TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 475 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3756.

Mr. KAMENY. Mr. CHAIRMAN, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Lovett.

Mr. LOVETT. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] and the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present H.R. 3756, the fiscal year 1997 Treasury Appropriations bill. As reported, this bill achieves deficit savings of $513 million from the 1996 enacted levels. Combined with savings from last year's bill, the Treasury-Postal Subcommittee has saved the American taxpayers $1.2 billion since January 1995. I believe this is a record that we all can be very proud of.

I am also pleased to report to my colleagues that although there were significant objections to this bill from the Committee on Ways and Means and from members of the Task Force on National Drug Policy, we have been able to work through these issues. While we cannot, at this stage, address all the objections raised by the Committee on Ways and Means, I am committed to working out the differences as we move toward conference with the Senate.

With regard to the IRS for fiscal year 1997, the subcommittee proposes several bold initiatives. Let there be no mistake about it. This is a tough bill for the IRS. But for 8 years, the IRS has been struggling to get on track. By 2002, the IRS' $3 billion in nonpayroll operating expenses could not be verified. The bottom line, IRS' weakness in internal controls, means we cannot verify compliance with laws governing the use of budget authority. That is right. We cannot verify that IRS is using the dollars that we give them in accordance with the law.

This is not something new. It has been going on for some time. But to me this is significant. GAO has been identifying these weaknesses for years. They made 59 recommendations aimed at solving these financial management problems. To date, the IRS has completed 17 of these recommendations. While IRS spent $7.3 billion last year and IRS cannot verify how they are spending the taxpayers' dollars.

So, as I hear complaints about how the funding levels proposed for the IRS are too low and the taxpayers will not be able to file their taxes this year, I can only say this: I do not buy it for a minute and my colleagues and the American public should not either.

These are the facts. The IRS cannot justify their appropriations because they cannot reconcile their expenditures. That means that they cannot write their budgets. Their records do not allow them to do it. IRS requires every single taxpayer to justify every dime on their tax return when they are audited, and yet the IRS cannot do it for themselves. I think taxpayers should be treated the same and for this incredible double standard and they should demand accountability from the IRS.

The funding levels proposed for IRS are not irresponsible. What is irresponsible is giving them everything they ask for without the appropriate justifications and backup. We view that as our job. If we are going to give you the money, you tell us why you need it and how you are going to use it.

So the message to the IRS is simply this. Come sit at the table with me as we prepare to go to conference with the Senate. Sit down and show me how and why and where you need this $7.3 billion increase. Show me what you plan to spend, what you plan to buy, what you plan to spend, and what you plan to change in this failing $8 billion computer modernization program. I am willing to negotiate and compromise, but not until the numbers are scrubbed and the facts are backed up with supportable facts.

Just as the IRS demands that the American taxpayer justify every penny on their tax returns, I am demanding the IRS justify every penny of their appropriation. It is only fair. To do anything else would be totally irresponsible.

I am optimistic IRS will heed the message. The days of automatic increases are over, but until the IRS can justify their budget, we should not give them a blank check. Instead, we fund the programs that work. We increase funding for the various law enforcement programs under our jurisdiction by $410 million from the 1996 level. We are providing in this bill $24 million for the ATF to investigate church fires, provide $65 million for Customs to get tough along our borders and stop drugs from coming in and reaching our children. We also provide $3.4 million for the DEA to investigate missing and exploited children, including funds to establish aggressive investigations of child pornography.
Mr. Chairman, this is a good bill for Americans. We achieve deficit savings of $513 million, we demand accountability from a failing $8 billion computer program, and we start an aggressive campaign against drugs coming in along our borders. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Chairman, before turning to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] for his comments, let me say a brief word in appreciation of the fine work that our staff has done. Jennifer Mummert, Dan Cantu, Betsy Phillips, Bill Deere and our subcommittee clerk, Michelle Mrdeza on the majority side, and Seith Statler and Pat Schlueter on the minority side have put in a lot of time and a lot of hard work to get us here today. It has been a tough bill to put together. I asked the subcommittee to take us in a new direction this year. They have done so and, in my opinion, to take us in a new direction this year.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 18 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, before launching into a statement on the Treasury-Postal appropriations, I want to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT], the chairman of the subcommittee. As all of us know, he is running for the Senate and will not be with us next year in the House. I would like to thank him and thank the diligent work that they have done on this bill.

I also want to reiterate what I said in committee. I want to thank the chairman and the committee for the openness with which they have dealt with us on the legislation before us, particularly as it relates to preceding the initial subcommittee markup. I appreciate it and it was helpful.

Mr. Chairman, the Treasury-Postal bill has been put together for fiscal year 1997, based in part on the deck we have been dealt by the budget resolution and the committee's 602(b) allocation, or more plainly, the money that we were given by the full Committee on Appropriations to carry out our responsibilities.

For fiscal year 1997, the 602(b) allocation requires an overall reduction of $130 million in budget authority and a half a billion dollars in outlays from the fiscal year 1996 level, a half a billion dollars below what was a very tight budget in 1996. We simply do not have enough money to fund all the requirements of this bill. Once again, there is another illustration of why we should have adopted the coalition budget.

Overall, this bill provides $11.1 billion in discretionary funding, which is about $13 billion below the amount we appropriated last year and $1.7 billion below the amounts requested by the administration.

On the good side, Mr. Chairman, within the limit of resources available, this committee's commitment to law enforcement is evident. Funding for law enforcement agencies totals $3.5 billion, an increase of $408 million, or 14 percent, over the 1996 levels and $355 million above the administration's requests.

We have funded law enforcement initiatives, including $800,000 for the Treasury Recipient Integrity Program, the TRIP Program, the Secret Service Program to stop fraud in benefit payments, where the more protected and the taxpayer is protected; $12 million supplemental this year and $12 million in 1997 to help ATF stop arson at American churches and do research on arson; continued full funding for Hill Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, HIDTA's, and the addition of three new HIDTA's; $28 million for Custom's Operation Gateway to cut drug traffic through the Caribbean; $300 million for FINCEN, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, a critically important agency; and $43 million for ATF.

Programs like these provide a secure environment for the vast majority of Americans who are law-abiding citizens. Ongoing initiatives like HIDTA and the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program, the GREAT Program, have serious results, results for those who would work at school and at home. Just as ATF and the Secret Service provide vital protection in communities across the country, the Customs Service secures our borders from those who would seek to bring harm to our citizens, especially from the ongoing threat of illegal drugs.

In addition to law enforcement, this bill funds the Archives and OPM and includes very limited buyout authority with taxpayer services and the IRS. I should note that this buyout authority must be significantly adjusted if it is to save the taxpayers money in avoiding RIF's, as GAO has indicated.

On the negative side, these increases in law enforcement have been made at the expense of the Internal Revenue Service, a critically important agency when it comes to deficit reduction and funding every priority of this Government. This bill cuts over $800 million from the amounts IRS needs just to maintain current levels of taxpayer service and revenue collection. Overall funding cuts to IRS would result in a decrease of some 7,500 FTE's and, to the extent these reductions cannot be accomplished by October 1, even more FTE's would have to be cut.

The reductions in this bill to the IRS are so unwise that the Committee on Ways and Means concluded in its June 26, 1996, letter to Commissioner LIVINGSTON that this bill will not work for the IRS. Specifically, Mr. Chairman, the bill will impair the IRS' ability to perform its core responsibilities. Its cuts to information systems will endanger IRS' ability to collect taxes and process returns in 1997 as well as provide efficient customer services to the Nation's taxpayers.

These budget cuts could create a very significant risk that substantial Federal revenues could begin to exacerbate our Federal budget deficit problems. That comes from the letter signed by the gentleman from Texas, Mr. ARCHER, and the gentlewoman from Connecticut, Mrs. JOHNSON, not by a Democrat, not by STENY HOYER, a ranking Member, but by the Republican oversight leaders of this House.

Specifically, Mr. Chairman, the bill will impair the IRS' ability to perform its core responsibilities; cuts in information systems will hurt their ability to collect taxes and process returns in 1997, as well as provide efficient customer services to the Nation's taxpayers. We all lament when our taxpayers complain that they do not get speedy response. They cannot get such a speedy response if the ability to do so is not funded.

These budget cuts could, and I think will, pose a risk of creating a very significant risk that substantial Federal revenues could be lost, thereby exacerbating our Federal budget deficit problems.

Mr. Chairman, this third conclusion of the Committee on Ways and Means should not, cannot be ignored by those Members of this House who take deficit reduction seriously. In other words, supporting this bill with its cuts to the IRS means you are putting at risk a balanced budget.

The problem is really very simple. This bill cuts IRS funding and staffing so much that it will not be able to collect the revenue that the rest of the Government depends upon and that deficit reduction depends upon.

If this bill were to become law, the 1997 filing season would be impacted by a severely limited taxpayer service and revenue collection. Overall revenues could begin to erode. If this bill were to become law, the 1997 filing season would be impacted by a severely limited taxpayer service and revenue collection. Overall revenues could begin to erode.

Not only does this bill halt the compliance initiative that would enhance revenues so successfully in prior years, but it cuts into the base funding of IRS' tax enforcement program, reducing law enforcement below the level by $447 million below the current level, and would result in an estimated annual revenue loss of over $640 million. Cuts like this will cost, not save, money in the long run.

With respect to TSM, let me call attention to the provisions of the June 26 letter, which says, and I would quote, "We strongly oppose a number of TSM management actions recommended by the subcommittee, in particular the fencing of all TSM funds, under the current IRS' environment as a structured, contractual arrangement with the private sector to develop and deliver effective TSM programs."
They do so because on page 5 of that letter, Mr. Chairman, they say “The IRS on TSM is clearly moving in the right direction.” In other words, what the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Archer], the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. Johnson], and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. Gibbons] and the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. Matsui] are saying is that from 1988, under President Reagan, from 1989 to 1992 under President Bush, from 1993 to 1996 under President Clinton, there were very serious problems in the tax systems modernization program. I agree with that. Our committee agrees with that.

Our committee has taken action to try to correct that, and in fact we have been heard because the Treasury Department, under Secretary Rubin, has taken action to ensure that TSM is done and done right.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we do not have an alternative but to do tax systems modernization. I look into the next century. The committee clearly believes, again I say not the Democrats looking at a Democratic administration, but the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Archer] and the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. Johnson] in their letter clearly says, “The IRS is clearly moving in the right direction.” Therefore, this action is a dollar short and a day late because we have gotten a handle on the program.

But it does make, I suppose, for good debate.

This bill would, in addition, Mr. Chair, set aside $26 million of IRS’s limited funds to double the scope of the current pilot project on using private collection agencies to collect overdue taxes. I personally believe that, until the results of the first project are complete, this $26 million would be better spent on information systems which could generate an additional $665 million in revenue.

This bill, in addition, cuts in half funding for tax systems modernization and ties the hands of the Treasury Department such that even the operational projects that GAO believes should be funded are halted. I am pleased that we are going to speak to that issue, and I want to say that the chairman, as he said in his opening statement, has been very willing to discuss problems that might exist and to indicate a willingness to look at these and try to correct them.

I think that is a very positive step and it does not surprise me, because that has been the Chairman’s continuing pattern throughout my relationship with him. He is a person who wants to make sense and to do the right thing.

The bill zero funds, in addition, the automating universal, the gentleman matching systems, which will result in the loss of jobs for 88 people, a savings of $9.4 million in budget costs, but the potential loss of a billion dollars. Saving $9.4 million and putting at risk a billion dollars does not seem to me to make common sense.

Zero funding of the electronic filing operating systems that were used by over 14,000,000 taxpayers in 1996 will cost us a billion dollars. We are not putting all filing on paper operations. Zero funding for corporate files on line will make resolving taxpayer inquiries much more difficult. I do not think that is what we want to do for our taxpayers.

Zero funding for the print systems that generate millions of taxpayer notices each year would create chaos, frankly, in the revenue system. Even the Detroit computing center, which processes all currency transaction reports and administration information, would be zero funded as well.

The committee has simply gone too far, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, in its zeal to punish the IRS for its lack of success with tax systems modernization. The bill’s broad effort to update all aspects of IRS’ computer and processing systems, known as TSM, is a high priority that is critical as the agency prepares for the 21st century. We are also concerned about the conclusion of results from IRS’ efforts on TSM.

TSM has had problems for many years, through three administrations, as I previously said. I am glad that Secretary Rubin agrees that we are on the right track and that the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Archer] agrees with the Secretary.

The Committee on Ways and means, as I quoted before, on page 5 of its letter, and I quote, “We believe it makes little sense, at a time when the IRS is finally making progress in its efforts to implement necessary changes in its TSM management processes, to hamstring the IRS’s ability to complete its task.”

My colleagues, particularly on the other side of the aisle, the majority side of the aisle, the Committee on Ways and Means leadership, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Archer] and the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. Johnson] say we strongly encourage the Committee on Appropriations to delete the funding restrictions on TSM and allow responsibility for execution of programs by micromanaging the Department and using DOD as a procurement agent for all TSM contractors.

