a clear signal of the purely political manner in which Secretary Babbitt intended to operate the NPS, and resulted in both Democratic and Republican-authored measures to require that the head of the NPS know something about parks other than having vacationed there.

Section 7 of the bill reauthorizes the National Park System advisory board. The statutory authorization for this board expired a couple years ago. While the board has been reauthorized administratively, I have hoped that it could be enhanced if it were reestablished by law.

Section 8 establishes and expands the Challenge Cost Share Program for the NPS on a permanent basis. This program, which permits Federal dollars to be leveraged with non-Federal dollars, has proven very effective for the Forest Service; and it is expected to provide similar benefits for the National Park Service at a time when appropriations are limited.

Finally, section 9 of the bill permits the NPS to recover costs from damages to natural resources in the same manner as costs are recovered from damages to Federal resources. When the Federal Government recovers costs from such damage, it makes far more sense to apply those funds to restore the resources than to deposit such funds into the Treasury, as is currently the policy.

Mr. Speaker, as Members can see, this bill contains a number of very important provisions which will help our parks, its employees, and make congressional oversight more effective. I commend all Members who have provided input into the bill, Democrats and Republicans alike, and urge all Members to support this bipartisan legislation.

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

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I had hoped that we could keep this discussion of this bill bipartisan. Obviously, I have to disagree with some of the chairman’s comments. This is a good bill.

Employee housing, I had a chance to go to Yellowstone over the recess and had a chance to spend some time with our Park Service employees, not just in law enforcement but also park rangers, men and women. The quality of these men and women is really outstanding. They are hard workers. Of course Yellowstone is the crown jewel.

They talked to me about this housing issue. Basically what you have is some of our, especially bachelor, park rangers living in what is generously called some very substandard housing. We have to do better. We have to do better for our park employees.

Let me address some of the chairman’s statements. I disagree. I think Secretary Babbitt has done a good job with the Park Service. I think Director Kennedy has done a good job, too. I differ with the chairman on whether Tom Brokaw or Robert Redford would have been good directors of the Park Service. I think what Secretary Babbitt is looking for is somebody with high visibility, to give the parks the visibility that they need.

I know the chairman agrees with me. We have got to find ways to ensure that these parks are funded. We need the political will to help. I think that was one of the objectives viewed there. But I am not going to get into an argument with him, except to say that this administration has done a good job with the environment and with the Park Service, particularly Director Kennedy and Secretary Babbitt.

This is an occasion where, perhaps a few times that we have come together on a bill, we should recognize that that has happened. I commend the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. HOFER] and the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] for this bill. It is a good one. They work with us. They compromise. We compromise. We have a good product that I think will advance the national interest.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words from the ranking member of the committee. Let me say that, as a Republican member, we have no desire to close any parks, contrary to what people have said, but to make them better.

I think this particular piece of legislation, as we waded through all the sections, points out and expedites the things that will make the parks better and make them work better; and we are very strong on the idea of taking care of our national parks. We have no argument with the administration on most the things that they do, but in some of these areas we feel that what they do, but in some of these areas we feel that what should be done should be done not for what is politically expedient, but done for the benefit of the parks, and that is the agreement we thought we had when we first got into the business of this committee.

I appreciate all those who have worked so diligently on this bill. I personally feel this is an excellent piece of legislation, and I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2941, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the bill passed, H.R. 2941, as amended.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3802) to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code, popularly known as the Freedom of Information Act, to provide for public access to information in an electronic format, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3802

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) the purpose of section 552 of title 5, United States Code, popularly known as the Freedom of Information Act, is to require agencies of the Federal Government to make certain agency information available for public inspection and copying and to establish and enable enforcement of the right of any person to obtain access to the records of such agencies, subject to statutory exemptions, for any public or private purpose;

(2) since the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act in 1966, and the amendments enacted in 1974 and 1986, the Freedom of Information Act has been a valuable means through which any person can learn how the Federal Government operates;

