to you our strong opposition to such activities and to express to you our concerns regarding your administration's policies in dealing with this critical situation.

As we have expressed to you in the past, Congress believes that the activities of Rus-

sian entities which are engaged in such transfers threaten our national security interests. If the current flow of technology and expertise from Russia to Iran continues unabated, Iran could have an indigenous capability to produce a ballistic missile that could strike at American interests in the Middle East, including our close ally Israel, as well as parts of Europe and Asia.

We believe that your administration needs to do more to address this issue. Under the "Gore-McCain" Iran/Iraq Arms Nonproliferation Act of 1992, you are required to sanction foreign governments or entities which knowingly supply Iran with advanced conventional weaponry or technology that could contribute to their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. In addition, since Russia is a signatory to the Missile Technology Control Regime, and since such technology transfers are in violation of this accord, further sanctions are called for under the Arms Export Control Act and the Export Administration Act.

The Government of Russia needs to understand that the United States will not stand idly by as entities under Russian authority assist a rogue nation in acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Despite the resolution issued by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin earlier this year, which did not legally restrict such transfers but rather stipulated that Russian firms "should refrain" from such transfers, U.S. intelligence reports indicate that Russian entities have signed contracts with Iran to help produce liquid-fueled ballistic missiles such as the SS-4. There is also evidence that the sale of high-technology laser equipment and other supplies needed for the manufacture and testing of missiles has been negotiated. Beyond the technology transfers, thousands of Russian scientists, engineers and technicians are reported to be operating in Iran as advisors.

In light of the failure of the Government of Russia to stop these transfers, Congress felt compelled to introduce the Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act last fall. This legislation, which has passed the House of Representatives and currently has 82 cosponsors in the Senate, would sanction those entities engaged in the transfer of technologies to Iran.

Mr. President, we are gravely concerned about this situation. We would appreciate your administration's assessment regarding current Russian procedures to stop such transfers.

The Administration has been reluctant until now to impose sanctions on Russian entities involved in providing Iran with missile technology even through existing law requires such sanctions. While we cannot expect the Russian government to be 100% effective in stopping the flow of missile technology and expertise to Iran, we can, and must, expect 100% effort. But, how are we to judge whether Russia is sincerely seeking an end to its cooperation with Iran or merely doing enough to prevent the imposition of American sanctions? Specifically, to allay our skepticism about Russian intentions, we would expect to see real evidence of Russian action. We are requesting that on our behalf you ask the following questions of Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and provide us with his answers as soon as possible.

Why hasn't the Government of Russia passe a law to strengthen their decree which restricts the transfers of such technologies and expertise to Iran? Are there legal actions which could be sought against those entities that continue to engage in such activities? How soon can we expect a law to be enacted?

What concrete evidence has the Government of Russia provided that contracts and intelligence cooperation between Russia and Iran are ceasing and programs being terminated?