The fact of the matter is neither the Department of Defense nor the Committee on Ways and Means nor the Treasury Department nor IRS agree with that proposal.

Mr. Chairman, I disagree with the bill’s restrictive TSM language, as does the Committee on Ways and Means. The IRS is not, Mr. Chairman, and never has been and probably never will be an important public agency. We know that, but it has a job to do. The bill does not provide the IRS with adequate tools to accomplish its mission. It is a pyrrhic position, I believe, to stand and say we want to cut the deficit, cut spending, but to cut IRS spending to the extent that the deficit will be made higher.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, moving on to the Postal Service, I am pleased and we are not fulfilling our agreement with the U.S. Postal Service which we agreed to some years ago and fully funding what we owe them. Now, it is a very small portion of the postal budget, but we ought to meet our own responsibilities. We are not doing it in this bill.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, this bill un- duly restricts the operations of our newly invigorated office of National Drug Control Policy. I know my friend, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. Hastert], has discussed this with the chairman and will be speaking to this issue.

The President has appointed, in my opinion, a true leader in Gen. Barry McCaffrey. Here is a man who began his career as a 27-year-old cadet at West Point and retired from active duty as the most highly decorated officer and the youngest four-star general in the U.S. Army. Most recently he was the commander of the U.S. military’s Southern Command, from which a lot of our drugs come, where he saw firsthand the efforts of all U.S. agencies involved in counternarcotics.

As President Clinton said when he announced General McCaffrey’s nomination, “I am asking that he lead our Nation’s battle against drugs at home and abroad.” To succeed, Mr. Chairman, he needs a force far larger than he has ever commanded before. He needs all of us. Every one of us has to play a role.

I believe we ought to give General McCaffrey the staff he needs and the opportunity to lead this Nation in our battle against drugs.

The good news is I understand that we are going to be doing that and I will certainly support that.

The bill before us demonstrates the continuing balance between personal and governmental responsibility. Yes, we each must pay taxes to the IRS, but, in turn, we expect good service and timely refund checks. The committee’s bill cuts so much from IRS that I question whether or not the IRS can meet its basic responsibility as does the gentleman from Texas, Chairman Archer.

On a much more macro level, every American must be involved in stopping gang violence, ending illegal drug use, and halting the burning of churches, black and white. Yet this bill reminds us that Government can and does play a role in many of these important fights. Those that choose to level criticism on the Government and on those they call bureaucrats ought to review the importance we attach to the accomplishments of the men and women that work at the Department of the Treasury and other agencies included in this bill.
Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT] so that we may enter into a colloquy with the gentleman from Iowa. I want to clarify the purpose of the gentleman's amendment.

Does the gentleman intend to provide sufficient resources for the Office of National Drug Control Policy to hire a staff of 154, including 30 military detailees?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTERT. I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I would say to the gentleman, the answer is yes.

This amendment will provide for full funding of the President's request for a staff of 154. I think it is important that the ONDCP have the resources to carry out its mission.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I object to the second part of the amendment, which would prevent ONDCP from spending $2.5 million until the House and Senate Committee on Appropriations and ONDCP reach an agreement on a revised staffing plan.

At what point would the gentleman from Iowa propose to lift that restriction?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. If the gentleman from Iowa were to propose to lift that restriction, the amendment would provide for full funding of the President's request for a staff of 154, including 30 military detailees.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, I want to be clear my concern is not with the leadership of ONDCP or with its mission. I support the mission of ONDCP. I believe that General McCaffrey has made great strides in turning around an agency that has been long neglected by the Clinton administration.

I want to be clear my concern is not with the leadership of ONDCP or with its mission but with the draft staffing plan that funds too many support staff at the expense of people who can actually coordinate the war on drugs and evaluate programs. I think we owe it to the taxpayer to ensure that ONDCP gives us the biggest bang for the buck, so to speak.

Let me also say to the gentleman that ONDCP has already made some important strides in addressing our concerns. The staffing plan that came out of the subcommittee initially marked up this bill. I fully expect we will have an acceptable staffing plan before we begin the House-Senate conference on this legislation. Once we have that agreement, it is my intention to withdraw a provision restricting the use of the funds from the bill at conference.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, I support the $1 million allocated for the State Model Drug Law Conferences. We understand the gentleman is open to considering that issue in conference where this funding may be most appropriately obtained to ensure the implementation of an aggressive antidrug strategy.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, I want to express my concerns with the strong language contained in the conference report regarding the ONDCP staffing levels and the ONDCP staffing plan.

I would hope the gentleman's intent is to reverse this language in the conference report once he has agreement on a staffing plan, and I understand that everyone is committed to reaching a swift agreement in general. Many of us have strong expectations that this will happen very soon and the monies will be released by the time this bill goes to conference.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Again, the gentleman from Illinois is correct. Once we have agreement, the strong language will no longer apply. At that time I will recommend to the conference committee that it be reversed. I fully expect and wish to drop the harsh report language in conference, and also to drop all restrictions on spending so ONDCP, under its new and more effective leadership, has our strong support for its mission and has the resources necessary to reduce drug abuse in this country.

I would also like to compliment the gentleman from Iowa for his hard work on this issue.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman from Iowa yielding on this and, as always, for his hard work and diligence and excellent craftsmanship.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, may we have the time remaining on each side?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. Hoyer] has 12 minutes remaining and the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] has 18 1/4 minutes remaining.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. Deal] to discuss his concerns about the ONDCP.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Chairman, as the gentleman just mentioned, I rise to engage the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee in a colloquy with regard to the postal facility in Dalton, GA.

Mr. Chairman, I want to bring to the gentleman's attention again the consideration of the situation in the postal facility in Dalton, GA. Dalton has become recognized internationally as the home of the carpet industry. As a result, tremeñes in recent years has placed an enormous burden on the local post office. Traffic along South Thornton Avenue is often congested due to the overwhelming number of consumers that are lacking adequate parking spaces there.

Automobile accidents have become a weekly occurrence. Not only is parking limited but also are the post office boxes. Currently, there is an unacceptable number of citizens and businesses on waiting lists that are in need of postal boxes.

Much has changed in Dalton, GA, since 1966 when this postal facility was established. I would appreciate the committee's support in urging the U.S. Postal Service to consider building a new postal facility that provides safe, accessible, postal services which meet the needs of the Dalton community.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I understand the gentleman's concern and also that the citizens of Dalton are in need of a new post office. Although this appropriations bill does not fund the construction of new post offices, the committee supports the proposed project and encourages the Postal Service to continue working with the residents of Dalton to ensure that a new postal facility is constructed.
that taxpayers expect and deserve regarding the payment of their taxes, until that time we should not be giving the IRS the leeway which it desires. So the money that is in this bill is fenced. There are hundreds of employees in the Internal Revenue Service that will no longer be employed upon that project. Some may find work elsewhere within the agency. Others will not.

It is a difficult decision. The subcommittee, however, has come down with a decision that it must be done because it cannot countenance the continued waste of taxpayers' money through the inefficiency of the IRS. Especially the higher the tax rates have become in recent years, the more natural opposition there is for taxpayers to comply voluntarily with the tax laws.

Therefore, if we expect the taxpayers to submit their money to the Federal Government, we had better be making sure that that money is properly spent, especially within the agency that collects it.

I applaud the chairman for his efforts on this. I know there will be further revisions to how we are handling that as the process moves through the House and the Senate.

Especially, Mr. Chairman, within the context of this overall bill, we realize the importance of holding the line in reducing Federal spending. I wish that I could say that this bill overall represents an actual reduction in overall spending. Within the context of a $23 billion spending measure, the increase from last year's authorized spending is $51 million. Frankly, it would not even be that were it not for mandatory payments to Federal retirement accounts. If we left out the Federal retirements, it would not even be that were it not for mandatory payments to Federal retirement accounts.

So it is certainly holding the line and we wanted to be able to go even further so that taxpayers have to surrender their hard-earned money, at least they will recognize that somebody here is trying to make sure that it does more good for them.

I ask Members' support of the bill.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA].

(Mrs. MORELLA asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Chairman, the provisions in the Treasury-Postal fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill directly impact my constituents. I represent tens of thousands of Federal employees, many of whom work at the Treasury Department, IRS U.S. Customs Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Secret Service, Postal Service, General Services Administration, and Executive Office of the President—all funded by the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill. This bill is all of these employees—America's tax payers—in many ways. While this bill contains many provisions that will improve the way in which the Government operates, it also contains some very troubling cuts to the IRS and restrictions on a woman's right to choose.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose the IRS cuts contained in this bill. This year the IRS will lose $51 million for the Internal Revenue Service than the fiscal year 1996 appropriation. Most of these reductions are in the IRS information systems account; it is cut by 29 percent from last year's appropriation. This bill restricts the expenditure of virtually all IRS tax systems modernization [TSM] funding and will require the IRS to immediately eliminate all but 150 of its 2,016 tax systems modernization employees—all from the D.C. area. These TSM employees' knowledge and expertise are critical to the success of the TSM system. The bill provides that the Defense Department will contract out the tax systems modernization functions, despite the fact that DOD does not want this function and would need to hire and train new employees. Furthermore, the buyout authority in this bill will provide little or no benefit for TSM employees because they will lose their jobs immediately upon enactment of this bill. This bill is devastating to my constituents who are employed by the IRS, but the real losers are the taxpayers who will become increasingly frustrated in dealing with the IRS if it does not have the resources to operate efficiently and correct its flaws.

This bill also calls for an additional $26 million to be appropriated to private contractors for a second debt collection pilot program. Last year's Treasury-Postal appropriations bill called for a $13 million pilot project to assess private debt collectors' ability to protect taxpayers privacy and fairness. This project has only been operating for just over a month, and it is far too early to assess its success. The ways and means committee opposes appropriating this $26 million for a second pilot project before we can evaluate this year's project. Before we invest additional tax dollars in contracting out programs, existing programs should be carefully analyzed. Despite these serious concerns, I want to commend Mr. LIGHTFOOT for addressing the year 2000 computer issue.

The year 2000 is rapidly approaching and the next millennium is expected to be a time of great change. Unfortunately, a vast majority of our Nation's computer systems are not equipped to handle the simple change of date initiated by the turn of the century. Most of the computer software in use today employ two-digit date fields. Consequently, at the turn of the century, computer software will be unable to differentiate between the years 1900 and 2000. If this software problem is not addressed promptly, it will render the vast majority of computer information unusable.

I am pleased that Chairman LIGHTFOOT has agreed to my recommendation and included language on the year 2000 problem in the report to accompany H.R. 3756, the Treasury, Postal Service Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1997. The report language directs the Office of Management and Budget to assess the risk Government computer systems are facing from the turn of the century. OMB is required to report to the Appropriations Committees and submit a report to Congress which first, includes a cost estimate to ensure software code date fields are converted by the year 2000; second, delineates a planned strategy to ensure that all information technology, as defined by the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996, purchased by an agency will operate in 2000 without technical modifications; and third, outlines a timetable for implementation of the planned strategy. The report will be submitted to the House Committee on Appropriations, House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, and the House Science Committee no later than November 1, 1996.

As chairwoman of the Technology Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, I convened a hearing on the year 2000 computer problem on May 14, 1996. At that hearing, computer expert, Peter DeJager, testified that it will cost the Federal Government $30 billion to correct the year 2000 problem in all of the computer systems. Senator Bob Dole indicated in his testimony that each agency will have to review every line of its software code, a process that could take years to complete.

The deadline, January 1, 2000, cannot be postponed. If Federal Government computer systems are not corrected by that time, our national security and Federal services affecting the well-being of millions of individuals will be jeopardized. The Department of Defense has testified that a majority of its weapons systems depend on computer software that must be upgraded. In addition, the Social Security Administration, Veterans' Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, and Agriculture Department all use date-sensitive computer software to provide benefits. These computer programs must be corrected before the end of the century or vital services will be disrupted.

The Treasury, Postal Service Appropriations Act requires Federal agencies to develop a comprehensive plan to address the problem and ensures that a solution be in place by January 1, 2000. I commend Chairman LIGHTFOOT and the members of the Appropriations Committee for their cooperation in addressing the year 2000 problem.

The Federal Government is only one piece of the puzzle. This fall, I intend to convene a second hearing on the impact of the year 2000 on State government and private sector computer systems. Estimates to correct the year 2000 problem in the private sector alone as high as $600 billion. The challenge ahead is daunting, Chairman LIGHTFOOT has taken a significant first step in addressing the year 2000 computer dilemma.

This legislation makes important improvements in the way the Government operates. It enhances rights through an IRS training program. It closes a loophole to prevent felons from applying to the BATF in order to have their right to own a firearm restored. This bill provides up to $500,000 to reimburse former White House Travel Office employees for any attorney fees they incurred in defending themselves against false allegations made at
the time they were fired. It also bans the use of funds by the Executive Officer of the President to request any FBI investigation report unless that individual gives his or her consent or when such a request is required for national security.

This legislation includes buyouts for IRS, BATF, and the U.S. Customs Service to facilitate downsizing. Federal employee buyouts have been the subject of many hearings in the Civil Service subcommittee on which I served. Properly administered buyouts can help ease the pain of downsizing for both employees and their agencies, and I strongly support the inclusion of this buyout authority. It is important, however, that employees have enough time to make informed choices based on both their personal situation and the agency's situation and that employees who are retirement eligible may also take buyouts. I will be supporting an amendment to the buyout law to allow employees to use the buyout authority through March 31, 1997.

Despite the important additions to this year's Treasury-Postal bill that I have mentioned, I regret the inclusion of those cuts to the IRS. We feel that they have damaged an important piece of legislation with many critical provisions.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM], chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

I want to use this opportunity, first of all, to congratulate the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] on a good product that he has produced here today that we are considering. From the standpoint of the law enforcement end of this, and that which I deal with on a great deal over on the authorizing side, I believe that this is a very, very commendable bill.

The bill increases law enforcement programs, as I understand it, by some $410 million over fiscal year 1996, specifically for drug interdiction, tracing explosives, combating illegal interstate gun trafficking, fighting child pornography, and gang-related activities.

The bill also provides an additional $24 million to supplement the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms' investigation of the recent church arson cases. Overall, the bill provides $23.2 billion in budget authority for the Treasury Department, Postal Service, and other government operations. It is $1.6 billion less than the President requested, but $51.5 million more than last year.

The bottom line is that in this big humongous piece of legislation that deals with the turf of appropriators, that is under the subcommittee presenting this bill, we have got a really good shake for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and those that are under Treasury that have a connection with law enforcement. Those agencies are vital agencies to the protection of the American citizenry. We have seen in recent weeks how vital those are.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has the responsibility for all of the arson work in this country, for all of the explosive concerns that we have, for all of the gun issues that are so volatile out there in the countryside. While they can be a very controversial law enforcement agency, and we have had times when we have criticized them for their actions in certain instances, such as Waco and Ruby Ridge, the truth of the matter is that day in and day out they are a law enforcement agency protecting public safety, and they need the support of this Congress. They need the resources that are involved in the very items that I named a moment ago that this bill would provide for them.

In addition to that, I know that Mr. LIGHTFOOT was able to work with the court systems as well and to the degree it is under his jurisdiction, he has supported it. I am very glad to be here to urge adoption of this bill.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. VISCLSOKY], a member of the subcommittee.

Mr. VISCLSKOY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I want to draw particular attention to one provision of the bill that I strongly support, and that is the inclusion of $24 million for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to expand their ongoing investigation of the recent wave of church burnings occurring across the United States. Since January of last year, 36 African-American church services have been bombed or burned to the ground by arsonists. These burnings have destroyed important sources of American history and left small rural communities gripped by an epidemic of terror and fear unknown since the days when marauding Klansmen destroyed important sources of American history and left small rural communities gripped by an epidemic of terror and fear unknown since the days when marauding Klansmen destroyed lives and property at will.

I am saddened to witness a climate in which many of America's most sacred institutions can be subjected to such abuse. Currently an estimated 1,000 Federal and State investigators are involved in the ongoing investigations, and ATF alone is spending more than $1 million a month for these investigations.

I applaud Chairman LIGHTFOOT for the leadership he has shown in his decision to include $24 million for ATF to expend in their investigations of these arsons. I also applaud his decision to create a joint Treasury-J ustice Department task force whose investigation will be as uncompromising in the case of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms' investigation as the investigation of the Department of Justice in the case of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. This by the chairman complements legislation recently signed into law by the President, the Church Arson Prevention Act.

These new laws make it easier for Federal authorities to investigate crimes against places of worship and broadens jurisdictional authority in church arson cases. I applaud the new law, but I feel the action taken by the Church Arson Prevention Act will be too little too late to prevent the kind of violence that has taken place. Clearly funds for additional personnel and resources will ultimately prove to be the difference between success and failure in the investigations.

This Congress must send a strong message that hate and intolerance will not go unchallenged and that the actions that we are taking today will be national in scope.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] for yielding this time to me.

I appreciate the gentleman's work and the work of the chairman of the committee and wish to say as well that on this side of the aisle we will miss the chairman as he retires from the Congress.

We are at the end of the toughest year in memory for Federal employees and for Federal agencies. It can only get better, and I know this has been a tough bill to work on, in part for that reason. I would like to call the attention of the House to a few issues that give me particular concern.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy now has a new director, and there is no doubt that at least I seem to me as he deserves the right to start without staff reductions. On that side of the aisle a major issue has been made of the increase in some sectors of drug use, especially among young people. The message that we are serious about curtailting that use would be to allow the Office of National Drug Control Policy to proceed without undue cuts.

There is no time to waste on this issue, and if it is enveloping us again, it rises, it falls, it rises again.

I also regret that there has been competition for funding between the IRS...
and the Treasury, the IRS making money, the Treasury making peace. I commend the committee that there is $24 million in this bill for the ATF to combat torching of churches. I appreciate, and I am sure America appreciates, the activity of the subcommittee on this matter.

But there is a false tradeoff here. If we are going to lay off thousands upon thousands of IRS employees—and that could happen—who can make money and therefore reduce the deficit, we are making false choices. We have cut into not only the compliance initiative, but the existing operations of the IRS, an unreasonable decision if ever there was one. This is no time to slow up on collecting revenue.

I just want to say a word about the Postal Service because the story there has been the story of broken promises since we have spun the Service off. I do regret that the Workman’s Compensation matter remains unresolved. We promise the Post Office and the IRS to the IRS employees that that matter would be dealt with by this body, not by the new Service.

It reminds me of the unfunded pension liability issue in the District of Columbia. They are currently funding pensions, but the House has transferred to the city unfunded pension liability from when the city was on its watch. We are doing the same thing to the Postal Service. In this jurisdiction the ranking member knows that we have had difficult problems with Service. We do not need to have the Postal Service take that money out of services.

Finally, we are once again here with no Federal funding for abortions for Federal employees who happen to be women. We are talking about a million women of reproductive age. We have done the same thing to military women and to women in the Federal service, alone among American women. We choose them out for special insult. They are bunched only with the women of the District of Columbia, poor women, who cannot have abortions paid for by our own funds.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. VISCOLOSKY] for his fine words and glad I had a few minutes to gather my composure to say that, and also the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] as well.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS].

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Chairman, I just want to associate myself with the words previously of the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mr. MORELLA], my friend, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER], and my colleague from the District of Columbia in talking about some of the cuts that are going to be felt by the IRS central office this year, the cuts in the TSM information systems.

The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER] from the Committee of Ways and Means has written the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations writing about the inadvisability of these cuts. As someone who has served for many years in local government, we found out many ways the best way to get revenue is the taxpayers who owe the money is to insure that they pay it. This is Congress, the previous Congress, embarked on a very ambitious way to go about collecting this, and it was reversed last year, and now we are cutting back even further the IRS central headquarters in the way we are going to go about collecting these taxes that are due.

The best thing we should do before we start raising taxes from other people and looking around for other cuts is to make sure the people who owe the revenue pay it, and that is all this system does.

Now, it has had some problems from time to time, but I think the chairman’s words in this case are very, very well chosen. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. VISCOLOSKY] said that Mr. LIGHTFOOT, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. HOYER] has written the Committee on Appropriations to restore funding of the important TSM information systems and the nonsystems collection, so on that part of this bill I hope we can amend it.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN].

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Chairman, I am going to have to vote against this bill. I do not think it is a responsible bill in any number of areas. The one that disturbs me the most one is that clearly not even penny wise and pound foolish; it is even penny foolish and pound unwise, if there is such an expression. I cannot imagine why we would cut so deeply in the IRS operations.

As my colleagues know, from the time of Jesus Christ, tax collectors have been beaten up on. Nobody likes tax collectors. They have one of the worst jobs in the world. But when we complete our tax collection system with any other country, we do a better job. We collect a higher proportion of revenue. We do it in a far less corrupt way than any other country, and the fact is there is no corruption in the Internal Revenue Service. These are good, professional people.

We ought not be eliminating 7,500 full-time permanent people, and this idea to take the tax system’s modernization program and give it to the Defense Department? The Defense Department has written us a letter. Here is the Undersecretary of Defense. He does not want it. He says we cannot operate this, we do not collect taxes, we do not know what we would be doing. In fact, it says if we were to implement the direction that was given us, it is very unlikely to be successful. And yet this bill gives this tax system modernization responsibility to the Department of Defense. No, thank you; I am sure that is not what the taxpayers want, and I do not want cuts that are going to result in a billion dollars less revenue, because that is what the estimate would be. It will increase the Federal budget deficit by a billion dollars.

Mr. Chairman, as the previous speaker, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] said, “You know the first thing we ought to do is to collect the revenue that is due us.” How can we do that by cutting back on the Internal Revenue Service?

This is not a good bill; it is not a responsible bill. It think we ought to give the consideration the American taxpayer than this bill does.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada [Mr. ENROSS] for a colloquy.

Mr. ENROSS. Mr. Chairman, I rise to engage the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. LIGHTFOOT, in a colloquy.

I want to thank the gentleman for this bill with address one of the most urgent infrastructure needs in the U.S. Court system. Under the legislation before us today, $540 million is available for constructing and acquiring Federal buildings, one of which is in Las Vegas, NV. How can we do that by conflicting obligations and the people who owe the revenue pay it, and that is all this system does.

Now, it has had some problems from time to time, but I think the chairman’s words in this case are very, very well chosen. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. VISCOLOSKY] said that Mr. LIGHTFOOT, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. HOYER] has written the Committee on Appropriations to restore funding of the important TSM information systems and the nonsystems collection, so on that part of this bill I hope we can amend it.

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Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN].
Mr. ENSIGN. I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, it would be my intent to continue working on behalf of the Las Vegas, NV, courthouse because it is a high priority project and one that has identified the need for this building, and I personally believe we should move forward with its construction. I also appreciate the gentleman's efforts in getting the city of Las Vegas to donate a construction site for this building. This will be the overall cost of construction, and something that we should see more of, I think, the combination of Federal and local cooperation on these kinds of projects.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his support of courts in southern Nevada.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of the time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, this debate as we open consideration of the Treasury-Postal bill has centered on the Internal Revenue Service. We have done enforcement and collection. Mr. Hoyer and I support them. We have done well by some other portions of the bill, and I am appreciative of the fact that we did not have the conflict which was political, in my opinion, last year with references to the operations of the Director of the Internal Revenue Service, the Treasury-Postal Service, and the White House, which I fund. I think that is appropriate in the comity between the legislative and executive branches.

Mr. Chairman, we have focused on IRS because it is central to the operations of government. We have come together as a people to perform certain functions. We argue about those functions. That is the purpose of this body and the body across the way, the Congress of the United States sent here to make determinations as to how this Government ought to be operated and what it ought to do.

In the process, we have taxed ourselves, we have said we will commit a certain portion of our resources to public efforts. All societies do that, and all societies have arguments about how much those taxes ought to be and what ought to be the purposes for which they are spent.

But I say to my colleagues, if you are a proponent of education, this bill puts at risk. That is not, as I said earlier, the gentleman from Maryland, STENY HOYER, alone saying that. That is not STENY HOYER who, like my colleagues from the Washington metropolitan area, represents a lot of the people who will be fired because of the lack of resources in this bill.

It is the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Archer], not perceived to be a liberal left-wing Democrat who wants to throw money at problems, saying that this bill will not work, this bill puts at risk deficit reduction. I do not know how the IRS to function as it is required to do. That is the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Archer], and the chairwoman, the gentlemanwoman from New York [Mrs. Bigelow], speaking. I hope my colleagues will oppose this bill.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] is recognized for 3½ minutes.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, before we get into the debate further on the bill, there are a couple of things that were said earlier I would like to correct. Our friend, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. Moran], left the House with impression that the Department of Defense would be operating the tax systems modernization program. That is not correct.

What we are asking the Department of Defense to do is merely write the contract for putting together tax systems modernization. In no way, shape, or form would we have the Department of Defense involved in tax collection. That just does not make sense. We would not do it. This is a very complex system that has to be developed. We were trying to keep from reinventing the wheel. We looked at the various government agencies that have expertise with writing big contracts, and the Department of Defense rose to the top. Basically, DOD would be hired to only write the contract. The management of TSA would be retained at all times within the IRS.

Additionally, as the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. Hooyer] said, and I agree, there are not any major political disagreements in this bill as it relates to ideologies between parties. We do have a difference of opinion on what the bill will or will not do. Personally do not feel funding levels in this bill will jeopardize our tax collecting capabilities. Those particular accounts have been funded at the President's request or above for the most part, and we are going to work to ensure that our taxpayers' dollars are spent.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, we have focused on IRS. As has been mentioned, there are other things in the bill on which there seems to be a general level of agreement, particularly the beefing up we have done in the law enforcement area as it relates to drugs, missing, and exploited children, the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

But, we as the newly emerging chairman, made requirements of agencies, if they are going to buy something, we have to have a justification for that. The FEC has provided us justification on a new computer system they would be interested in. We have fended a little money from the White House for a computer system they are asking for because we do not have that justification yet, but I think that is just doing our job and protecting the taxpayers' dollars that were sent here to do that. If somebody wants something, let them justify it to us. All of us certainly have to do that in our private lives. If you are going to borrow money for a car, the bank wants to know why; how are you going to pay it back? I do not think the IRS should be exempt from that kind of thinking as well.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is a tough bill, but we are in tough times. We have saved something in the neighborhood of over $1 billion if we pass this bill, combining the fiscal year 1996 and fiscal year 1997 Treasury-Postal bills together. I could not urge my colleagues to support this fiscal package. Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the textile enforcement initiative contained in the Treasury-Postal Service appropriations bill for fiscal year 1997.

This bill includes $1 billion earmarked to the Customs Service for enforcement of textile and apparel trade laws, along with other trade enforcement measures. Customs is to use these funds to pay for 186 full-time-equivalent employees, 100 of whom are dedicated to the enforcement of textile and apparel trade laws. Both the fiscal year 1995 and fiscal year 1996 appropriations bills contained the same textile enforcement initiative.

This funding keeps faith with a pledge the Clinton administration made to 12 Representatives 2 years ago. We asked the President to commit these resources because textile and apparel trade restrictions seem to be honored more in the breach than in the enforcement. Customs has estimated that as much as $4 billion in textiles/apparel may enter this country each year illegally, as a result of transshipping. This is a multibillion dollar problem which may mean a loss of up to 100,000 textile and apparel jobs.

We are pleased to report that in a letter of November 16, 1993, that Customs will hire 50 additional employees to work exclusively, to the extent practical on non-NAFTA textile enforcement and 50 employees to work on
NAFTA-related textile enforcement. The President also pledged that Customs' commercial program, associated with both the enforce-
ment of NAFTA and other textile apparel enforcement, "will be held harmless from our governmentwide effort to reduce employment levels.

The Government Operation's Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer and Monetary Affairs, which I chaired in the last Congress, held hearings to assess Customs' resources to deal with the textile transshipment problem, and problems of a particular NAFTA's rule of origin with respect to textile and apparel prod-
ucts. Our hearing record showed that as many as 33.5 million textile articles are transshipped to this country each year. Our record also showed that Customs needs more manpower and resources to combat effectively this sort of fraud and evasion. With inadequate resources to police existing laws, Customs can hardly be expected to take on this additional burden. That is why this initiative is so important. I am, aware of the tight funding constraints in which the Appropriations Committee operated this year. But I believe that the committee has made a wise long-term investment. If past experience is any guide, this small increment of extra money will more than pay for itself in additional and more efficient law enforcement, additional specialized revenues for the Government. I wish to com-
plement both Chairman LIGHTFOOT and ranking Democrat HOYER for their foresight in support-
ing the initiative.

These extra resources will not put an end to the problem of evasion, circumvention, and transshipment in textile and apparel trade, but they will help. I urge support for this initiative.

All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-
minute rule.

The amendment printed in part 1 of House Report 104-671 is adopted.

Before consideration of any other amendment, it shall be in order to con-
sider the amendments printed in part 2 of the report. Each amendment may be considered only in the order printed, may be offered only by a Member des-
ignated in the report, shall be consid-
ered debatable for the time specified in the report, equally di-
vided, and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the ques-
tion.

During consideration of the bill for further amendment, the Chair may ac-
cord priority in recognition to a Mem-
ber offering an amendment that he has printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amend-
ments will be considered read.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone until a time
during further consideration in the Committee a request for a recorded vote on any amendment and may reduce to not less than 5 minutes the time for voting by electronic de-
vice on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote by electronic device without intervening business, provided that the time for voting by electronic device on the first in any series of questions shall not be less than 15 minutes.

After the reading of the final lines of the bill, a motion that the Committee of the Whole rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted shall, if offered by the majority leader or a designee, have precedence over a motion to amend.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk reads as follows:

BE IT ENACTED, Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, namely:

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 104-671.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. LIGHTFOOT

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I offer amendment No. 1.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as fol-

Amendment No. 1. Offered by Mr. LIGHTFOOT: On page 39, line 18, after the colon:

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield amendment No. 1.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] and a Member opposed will each control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the amendment that we are talking about restores a total of $2,268,000 for salaries and expenses of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, which would be sufficient to come up to the 154 FTE proposed by the President.

It deletes funding for drug prevention public service announcements, it shifts $1 million in funding for conference on international drug enforcement training, from salaries and expenses to the Counter-drug Technology Assessment Center. It fences 2.5 million of the amounts available for salaries and expenses pending receipt of an acceptable 1997 organizational plan that is acceptable to all of us, both the drug czar and the Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I believe this will win the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a Member who wishes to speak in opposition to the amendment?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. chairman, I am not opposed to the amendment, but I ask unanimous consent to control half the time.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise on behalf of this amendment, as a strong supporter of the drug czar, he has taken on a lot of difficult problems that we all have had to face, and I think we are doing the right thing by making sure that they get the money they need. This amendment will not get any real work done. It is simply a request for funding, and I think we need to give it to him. We need to give him the money he needs to do the job. The drug czar gets the money he needs to build his office. The American taxpayer gets the assurance that their money will be used ef-
ficiently and effectively to fight the war on drugs.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank everyone who has worked very hard to make this come together. We all think, have the same goal in mind, and now we have ironed out a lot of the differences that were there, and some misunderstandings that were there. I think we are on the right track. I would urge the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there a Member who wishes to speak in opposition to the amendment?

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There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise on behalf of this amendment, as a strong supporter of the drug czar, he has taken on a lot of difficult problems that we all have had to face, and I think we are doing the right thing by making sure that they get the money they need. This amendment will not get any real work done. It is simply a request for funding, and I think we need to give it to him. We need to give him the money he needs to do the job. The drug czar gets the money he needs to build his office. The American taxpayer gets the assurance that their money will be used ef-
ficiently and effectively to fight the war on drugs.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank everyone who has worked very hard to make this come together. We all think, have the same goal in mind, and now we have ironed out a lot of the differences that were there, and some misunderstandings that were there. I think we are on the right track. I would urge the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.
friend, the chairman, that the Office of National Drug Control Policy, created by the Congress for the purposes of overseeing and coordinating our fight against drugs, is a critically important office. The scourge of drugs that invade our communities and undermine the health of our people and puts at risk our children is a very high priority for the country to combat, and, if at all possible, eliminate.

I would say to my friend, the gentleman from Iowa, that he misperceives, I think, what the Office of National Drug Control Policy is all about. In his comments with reference to the personnel here, he suggests that we have a lot of people who are not policy people. Perhaps, he believes this is top-heavy, as I think one of his contents was.

But we must remember what this office is. This adds $2.5 million, but Mr. Chairman, we spend somewhere in the neighborhood of $11 billion to $13 billion on the drug fighting program in America. I do not have the figure off the of my head, but it is billions and billions and billions of dollars, and thousands and thousands and thousands of people.

We knew that Justice, with the DEA, we knew that Treasury, with Customs, ATF, other law enforcement agencies, including even Secret Service, FINCEN on money laundering, FBI back in Justice, the Health and Human Services agency in terms of drug rehabilitation and other efforts to try to combat the demand side of this cancer that afflicts America, we knew there were an awful lot of people involved in this fight against drugs. The drug office, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, was created to oversee and organize this battle.

The 54 people is a drop in the bucket, an infinitesimal amount of the number of people who are engaged in this battle against drugs.

I said in my opening statement that General McCaffrey could not have been a better selection by the President of the United States, President Clinton. The organizational structure that he presented to the committee and to all of us was one that said “I want to get a handle on what we are doing”, for exactly the reason that he was selected, because he is used to being the head of an effort to combat an enemy that would destroy us, and to bring together the disparate elements into a unified, victorious, successful force.

I suggest to my friend, the chairman, that is what this is about. I am very pleased, as I said, Mr. Chairman, that the chairman of the subcommittee’s amendment is the addition of General McCaffrey’s proposal. I think that was good policy when it was proposed. I think it is good policy now. I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, to join the chairman, the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT], in the support of General McCaffrey’s proposal.

The CHAIRMAN. All time has expired.

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Iowa. [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 104-671.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. METCALF

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I offer amendment No. 2.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 2. offered by Mr. METCALF:

Page 118, after line 16, insert the following new section:

SEC. 637. For purposes of each provision of law amended by section 704(a)(2) of the Ethics Reform Act of 1989 (5 U.S.C. 3338 note), no adjustment under section 5309 of title 5, United States Code, shall be considered to have taken effect in fiscal year 1997 in the rates of basic pay for the statutory pay systems.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] and a Member opposed will each control 15 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to claim the time in opposition.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] will control 15 minutes in opposition.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF].

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am joined by the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIARHT] and the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. LUTHER] in a bipartisan proposal to freeze the pay of the Members of Congress.

As my colleagues are aware, the cost-of-living adjustment for Congress is a permanent law and it will take place automatically. Without our amendment, Members of Congress will receive more than a $3,000 raise.

The Metcalf-Tiarht-Luther amendment is exactly the same as the amendment passed last year. It will freeze the pay of the Members of Congress, the Vice President, Members of the Cabinet, Federal judges, and senior administrative heads in the Executive Schedule pay levels 1 through 5.

It is my understanding that the individuals covered in this amendment make more than $100,000 a year. In fact, Members of Congress, as we know, make $133,600 per year.

We all know that there are unique financial demands made on Members of Congress. We have to maintain a place to stay in the Nation’s Capital and a residence in our home State. But many American families have to make do with a far smaller salary.

It is our No. 1 job to save this Nation from bankruptcy by balancing the budget. I believe that Members of Congress should not get any pay raise, at least until the budget is balanced.

We are working hard to save money wherever we can. This pay freeze will save $7 million the first year and $10 million every year thereafter. This is $47 million in savings by the year 2001 just from this 1-year’s pay freeze, even if it is not next year. Frankly, we must do this during this Nation’s budget crisis. Congress must lead by example.

I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment and with great regret that the very distinguished gentleman from Washington chose to come forward with this amendment.

We gave up honoraria a number of years ago because, in fact, that was a practice that had escaped reason and common sense. In an effort to make an even trade, because Members were always reluctant to vote for pay raises, it was deemed that we would get a smaller COLA than we would have gotten. The Congress decided it would be a smaller COLA, than what would the general Federal employee. However, at least from time to time, we would expect to get an increase.

The fact is that that plan broke down. Members of Congress have not gotten a raise in fiscal year 1994 or in the calendar year 1994 or in the calendar year 1995 and now again in the calendar year 1996. In fact, adding it up, going back to the years 1970 to date, we see that the Federal employees got a total of 22.4 percent in pay increases, inclusive of pay raises in the last 3 years; Federal retirees got a pay raise of 30.5 percent since 1970, inclusive of pay raises in those last 3 years; and the Social Security recipients got a total of 39.9 percent, inclusive of those for the last 3 years. The Members of Congress since that time are among the lowest increase. They got a 21.4 percent increase, which is well below most of the others.

Members’ pay is $133,600, compared to a Supreme Court Associate Justice, who makes $164,100. A U.S. Cabinet Secretary makes $148,400; the county executive of Fairfax County, Virginia makes $145,916; the superintendent of schools of Dade County, FL, makes $141,271; the Federal Reserve Regional President in Chicago makes $133,600; the chief of Los Angeles County makes $145,916; the superintendent of schools of Dade County, FL, makes $133,600; various CEO’s of various companies make anywhere from $600,000 to $800,000 to a few million dollars.

The chief administrator, Riverside County, CA, makes $149,406; the fire chief of Los Angeles County makes $144,000; the city manager of Dallas, TX, makes $150,165. Members of Congress, who make $133,600, compared to the board of directors of the United States of America and again we make $133,600.
Some people say, "That is too much. They haven't been doing their job." I would suggest in the last year and a half we have saved $80 billion in the discretionary appropriations process. We are doing our job.

The message of our amendment sends the American people a simple and straightforward message: Congress has decided to freeze the pay raise in the open and in the light of day. Even though this amendment will save over $7 million next year alone, it is less about saving money for the American taxpayer than it is about doing the right thing. This issue should be conducted in an up or down vote in the open. The American people deserve no less than that.

When this country has a $5 trillion debt and when we are struggling to balance the Federal budget, I do not believe it is prudent for this Congress or high-ranking Government officials within the administration to accept a pay raise. We have repeatedly asked the American people to tighten their belts and help us balance the budget. We all know we must lead by example and prove that we are here to serve the people and make America better. This Congress has already demonstrated its commitment to integrity and maintaining the trust of the American people. Congressional reform is a top priority, from adopting strong internal reforms to enacting lobbying reform and taking them to the floor later this week. This Congress has done more to return openness and honesty to this institution than any other Congress in recent history.

Mr. Chairman, I am not a man of much wealth. I am not a mean-spirited millionaire trying to pull a ploy on the Members of Congress. This job is not about a paycheck for me. I am here to serve the people in the Fourth District of Kansas. They want a balanced budget and a bright future for their kids. Until we are able to achieve that, I cannot ask them for a raise.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to act and maintain that commitment, to balance the budget first by voting for this amendment. Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TIAHRT. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I understand the gentleman's premise of respect to Members of Congress. I do not agree with it, but I understand the premise. How does the gentleman justify freezing judges and SES's in the same process, however? Mr. TIAHRT. I believe we all have a commitment to balance the budget, even those in the administration.

Mr. HOYER. The judges are not in the administration.

Mr. TIAHRT. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Gekas].

Mr. Gekas. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, last year Congress acted to freeze the salaries of Members of Congress following the automatic pay raise. The Metcalf-Tiahrt amendment would continue this freeze for an additional year.

The message of our amendment sends the American people a simple and straightforward message: Congress has decided to freeze the pay raise in the open and in the light of day. Even though this amendment will save over $7 million next year alone, it is less about saving money for the American taxpayer than it is about doing the right thing. This issue should be conducted in an up or down vote in the open. The American people deserve no less than that.

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Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TIAHRT. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

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Mr. HOYER. The judges are not in the administration.

Mr. TIAHRT. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Gekas].

Mr. Gekas. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, if I had the time I would ask for a parliamentary rule as to whether this not can by unanimous consent call for a division of the question, but it counts against my time so I am not going to do that.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. HOYER. Does a parliamentary inquiry count against the time that is allotted to a speaker?
Mr. GEKAS. Yes, Mr. Chairman. The parliamentary inquiry is, How can I pose the question to the gentleman from Washington?

The CHAIRMAN. That would be during debate time. The Chair has to recognize the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. GEKAS. Parliamentary inquiry. Through the Chair I could not ask the gentleman from Washington if he would entertain thoughts of asking unanimous consent on his own to divide the question?

The CHAIRMAN. The time for debate on this amendment is controlled by the rule and the gentleman from Washington. The gentleman from Maryland control the time.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I do not choose to divide the question.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to my Democratic colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. LUTHER], who joined in the bipartisan effort.

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today as a cosponsor of this bipartisan amendment to prevent an automatic increase in the salaries of Members of Congress and top executive and judicial branch personnel.

Last year the House overwhelmingly voted in favor of an identical measure and I believe we should do so again to avoid allowing our own pay to increase as we reduce spending in other areas of the Federal Government.

Under current law, each Member of Congress receives an automatic cost-of-living adjustment, or pay raise, each year. That provision was part of an agreement to end the old system of Members accepting honoraria.

I respect the thoughtful efforts of House Members at that time to clean up Congress and to ensure a fair level of compensation for Members. But much has changed since the Ethics Reform Act was passed in 1989. Our national debt has now reached $5 trillion, and we must take strong action to reach a balanced budget in order to secure a sound future for our children and our grandchildren.

As we debate our spending priorities, I believe everything must be on the table for discussion. Congress cannot and must not exempt itself from the tough choices we need to make as a nation. If we in Congress would benefit through a series of automatic pay increases, at the same time we ask the rest of our country to suffer reductions in Government spending, we will lose credibility with America's taxpayers and voters.

I recognize that, over time, compensation must be sufficient to encourage the best possible citizens to serve in the U.S. Congress, but this Congress has only just begun the important job of making the tough decisions necessary for the future of our country. We have not accomplished enough this session to justify a pay raise.

Mr. Chairman, one of the strongest aspects of the American tradition has been the willingness of our entire country to step up and share the sacrifice during the times of emergency or need. At this time, our national debt endangers opportunities of future generations. I believe supporting this amendment will oblige our intent to lead by example and ask of ourselves what we ask of others.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. WICKER], a member of the Committee on Appropriations and all of whose committee's testimony.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague from Maryland for yielding me the time. I certainly intend to support the amendment of the gentleman from Washington.

I simply rise for the purpose of echoing what the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] said earlier, that it is a shame that the Federal judges must be linked to the cost of living of those Members of this Congress. Members of Congress are responsible for legislation dealing with the Federal debt. The same can be said for the President and the Vice President. We are all in this battle. The deficit has not been taken with Federal judges. So we have a situation where their salaries are held hostage to our salaries.

I think the vast majority of American are aware with the comments made by my colleague from Washington and my colleague from Minnesota. I think the vast majority of House Members will vote with them, as I will. I would simply just submit that it is a shame that under the new law we cannot divide this question, go ahead and give a raise to Federal judges. We have districts where the U.S. attorney makes more than the judge, the clerk makes more than the judge, and yet just a shame that we cannot raise their salaries because they deserve it.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL], my good friend, who also testified at the Committee on Appropriations Rules to protect this amendment from a point of order.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I think the ultimate mandate of this Congress has been to try to balance the budget. I commend the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and all others who have made Herculean efforts in that regard. We have done so in this body by reducing our staffs by a third. We have made other efforts.

I would support this amendment. I remind my colleagues that no one who is affected by this amendment is an indigent worker. There are choices that all of us have the right to make. I would urge the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, how much time is remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] has 7½ minutes remaining and the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] has 8¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. BROWNBACK].

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment. We cannot allow this automatic pay raise to take effect. I want to recognize and thank all the people that have done so much to work hard to move us towards balancing the budget. But this amendment and this issue is not about pay and it is not about the salary, it is about leadership.

We must balance the budget, and we must lead by example. If we accept the pay increase, it will be interpreted that we have given up on balancing the budget or, worse yet, that we can afford and we can cut other things but we cannot cut Congress or we cannot deal with ourselves or our own salary. People are going to follow much of our actions over our words, and they are going to see what our deeds say versus what our words act.

We have worked very long and hard in this Congress to balance the budget, and it is important that we stay on the glide path to balance the budget over a period of 7 years. Let us stay on that and show the commitment to the American people that we have by this action of leadership. It is an important thing for us as Members of Congress. This time when we have crushing debt on our Nation that we say to our future and we say to our children we are going to deal with this and we are going to lead by example.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, there is no more vexing an issue for any public figure than voting on his or her own salary. There have been many comments that we ought to do this on the record, we ought to do it not in secret. In point of fact, if those who were debating this had bothered to look at the record, we did exactly that in the Pay Reform Act of 1989. We changed the law and said, for a raise, we have to vote in the public's view. And, in point of fact, I tell my friends, all of the freshmen who were not here and who have spoken on this bill, the House of Representatives did in fact vote on the record during the daytime with full public scrutiny on the issue of pay reform for Members. Now, I will not speak about the other body of what they did.

In the course of the reform, we said this makes no sense. What made no sense? We would go, as we are proposing to do today, 4, 5, 6, 7 years with no raise. So what happened? The same thing that would happen in everybody's family in America, whatever they were making. They would say: Hey, dad or mom, you know, groceries are getting more expensive, cars are more expensive. Our car is 6 years old, we have to replace it. Hey, the rent has gone up or replace it. Hey, the rent has gone up or grocery prices are getting more expensive. It is the same thing that would happen in everybody's family in America.
is expanding, all sorts of things. As the cost of living goes up, your resources are squeezed if you freeze them.

So we said it was not automatic, I tell my friend from Washington State. We said specifically, Congress gets no raise. Federal employees did not get a raise. There was no justification, we said, for Members of Congress taking a raise if Federal employees did not get a raise. But if they got a raise and only if they got a raise, then the cost of living less than a half a point, less than the cost of living. That was hailed by Common Cause and other groups around the country as a step forward in rationalizing a way to affect the pay of Members of Congress.

Yes, a vexing issue for those of us in public life, and every one of us who gets up and says cost of living is justified for Federal employees, for judges, for SES's and, yes, even for Members of Congress are subject obviously to 30-second ads, to make sure to put the sex issue in. I think we all know that. I am sure that the gentlemen who raised it are going to make it very clear to their constituents how they did this.

There has been a lot of talk about cutting the deficit. All right, for the first time in history, we have cut the deficit 4 years running. For the first time in May of this year, 4 years running, the deficit is down and is now half what it was just 4 years ago.

So, very frankly, we are on the right track, we are doing the right thing. We are performing our duties as we were sent here to do.

If we do what the gentleman suggests and, Mr. Chairman, everybody knows we are going to do what the gentleman suggests so everybody can go home and beat their chests and say, I was against raising my pay.

Let me tell you what is going to happen. A year from now or 2 years from now or 3 years from now, Members of Congress are going to get together and say, you know, for 5 or 6 or 7 years we have been zero, and we ought to raise it by $10,000.

We have done that before for exactly the same reason. Eleven out of 20 years it was frozen, just as we are doing now; and we are putting in the adjustment for 4 years in a row with this new major effort in Congress has made progress but because of President Clinton's vetoes we still have a long way to go.

Accepting a cost-of-living pay increase at this time, I believe, would send the wrong message to the American taxpayers. Until we complete the job that we were elected to do, we have no business talking about pay raises. I urge adoption of the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. Hoyer] has the right to close on this amendment.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to my very distinguished colleague, the gentleman from California [Mr. Lewis], the chairman of the Sub-committee on VA, HUD and Independent Agencies and the leader of reform efforts in Congress.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my colleague yielding me the time for just a moment.

I must say that the courage my colleague is demonstrating here is very important for the House to note. I am not surprised that our new Members are here opposing even a cost-of-living adjustment, for they have not been through the process of compromise and very, very difficult effort that was put together to make sense out of Members having to give up their tax relief on their own pay. But I can tell my colleagues what they do not realize is that they really are cutting off the future opportunity of their families to have a decent standard of living over a significant period of time as they serve in the House.

Above and beyond that, I think it is very fundamental for us all to understand this is a leadership issue. The gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. Livingston] spoke on this issue on the floor, the only Member of the leadership. The members need from time to time to be protected against themselves. Indeed, even the author of this amendment did not know the other day that we had not had a cost-of-living adjustment for 4 years in a row with this amendment. He was unaware of the impact that this is already having upon families across the place.

Indeed we are leaving the House to people who are either born with a silver spoon in their mouth and they have got their own millions or people who could not get better jobs in the first place. That is not the direction the House needs to go in. I urge the Members to vote no on this amendment.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. Miller].

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, let me talk about reforming Congress, we need to reflect back on all the reforms we already conducted this year. When we first took office in January 1995, we passed the Congressional Accountability Act. We applied 11 laws of the land on Congress, from OSHA, to the Wage and Hour, to the Civil Rights Act.

After that we went about cutting the costs of Congress, really reforming the way we do business. We cut over 10 percent of the budget of Congress, real costs in our spending. We privatized functions. We got rid of 25 committees, we cut committee staff by one-third.

And we did that and we changed the procedures of running Congress. We opened up Congress so we are not a closed institution. We got rid of proxy voting. Then we passed a gift ban, basically a total ban on gifts in Congress. And so we have performed.

This is the most reform-minded Congress that we have had in generations, and I am proud to be part of all the reforms taking place in this Congress.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. Hastings].

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. Coble].

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Chairman, some years ago a Federal judge appeared before our House Committee on the Judiciary and said he was earning less money than any of his classmates from law school. I said, Judge, why do you not resign your job from the bench and start practicing law? My suggestion, Mr. Chairman, did not appeal to him.

My point is very simple, Mr. Chairman. I represent people in my district who earn 25, 30, $35,000 a year and they are barely making it. Now, if we, on the other hand, too extend a generous cost of living allowance to the Vice President, to the Executive Schedule levels 1 through 5, to the members of the Federal judiciary to the Members of Congress, I think it would be an obvious slap in the face of these people who are barely hanging on.

Now, all of us knew what the pay way when we signed on, Members of Congress and Federal judges as well. The time to address the matter of COLAs is not this night, and it is not on this floor.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. Christensen].
Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the amendment of the gentleman from Washington and the Tiahrt amendment.

I want to point out that today's debate is a little ironic, since many of us who support freezing our pay and have never, never voted for a congressional pay raise are the very ones being wrongfully attacked in the big labor television ads' claim that we voted to raise our pay.

In fact, I can think of nothing that typifies the previous Democratic Congresses more than the fact that they wrote themselves into a law, a law which automatically annually increases their pay. As a matter of principle, this body should not be giving itself a pay raise until we have balanced the budget. Moms and dads at home, businesses do not write themselves into their budgets automatic pay raises if their books are out of balance. This Congress should not either. We should set the example.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge my colleagues vote to pass this amendment and lead by doing the right thing.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT].

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is something that I think the American public has wanted to open up in the light of day. It does include members of the administration, the judicial branch, as well as Members of Congress.

They were all tied together because I think there was a commitment that was desired by the American public that we all work for a balanced budget; that we do not pass on to the next generation the type of debt that this country has incurred, over $5 trillion.

It is going to take a considerable amount of time to pay this off. So until we get to $5 trillion and get on the glidepath, get to a balanced budget, we should make a commitment as Members of Congress that should include all of the upper branches of this Government, including the judicial branch, to focus on getting this accomplished, balancing the budget, restoring the hope for the future.

Mr. Chairman, I think that is why this has been grouped together and why it will stay together.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire who is entitled to close this debate?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER], representing the committee position, is entitled to close debate.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I want to conclude by attempting to put this amendment in perspective. At 3:30 this afternoon the national debt of the United States was $5,155,309,627,707.59. The debt owed per person is $19,400. I have to point out that this figure is already outdated because it increases every few seconds.

I know the savings achieved by freezing the congressional pay and the judges and the administrative officers is only a drop in the bucket of our staggering national debt. I know that we have tried hard to make progress in reducing the deficit and I believe we have done some work on that. We have won some and we have lost some, but we have an awful long ways to go.

I think that the opposition just does not feel to the depth that I feel that we have a real chance at balancing this budget and we have to take very definite action.

As we prioritize our spending and make the tough choices that affect millions and millions of American people, Members of Congress should stand shoulder to shoulder with those people and share the burden.

Mr. Chairman, it is time for Congress to lead by example. I urge my colleagues to vote for the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.
The salaries of our Nation's Federal judges should not be a political issue and should not be included in this amendment. Federal judges are lifetime employees and should be treated the same as career Federal employees when it comes to COLA adjustments. It is my hope that legislation moves forward, it can be amended by taking that part out concerning the judicial pay process. This Congress should act on H.R. 2701, which was introduced by my colleague, Representative ROGER WICKER, as soon as possible.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment because it is the right thing to do and it is supported by the American people. Along with most Americans, my constituents agree that the pay raise Congress gave itself earlier this decade was wrong and any increase at this time would also be wrong. If Congress wants to give itself a pay raise or a COLA increase it should be voted on in the open and in front of the American people.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Chairman, I am distinctly perplexed such a way that would deny U.S. Federal judges the COLA's that they believe that they deserve. Unfortunately, because judges have been lumped together with politicians on Capitol Hill, I have no other choice but to vote for the measure lest I appear to be self-serving. It is my hope that Federal judges may be separated from politicians' pay scales in the future.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Metcalf-Luther amendment to deny Members of Congress a cost-of-living adjustment. Given our current deficit, I do not believe that this is the appropriate time for Members to receive a pay raise.

I am concerned, however, that this amendment will keep Federal judges from receiving a cost-of-living adjustment. I do not think that it is appropriate for the salaries of Federal judges to be tied to the salaries of Members of Congress.

This Nation has the premier justice system in the world. We rely on judges to make some of the most important decisions in our democracy—decisions that determine the reach of our Constitution, and decisions that are literally a matter of life or death.

Given the fact that judges sit at the pinnacle of our justice system, it is outrageous that judicial salaries are held back by congressional politics. Judicial salaries are completely overshadowed by salaries in the private sector. Many of our judges are forced to take a sizeable pay cut to serve on the bench. Many other highly qualified individuals walk away from public service because the financial sacrifice is too great. Our Nation is the poorer for that loss.

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2701, a bill that will separate judicial salaries from congressional salaries. I put in place a dramatic annual increase for judges. Our Federal judges deserve no less. After all, they are the keepers of our democracy.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] will be postponed. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 104-671.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GUTKNECHT
Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment. The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment. The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. GUTKNECHT:
Page 118, after line 16, insert the following new section:

SEC. 637. (a) For purposes of this section, the term "political appointee" means any individual who—
(1) is employed in a position listed in sections 5312 through 5316 of title 5, United States Code (relating to the Executive Schedule);
(2) is a limited term appointee, limited emergency appointee, or noncareer appointee in the Senior Executive Service, as defined under section 3312(a) (5), (6), and (7) of title 5, United States Code, respectively;
(3) is employed in a position in the executive branch of the Government under schedule C of part 213 of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) The President, acting through the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management, shall take such actions as necessary (including reduction-in-force actions under procedures consistent with those established under section 3303 of title 5, United States Code) to ensure that the number of political appointees shall not, during any fiscal year beginning after September 30, 1997, exceed a total of 2,300 (determined on a full-time equivalent basis).

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT].

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the members of the Committee on Rules for their work as well as the members of the subcommittee for bringing to the floor, I think, a good amendment, but I do not think it is the amendment which I hope will make this bill even better, perhaps what I would describe as a perfecting amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today with my friend and colleague from Minnesota to offer a fairly simple amendment to this bill. Our amendment would place a cap of 2,300 on the number of executive branch political appointees that can be named. This figure would be down from approximately 2,800, but it has been even higher in past administrations.

Mr. Chairman, this is not a new idea. In fact, the Vice President of the United States made a similar suggestion in his National Performance Review. And the National Commission on the Public Service called for an even lower cap of 2,000 political appointees. Furthermore, Citizens Against Government Waste and the Concord Coalition have endorsed this proposal, and we have gathered broad bipartisan support within this House.

But Mr. Speaker, most importantly, a savings resulting from this cap has already been assumed in the Fiscal Year 1997 Budget Resolution Conference Report. A similar suggestion was made in last year's budget resolution as well. Our amendment would simply follow through on this language.

Some interesting facts—in 1960, there were 17 layers of management at the top of the Federal Government; by 1992, there were 32. During that period, the number of senior executives and political appointees grew from 451 to 2,393—a 430 percent increase. Now ask yourselves, is the Federal Government more responsive—more responsible—more efficient?

Mr. Chairman, report after report shows that greater quantities of such political appointees do not bring about a more responsive government, but actually confuses the communication channels and adds unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. We can make important progress toward balancing the Federal Budget by eliminating a few hundred of these positions, which average approximately 260,000 per year in salary.

The public believes that our Government is too large. This amendment begins to address this situation. This is not a drastic reduction, but a good first step toward operating a leaner and more efficient government. Last year we here in Congress reduced our staffs by a third, and many private-sector businesses have eliminated bureaucratic layers in the last several years to become more responsive and effective in a very competitive economic environment. It seems only right that we should suggest the executive branch do the same, and it's my guess that any President can get along just fine with 2,300 political appointees.

Mr. Chairman, this is a bipartisan amendment. This is a good amendment. I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment and let me tell my colleagues why, basically. There are 2 million Federal employees. They work essentially from administration to administration. Every President, every administration will tell any one of us that one of the problems they have is making the Government work to its policies.
have been there, who want to consistently follow the policies they have been following. And the frustration of getting the government to conform to the policies of the President is also understandable.

Now, the political appointees are committed to the President of the United States, whoever he might be, to carry out the policies of the administration. Frankly, that is what the electorate expects. Now, to pretend that political appointees are not necessary or that there’s a way down to an ever-increasing smaller number is to simply take from our Presidents the ability to effect their policies.

Now, George Bush in 1989, had 3,290 political appointees or 1,000 more than this amendment affects. President Clinton has less appointees than President Bush, not by a whole lot, 3,147, 150 or 5 percent less than President Bush had. Those folks are for the purposes of enforcing the President of the United States with the ability to carry out policy.

When the people vote for President in 1992 or 1996, they expect their President to be able to effect the policies in concert or in cooperation with and in concert with the Congress. Political appointees are not good or bad. They are necessary. They are essential in a democratic system for a democratically elected official to carry out their policies.

On the one hand, in the 1930s, we said, look, 100-per cent patronage is wrong. It is debilitating. It leads to very bad policies. So we adopted a Civil Service system. Actually, we had adopted it long before that, about, I suppose, in the latter part of the last century. And we said, we are going to give to the overwhelming majority of employees Civil Service protection, because what we ask them to do is not to make policy but to carry it out in a ministerial function. Some of them obviously are very high level and they obviously have decisions to make. But the fact of the matter is, they are professional employees, expected by their government to carry out the policies of Republicans and Democrats irrespective of administrations. I suggest to my colleagues that they do just that.

This amendment undermines the ability of a President to effect policies and is, therefore, wrong. I will speak to my colleagues the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. LUTHER].

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Chairman, I am joining with my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT], in offering this amendment to reduce and cap the number of political appointees in the executive branch at 2,300 effective September 30, 1997. The term political appointee refers to those employees of the Federal Government who are appointed by the President, some with and some without confirmation by the Senate, and to certain policy advisors hired at lower levels.

It includes Cabinet secretaries, agency heads, and other executive schedule C employees of Government. It includes managers and supervisors who are noncareer members of the Senior Executive Service, and it includes confidential aides and policy advisors who are referred to as schedule C employees.


While the number of political appointees rose significantly from 200 in 1940 to 500 in 1960, it mushroomed from 500 in 1960 to 3,200 in 1992. In the most recent 12 years between 1980 and 1992, the number of political appointees rose over three times as fast as the total number of executive branch employees.

Our amendment’s primary intent is to reduce the number of lower level political appointees, known as schedule C appointees, who represent nearly half of the current number of political appointees. Our amendment is estimated to save American taxpayers between $228 million and $363 million over 5 years, and it is consistent with the recommendation of the Vice President’s National Performance Review, which called for reductions in the number of Federal managers and supervisors.

It is also consistent with the work of the National Commission on the Public Service, chaired by former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker, which stated in its 1989 report that the growing number of Presidential appointees may actually undermine effective Presidential control of the executive branch.

For this reason, the Volcker commission recommended limiting the number of political appointees to 2,000. The other body included a similar amendment in last year’s bill, although it was dropped in conference. The authors plan to offer that amendment again this year.

The gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] and I have sponsored a bill in this body to limit the number of political appointees, and we have a number of Democrat and Republican co-sponsors.

I want to stress that both in the other body and here this amendment is a bipartisan effort to get our fiscal house in order. It recognizes that the sacrifices required to meet our collective goal of balancing the Federal budget must begin at the top and be spread across all levels of Government. My colleagues and I join in us in supporting this amendment.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, the National Performance Review, which was referred to by the previous speaker, specifically does not do what he says it does. Yes, they have effectively accomplished the desired effect of reducing the cost of Government while providing quality higher services. The proposed amendment singles out only political appointees. Many of these appointees, by the way, are only mid-level or junior staffers. The National Performance Review plan instead focuses on all employees by reducing workers.

Political appointees, as I said earlier, play a critical role in carrying out policy. The proposed cap would limit political appointees to 2,300. President Clinton has created the National Performance Review to promote Federal Government that works better and costs less. But if you cut the folks committed to that objective, you are going to do less, not cost less.

Presidents Reagan and Bush saw an increase of 67,000 in the Federal work force while Clinton, let me indicate to my colleague, under President Bush and President Reagan, 67,000 additional employees. Under President Clinton, 225,000 fewer employees.

This small nick is political, not policy. It undermines policy. The last time the levels of Federal employment were this low was during the Kennedy administration. So this is not an issue of cutting expenses or reducing numbers of employees. This is an issue about reducing the accountability of the administration to the American people for the carrying out of policy through people it puts in place to oversee policy.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope that we would reject this amendment. If the gentlemen are sincere, then I think that we ought to ask the White House and perhaps even the Republican candidate for President, whoever that might be after the convention, what do you think are the appropriate levels so that you can carry out your policies? It seems to me that we all have an ability to make a substantive, appropriate judgment. I do not know that any such study, maybe the sponsors came up with 2,300 out of some study or some management knowledge that I do not have. Maybe you would like to tell me where 2,300 came from.

Apparent not.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. LUTHER].

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Chairman, I am joining with my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT], in offering this amendment to reduce and cap the number of political appointees in the executive branch at 2,300 effective September 30, 1997. The term political appointee refers to those employees of the Federal Government who are appointed by the President, some with and some without confirmation by the Senate, and to certain policy advisors hired at lower levels.

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Mr. Chairman, I would hope that we would reject this amendment. If the gentlemen are sincere, then I think that we ought to ask the White House and perhaps even the Republican candidate for President, whoever that might be after the convention, what do you think are the appropriate levels so that you can carry out your policies? It seems to me that all we have an ability to make a substantive, appropriate judgment. I do not know that any such study, maybe the sponsors came up with 2,300 out of some study or some management knowledge that I do not have. Maybe you would like to tell me where 2,300 came from.

Apparent not.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Kansas [Mrs. MEYERS].

(Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Chairman, I cosponsored the Political Appointee Reduction Act, now being offered as an amendment, because I support reducing the size of our Federal Government. This amendment will reduce the size of "The Plum Book" and
Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this amendment. As was just mentioned by my colleague from Minnesota, around this place we reduced committee staff by one-third. The very first day of Congress, the first thing we did was to get by on less. Our Nation is $5 trillion in debt. The Federal checkbook is $150 billion overdrawn; that is, we are spending $150 billion more than we are taking in.

The amendment reduces the number of political appointees by one-third, and now it is time to take the next step: this is not going to solve all our budget problems, but it is certainly a good step in the right direction.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. FURSE).

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Luther-Gutknecht amendment. Last year, I introduced H.R. 1671, which would reduce the number of political appointees at 2,000 and have saved $36 million. Vice President Gore's National Performance Review also suggested capping the number of political appointees. The amendment caps the number of political appointees at 2,300, which still represents an increase over 1991. I urge my colleagues to support this common-sense amendment.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN].
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Our efforts this year by doing more with less. We continue to review each and every Federal program for its efficiency and effectiveness and explore alternatives to get the most out of each tax dollar. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT]. The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 475, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

TITI E—DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES
SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Departmental Offices including operation and maintenance of the Treasury Building and Annex; hire of passenger motor vehicles; maintenance of Treasury Clock and Clock Tower and of buildings occupied by the Department; purchase of commercial insurance policies for, real properties leased or owned overseas, when necessary for the performance of official business; not to exceed $2,900,000 for official travel expenses; not to exceed $150,000 for official reception and representation expenses; not to exceed $258,000 for unforeseen emergencies of a confidential nature, to be allocated and expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury and to be accounted for solely on his certificate: $185,477,000. Provided, that up to $500,000 shall be made available to implement section 28 of this Act.

AUTOMATION ENHANCEMENT
INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS

For the development and acquisition of automated data processing equipment, software, and services for the Department of the Treasury, $27,100,000, of which $15,000,000 shall be available to the United States Customs Service for the Automated Commercial Environment project, and of which $5,100,000 shall be available to the United States Customs Service for the International Trade Data System. Provided, That these funds shall remain available until September 30, 1999: Provided further, That these funds shall be transferred to accounts and in amounts as necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Department’s offices, bureaus, and other organizations: Provided further, That this transfer authority shall be in addition to any other authority hereby provided: Provided further, That none of the funds shall be used to support or supplement Internal Revenue Service appropriations for Information Systems and Tax Systems Modernization: Provided further, That none of the funds available for the Automated Commercial Environment or the International Trade Data System may be obligated without the advance approval of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General and the internal audit functions of the Internal Revenue Service, $135,925,000 of which, $28,689,000 shall be made available for the Office of Inspector General in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, of which not to exceed $2,000,000 for official travel expenses; including hire of passenger motor vehicles; and not to exceed $100,000 for unforeseen emergencies of a confidential nature, to be allocated and expended under the direction of the Inspector General of the Treasury; and of which $106,606,000 shall be available for the Internal Revenue Service: Provided, That the chief of internal audit for the Internal Revenue Service shall report directly to the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to engage the Chairman in a colloquy with regard to items contained in the bill which affect the Internal Revenue Service.

I want to take this opportunity though to commend Chairman LIGHTFOOT for his hard work and diligent efforts to improve effective oversight of the IRS. With FY 1997 budget of $7.3 billion, the IRS consumes nearly 60 percent of all of the funding under his subcommittee’s jurisdiction and touches the lives of Americans more directly than any other Federal agency. I appreciate the Chairman’s dedication to making the IRS a more effective and efficient agency, and to improve the IRS’s accountability in its handling of the massive tax systems modernization program.

Having said that, there are a number of provisions in this bill which give me cause for concern, and I hope that the gentleman can clarify several points for me.

First, I note that there is a large reduction made to the account which funds IRS Information Systems. While much of this is to the TSM Program, there appears to be a significant reduction to Legacy systems which are needed to support IRS returns processing. Total funding for non-TSM information systems appears to be $179.2 million below fiscal year 1996 operating levels. I am concerned that reductions of this magnitude could have a negative effect on the IRS’s ability to efficiently manage the 1997 return filing season. What is the rationale behind reducing this account?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JOHNSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, under the subcommittee’s assumptions, we believe there will be sufficient funds provided for all of the IRS’ current computer systems. Our bill assumes significant savings in this account, for instance, by reducing funds for travel, supply costs, and telephone costs. I also note that, since the bill reduces IRS employment by over 2,000 TSM employees, we will save $149 million next year. These savings are applied to operating IRS computer systems, so our cuts are made to salary and overhead costs, not to computer systems.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate that the bill’s funding for Information Systems rests on the assumption that significant salary savings can be achieved next year, but I am concerned that it will be very difficult to actually realize those savings within the fiscal year. If this concern is verified as the bill moves forward, can the gentleman assure me that he will work in conference to restore full funding for IRS’s operational computer systems?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. If the gentlelady will yield, let me assure her in the event that there are some Legacy systems which are funded below the level that IRS may need to operate them in the upcoming year, I am committed to increasing this number as the bill moves through conference with the Senate.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. I thank the gentleman for that clarification. I also have several concerns about provisions in the bill relating to the Tax Systems Modernization Program. We all agree that the IRS has not adequately managed this program and changes are necessary so that TSM is successful. However, the bill contains language fencing off all TSM funds until IRS establishes a restructured contractual arrangement with the private sector to deliver the balance of the program. Within the fenced-off funds is nearly $170 million for currently operational TSM systems, such as Telefile and Electronic Fraud Detection. Since it is unlikely that these contractual arrangements will be in place by the beginning of the fiscal year, I am concerned that the fencing off language could have the effect of prohibiting IRS from using these operational TSM systems for some period of time next year.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JOHNSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, under the subcommittee’s assumptions, we believe there will be sufficient funds provided for all of the IRS’ current computer systems. Our bill assumes significant savings in this account, for instance, by reducing funds for travel, supply costs, and telephone costs. I also note that, since the bill reduces IRS employment by over 2,000 TSM employees, we will save $149 million next year. These savings are applied to operating IRS computer systems, so our cuts are made to salary and overhead costs, not to computer systems.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate that clarification. I also have concerns about the provision to transfer TSM procurement activities, including responsibility for writing the request for proposal to the Department of Defense. I want to ask whether it will be helpful, at this point in the process, to put responsibility for contracting out TSM in the hands of DOD employees who have not had any previous experience with IRS computer systems or the agency’s business needs.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I note that there is a large reduction made to the account which funds IRS Information Systems. While much of this is to the TSM Program, there appears to be a significant reduction to Legacy systems which are needed to support IRS returns processing. Total funding for non-TSM information systems appears to be $179.2 million below fiscal year 1996 operating levels. I am concerned that reductions of this magnitude could have a negative effect on the IRS’s ability to efficiently manage the 1997 return filing season. What is the rationale behind reducing this account?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, under the subcommittee’s assumptions, we believe there will be sufficient funds provided for all of the IRS’ current computer systems. Our bill assumes significant savings in this account, for instance, by reducing funds for travel, supply costs, and telephone costs. I also note that, since the bill reduces IRS employment by over 2,000 TSM employees, we will save $149 million next year. These savings are applied to operating IRS computer systems, so our cuts are made to salary and overhead costs, not to computer systems.
The private contractors who were recently awarded contracts under the program are subject to the disclosure laws: The Privacy Act, the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, and applicable sections of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

However, I do want to emphasize my belief that the use of private collection firms to collect Federal tax debts is something that needs to be fully and fairly tested before the program is greatly expanded under current law. Private contractors cannot be compensated out of the proceeds of amounts they assist in collecting, so the pilot is being conducted using appropriated funds. Since this does not allow for the most efficient test of the effectiveness of private contractors, the Committee on Ways and Means is in the process of developing legislation which we hope to be able to consider in the near future. It is important that we use the same standards for private collection firms and test alternative compensation arrangements that are not permissible under present law.

Thus, I urge the gentleman to drop the $13 million that the bill transfers from IRS to Treasury to initiate a second private sector debt collection program. 

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, if the gentlewoman will continue to yield, I am very pleased to learn that the Committee on Ways and Means is developing legislation relating to private debt collection. I share the gentlewoman’s goal of doing what is necessary to determine whether privatizing some tax collection functions is a good business decision.

As the Treasury appropriations bill moves through conference with the Senate, I am committed to addressing the gentlewoman’s concerns regarding the second private sector debt collection program.

Ms. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for his clarification on these important issues. While I remain concerned about the adequacy of funding levels provided for the IRS, I recognize the challenges the gentleman faced in putting this bill together, and I am satisfied by the chairman’s commitment that he will address these issues in conference with the Senate. I commend Chairman LIGHTFOOT for his responsiveness and willingness to listen to the concerns of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Amendment offered by Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut.

Mrs. JOHNSON OF Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 4, line 14, strike “and of which” and all that follows through line 19, and insert “$29,319,000.”

Page 20, line 23, strike “$1,616,379,000” and insert “$1,722,985,000.”

The CHAIRMAN. For what purpose does the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] rise?

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I am offering the following amendment to the remainder of title I be considered as read, printed in the Record, and open to amendment at any point.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

The text of the remainder of title I is as follows:

Office of Professional Responsibility
Salaries and Expenses
Including Transfer of Funds

For necessary expenses of the Office of Professional Responsibility, including purchase and hire of passenger motor vehicles, not to exceed $5,000,000, to remain available until expended; Provided: That none of the funds shall be obligated without the advance approval of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

Treasury Buildings and Annex Repair and Modernization
Including Transfer of Funds

For the repair, alteration, and improvement of the Treasury Building and Annex, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Fire-arms National Laboratory Center and the Fire Investigation Research and Development Center, and the Rowley Secret Service Training Center, $22,892,000, to remain available until expended; Provided, That funds for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms National Laboratory Center and the Fire Investigation Research and Development Center and the Rowley Secret Service Training Center shall not be available until a prospectus authorizing such facilities is approved by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

Moreover, that funds previously made available under this title for the Secret Service Headquaters, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms National Laboratory Center and the Fire Investigation Research and Development Center and the Rowley Secret Service Training Center shall not be available until such time as the Treasury Building and Annex shall be completed and all applicable laws have been complied with.

Financial Crimes Enforcement Network
Salaries and Expenses
Including Transfer of Funds

For necessary expenses of the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, including hire of passenger motor vehicles; travel expenses of non-Federal law enforcement personnel to attend meetings concerned with financial intelligence activities, law enforcement, and financial regulation; not to exceed $34,000 for the acquisition, rental, and use of computers, computer software, and related resources from commercial vendors without regard to otherwise applicable procurement laws and regulations and without the use of full and open competition, utilizing procedures best suited under the circumstances of the procurement to efficiently fulfill the agency’s requirement; Provided further, that any funds appropriated in this account may be used to procure personal services contracts.
For necessary expenses of the Treasury Forfeiture Fund, notwithstanding any other provision of law, not to exceed $7,500,000 shall be available for the development of a Federal wireless communication system, to be derived from deposits in the Fund: Provided, That the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to accept and use gifts of property, both real and personal, and to accept services, for authorized purposes, from other than Federal sources.

**VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION PROGRAMS**

**INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS**

For activities authorized by Public Law 103-322, to remain available until expended, which shall be derived from the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund, as follows:

(a) As authorized by section 100001(e), $89,800,000, of which $15,005,000 shall be available to the United States Customs Service; of which $47,624,000 shall be available to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, of which $2,500,000 shall be available for administering the Gang Resistance Education and Training program, of which $3,662,000 shall be available for the purchase of firearms and equipment, and of which $41,462,000 shall be available to enhance training and purchase equipment and services; of which $5,971,000 shall be available to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network; of which $20,200,000 shall be available to the United States Secret Service, of which no less than $1,000,000 shall be available for a grant for activities related to the investigations of missing and exploited children.

(b) As authorized by section 32401, $7,200,000, for disbursement through grants, cooperative agreements or contracts, to local governments for Gang Resistance Education and Training: Provided, That notwithstanding sections 32401 and 310001, such funds shall be allocated only to the affected State and local law enforcement, and prevention organizations participating in such projects.

**TREASURY FRANCHISE FUND**

There is hereby established in the Treasury a franchise fund pilot, as authorized by section 103-319, to remain available until expended, to be available as provided in such section for expenses and equipment necessary for the maintenance and operation of such financial and administrative support services as the Secretary determines may be performed more advantageously as central services: Provided, That any inventories, equipment, and other assets pertaining to the services to be provided by such fund, either on hand or on order, less the related liabilities or unpaid obligations, and any appropriations made for the purpose of purchase of capital, shall be used to capitalize such fund: Provided further, That such fund shall be reimbursed or credited with the payments, including advanced payments, for equipment, and funds available to the Department and other Federal agencies for which such administrative and financial services are performed, at rates which will recover all expenses of operation, including accrued leave, depreciation of fund plant and equipment, amortization of Automatic Data Processing (ADP) systems, and the Secretary determines is necessary to maintain a reasonable operating reserve, as determined by the Secretary: Provided further, That such fund shall provide services on a cost-reimbursable basis: Provided further, That an amount not to exceed 4 percent of the total annual income to such fund may be retained in the fund for fiscal year 1997 and each fiscal year thereafter, to remain available until expended, to be used for the acquisition of capital equipment and for the improvement and modernization of Treasury financial management, ADP, and other support systems: Provided further, That no later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year, any unused reserve, and any increase in the reserve limit shall be deposited as miscellaneous receipts in the Treasury: Provided further, That such franchise fund pilot shall terminate pursuant to section 304(f) of Public Law 103-356.

**FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTER AND SALARIES AND EXPENSES**

For necessary expenses of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, as a bureau of the Department of the Treasury, including materials and support costs of Federal law enforcement program at the Center during the period not to exceed $2,500,000 for police-type use, without regard to the general purchase price limitation, and hire of passenger motor vehicles; for expenses for student athletic and related activities; uniforms without regard to the general purchase price limitation for the current fiscal year; and for participating in firearms matches and presentation of awards; for public awareness and enhancing community support of law enforcement, which shall be available until expended, $9,500 for official reception and representation expenses; food and board for student interns; and services as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3109; of which $4,423,000 for materials and support costs of Federal law enforcement basic training shall remain available until September 30, 1999: Provided, That the Center is authorized to accept and use gifts of property, both real and personal, and to accept services, for authorized purposes, including funding of a gift of intrinsic value by the Secretary, which shall be used by the Director of the Center to the outstanding student who graduated from a basic training program during the previous fiscal year, which shall be funded only by gifts received through the Center’s gift authority: Provided further, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, students attending training at any Federal Law Enforcement Training Center shall reside in on-center or Center-sponsored housing, insofar as is practicable in accordance with Center policy: Provided further, That funds appropriated in this account shall be available for training United States Postal Service law enforcement and postal police officers, at the discretion of the Director; State and local government law enforcement training on a space-available basis; training of foreign law enforcement officials on a space-available basis with reimbursement of actual costs to this appropriation; training of private sector security officials with reimbursement of actual costs to this appropriation; and travel expenses of non-Federal personnel to attend course development meetings and training at the Center: Provided further, That the Center is authorized to obligate funds in anticipation of reimbursements from agencies receiving training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, except that total obligations at the end of the fiscal year shall not exceed total budgetary resources available at the end of the fiscal year: Provided further, That no funds appropriated for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center are authorized to provide short term medical services for students undergoing training at the Center.

**ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, IMPROVEMENTS, AND RELATED EXPENSE**

For expansion of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, for acquisition of necessary additional real property and facilities, and for ongoing maintenance, facility improvements, and related expenses, $38,864,000, to remain available until expended.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE SALARIES AND EXPENSES**

For necessary expenses of the Financial Management Service, $391,799,000, of which not to exceed $4,277,000 shall remain available until expended, and for modernization initiatives. In addition, $90,000, to be derived from the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, to reimburse the Service for administrative personnel and services as authorized by the Secretary, to the extent authorized by section 101 of Public Law 101-380: Provided, That none of the funds made available for systems modernization initiatives may not be obligated until the Commissioner of the Financial Management Service has submitted, and the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate have approved, a report that identifies, evaluates, and prioritizes all computer systems investments planned for fiscal year 1997, a milestone plan for the development and implementation of all projects included in the systems investment plan, and a systems architecture plan.

**BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS SALARIES AND EXPENSES**

For necessary expenses of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, including purchase of not to exceed 650 vehicles for police use for replacement only and hire of passenger motor vehicles; hire of aircraft; and services of expert witnesses at such rates as may be determined by the Director; for payment of per diem and subsistence allowances to employees where an assignment to the National Response Team during the investigation of a bombing or arson incident requires an employee to remain overnight or more than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year, which shall be funded only by gifts received through the Bureau’s gift authority: Provided further, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, not to exceed $12,500 for official reception and representation expenses; for training of State and local law enforcement agencies with or without reimbursement, including training in connection with the training and acquisition of canines for explosive and narcotics detection; provision of laboratory assistance to State and local agencies, with or without reimbursement; $389,962,000, of which $12,011,000, of which $1,500,000 shall be available for arson investigations, with priority assigned to arson involving religious institutions; which not to exceed $13,000,000 shall be available for the payment of attorneys’ fees as provided by 18 U.S.C. 924(d)(2); and of which $1,000,000 shall be available for the equipping of any vessel, vehicle, equipment, or aircraft available for official use by a State or local law enforcement agency if the conveyance will be used in drug-related joint law enforcement operations with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and for the payment of over-time salaries, travel, fuel, training, equipment, and other similar costs of State and local law enforcement officers that are incurred in joint operations with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms: Provided, That no funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to provide for the functions, missions, or activities of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to other agencies or Departments in the fiscal year for which that law is in effect: Provided further, That no funds appropriated herein shall be available for salaries or administrative expenses in connection with consolidating or merged, within the jurisdiction of the Treasury, the records, or any portion thereof, of acquisition and disposition of firearms.
provided further, That none of the funds appropriated herein shall be available for the procurement of aircraft or marine interdiction programs, as authorized by section 252 of this Act, for the support of interdiction programs, $28,000,000. Provided, That such resources shall not be available until September 30, 1997, and shall remain available until expended.

CUSTOMS SERVICES AT SMALL AIRPORTS

TO BE DERIVED FROM FEES COLLECTED

For necessary expenses of the United States Customs Service at small airports required to provide for the operation and maintenance of marine vessels, aircraft, and other related equipment of the Air and Marine Programs, including operational training and mission-related travel, and rental payments for facilities occupied by the air or marine interdiction equipment, for the Custodie Office, and for the operations of which include: the interdiction of narcotics and other goods; the provision of support to Customs and other Federal, State, local, and private law enforcement or air and marine interdiction programs; the provision of aircraft and marine interdiction facilities; and the furnishing of necessary support services, or for the operation and maintenance of the interdiction programs, $28,000,000. Provided, That such resources shall not be available until September 30, 1997, and shall remain available until expended.

HARBOR MAINTENANCE FEE COLLECTION

For administrative expenses related to the collection of the Harbor Maintenance Fee, pursuant to Public Law 103-182, $3,000,000, to be derived from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and to be transferred to and merged with the Treasury and Expenditure accounts of the United States:

BUREAU OF THE PUBLIC DEBT

ADMINISTERING THE PUBLIC DEBT

For necessary expenses connected with any public-debt issues of the United States, $4,400,000. Provided, That none of the funds appropriated herein from the General Fund for fiscal year 1997 shall be reduced by more than $4,400,000 as definitive security issue fees and Treasury Direct Investor Account Maintenance fees are collected, so as to result in a final fiscal year 1997 appropriation for these purposes, as incurred, of $365,335,000.
Of the funds made available under this heading for Tax Systems Modernization in Public Law 103-294, $50,000,000 are rescinded, in Public Law 102-354, $51,685,000 are rescinded, in Public Law 102-393, $2,421,000 are rescinded, and in Public Law 102-141, $20,341,000 are rescinded. **ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS—INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE**

**SECTION 101.** Not to exceed 5 percent of any appropriation made available in this Act to the Internal Revenue Service may be transferred to the Treasury of the United States, if the Secretary of the Treasury with the prior approval of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

**SECTION 102.** The Internal Revenue Service shall maintain a training program to insure that Internal Revenue Service employees are trained in taxpayers' rights, in dealing courteously with taxpayers, and in cross-cultural relations.

**SECTION 103.** The funds provided in this Act for the Internal Revenue Service shall be used to provide, in cooperation with the fiscal level of service, staffing, and funding for Taxpayer Services.

**SECTION 104.** No funds available in this Act to the Internal Revenue Service for separation incentive payments as authorized by section 525 of this Act may be obligated without the advance approval of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

**UNIFIED STATES SECRET SERVICE**

**SALARIES AND EXPENSES**

For necessary expenses of the United States Secret Service, including purchase (not to exceed 202 vehicles for police-type use, of which 665 shall be for replacement only), and hire of passenger motor vehicles; hire of aircraft; training and assistance requested by State and local governments, which may be provided without reimbursement; services of expert witnesses at such rates as may be determined by the Director; rental of buildings in the District of Columbia, and fencing, lighting, guard booths, and other facilities on private or other property not in Government ownership or control, as may be determined. Provided, That approval is obtained in advance from the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; for repairs, alteration, and improvement of facilities, $31,298,000, to remain available until expended. **ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, IMPROVEMENT, AND RELATED EXPENSES**

For necessary expenses of construction, repair, alteration, and improvement of facilities, $31,298,000, to remain available until expended. Provided, That funds previously provided under the Act, Treasury Buildings and Annunciation Quadrangle, shall be transferred to this account.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS—DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY**

**SECTION 111.** Any obligation or expenditure by the Secretary in connection with law enforcement activities of a Federal agency or a Department of the Treasury law enforcement organization in accordance with title 31 U.S.C. 9703(6)(B) from unobligated balances remaining in the Fund on September 30, 1997, shall be made in compliance with the regulatory guidelines contained in the House and Senate reports accompanying this Act.

**SECTION 112.** Appropriations to the Treasury Department in this Act shall be available for uniforms or allowances therefor, as authorized by law (5 U.S.C. 5901), including maintenance, repairs, and cleaning; purchase of insurance for vehicles operated by employees of the United States in foreign countries; purchase of motor vehicles without regard to the general purchase price limitations for vehicles purchased and used overseas for the current fiscal year; entering into contracts with the State for the furnishing of health and medical services, dental services, and health insurance services, and their dependents serving in foreign countries, and services authorized by 5 U.S.C. 3019. **SECTION 113.** None of the funds appropriated by this title shall be used in connection with the collection of any underpayment of any tax imposed by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 unless the conduct of officers and employees of the Internal Revenue Service in connection with such collection, including any private sector employees under contract to the Internal Revenue Service, complies with subsection (c) of section 7805 (relating to communications in connection with debt collection), and section 806 (relating to harassment or abuse), of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

The Internal Revenue Service shall institute policies and procedures which will safeguard the confidentiality of taxpayer information. **SECTION 115.** The funds provided to the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms for fiscal year 1997 in this Act for the enforcement of the Federal Alcohol Administration Act shall be expended in a manner so as not to diminish enforcement efforts with respect to sections 241 of the Federal Alcohol Administration Act.

**SECTION 116.** Paragraph (3)(C) of section 9703(g)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read: "(3) funded under title, "Treasury Department Appropriations Act," and the fiscal year for purposes authorized under subsection (a);" and the following sentence: "At the end of fiscal year 1997, and at the end of each fiscal year thereafter"; (2) by inserting in lieu thereof: "1994, 1995, and 1996;" and (3) by adding at the end the following new sentence: "At the end of fiscal year 1997, and at the end of each fiscal year thereafter, the Treasury shall reserve any amounts that are not required for the Fund to ensure the availability of amounts in the subsequent fiscal year for purposes authorized under subsection (a)."

**SECTION 117.** Of the funds available to the Internal Revenue Service, $13,000,000 shall be made available to continue the private sector debt collection program which was initiated in fiscal year 1996 and $13,000,000 shall be transferred to the Departmental Offices appropriation to initiate a new private sector debt collection program. That transfer provided herein shall be in addition to any other transfer authority contained in this Act. **PRIVACY PLACEMENT, JOB PLACEMENT, TRAINING, AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS FOR U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY A REDUCTION IN FORCE**

SEC. 118. (a) DEFINITIONS.

(1) For the purposes of this section, the term "agency" means the United States Department of the Treasury.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the term "eligible employee" means any employee of the agency who—

(A) is scheduled to be separated from service due to a reduction in force under—

(i) regulations prescribed under section 3002 of title 5, United States Code; or

(ii) procedures established under section 3020 of title 5, United States Code; or

(B) is separated from service due to such a reduction in force, but does not include—

(i) an employee separated from service due to charges of misconduct or delinquency; or

(ii) an employee who, at the time of separation, meets the requirements for an immediate annuity under subchapter III of chapter 83 or chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code.

**PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRACTORS.**—Any contract or subcontract for job placement and counseling services established under subsection (b) shall include provision that such services shall not be filled by the appointment or transfer of any individual from outside of the agency if—

(1) there is then available any eligible employee who applies for the position within 30 days of the agency issuing a job announcement and is qualified (or can be trained or retrained) to become an employee within 90 days of assuming the position for the position; and

(2) the position is within the same commuting area as the eligible employee's last held position or residence.

**DISPLACEMENT SERVICES.**—A program established under subsection (d) may include, is not limited to, such services as—

(A) career and personal counseling;

(B) training and job search skills; and

(C) job placement assistance, including assistance provided through cooperative arrangements with State and local employment services offices.

**REFERRAL OF ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES TO PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRACTORS.**—Any contract provided for under the "Treasury Department Appropriations Acts" modernization program shall contain a provision requiring that the contractor, in hiring employees for the performance of the contract, consider referrals of eligible employees who consent to such referral from the priority placement or job placement programs established under the section.

This title may be cited as the "Treasury Department Appropriations Act, 1997."

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise. The motion was agreed to. Accordingly the Committee rose, and the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. L. A. HODD]
having assumed the chair, Mr. Dreier, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3756) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the U.S. Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain independent agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, pursuant to House Resolution 475, had come to no resolution thereon.

Mr. HOYER. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, and I do not intend to object, this agreement is intended, as I understand it, to give all the amendments that we know about the opportunity to be offered. In addition, it gives us an opportunity to further discuss the points raised by the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON] in my amendment, and will then provide for the consideration of the balance of the bill.

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. If the gentleman will yield, that is correct. Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the unanimous consent request offered by the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT] is agreed to.

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3814, COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-678) on the resolution (H. Res. 479) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3814) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HOYER. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I presume the answer to my question, but the Chair did not say the unanimous-consent request was adopted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair did say that. The Chair in a very soft voice said “without objection.”

Mr. HOYER. If the Speaker said that, then we are confident that it is done.

TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 475 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in order. The Chair rose just a few moments ago. The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from the Whole House rose just a few moments ago, pending the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON].

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose just a few moments ago, pending was the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON].

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON] for 5 minutes in support of her amendment.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, this amendment strikes language in title I of the bill.