(3) the Freedom of Information Act has led to the disclosure of waste, fraud, abuse, and wrongdoing in the Federal Government;

(4) the Freedom of Information Act has led to the identification of unsafe consumer products, harmful drugs, and serious health hazards;

(5) Government agencies increasingly use computers to conduct agency business and to store publicly valuable agency records and information; and

(6) Government agencies should use new technology to enhance public access to agency records and information.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

(1) foster democracy by ensuring public access to agency records and information;

(2) improve public access to agency records and information;

(3) ensure agency compliance with statutory time limits; and

(4) maximize the usefulness of agency records and information collected, maintained, used, retained, and disseminated by the Federal Government.

SEC. 3. APPLICATION OF REQUIREMENTS TO ELECTRONIC FORMAT INFORMATION.

Section 552(f) of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(f) For purposes of this section, the term—
"(1) ‘agency’ as defined in section 552(1) of this title includes any executive department, military department, Government corporation, Government controlled corporation, or other establishment in the executive branch of the Government (including the Executive Office of the President), or any independent regulatory agency; and

(2) any other term used in this section in reference to information includes any information that would be an agency record subject to the requirements of this subchapter when maintained by an agency in any format, including an electronic format.”

SEC. 4. INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT AND INDEXATION OF RECORDS.

Section 552(a)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the second sentence, by striking “or staff manual or instruction” and inserting “staff manual, instruction, or copies of records referred to in subparagraph (D)”; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end of the third sentence the following: “and the extent of such deletion shall be indicated on the portion of the record which is made available, unless including that indication would harm an interest protected by the exemption in subsection (b) under which the deletion is made.”

(3) by inserting after the third sentence the following: “If technically feasible, the extent of the deletion shall be indicated at the place in the record where the deletion was made.”;

(4) by inserting after subparagraph (B), by striking “and” and inserting “;” after the semicolon;

(5) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) copies of all records, regardless of form or format, which have been released to any person under paragraph (3) and which, because of the nature of their subject matter, have become likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records; and

(E) a general index of the records referred to under subparagraph (D);”;

(6) by inserting after the fifth sentence the following: “Each agency shall make the index required by subparagraph (E) available by computer telecommunications by December 31, 1999.”;

(7) by striking the first sentence the following: “For records created on or after November 1, 1996, within one year after such date, each agency shall make such records available, including by computer telecommunications, if computer telecommunications means have not been established by the agency, by other electronic means.”

SEC. 5. HONORING FORM OR FORMAT REQUESTS.

Section 552(a)(3) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “(A)” after “(I)”; and

(2) by striking “and” and inserting “;” after the semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(B) In making any record available to a person under this paragraph, an agency shall provide the record in any form or format, or arrange such an alternative time frame for processing the request or a modified request. Refusal by the person to reasonably modify the request or arrange such an alternative time frame shall be considered as a factor in determining whether exceptional circumstances exist for purposes of subparagraph (C).”;

“(C) For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘compelling need’ means—

(1) the need to search for and collect the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request;

(2) the need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are deemed necessary to the particular request;

(3) the need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the agency having substantial subject-matter responsibility for the records; and

(4) any other term used in this subparagraph in reference to information includes any information that would be an agency record subject to the requirements of this subchapter when maintained by an agency in any format, including an electronic format.”
pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or

“(ii) with respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, subsection (b), to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity.

“(vi) A demonstration of a compelling need by a person requesting a record for expedited processing shall be made by a statement certifying by such person to be true and correct to the best of such person’s knowledge and belief.”

(b) EXTENSION OF GENERAL PERIOD FOR DETERMINING WHETHER TO COMPLY WITH A REQUEST

Section 552(a)(6)(A)(i) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking “ten days” and inserting “20 days”.

(c) MATTER DENIED.—Section 552(a)(6) of title 5, United States Code, as amended by section 7 of this Act and subsection (a) of this section, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(F) In denying a request for records, in whole or in part, an agency shall make a reasonable effort to estimate the volume of any requested matter the provision of which is denied, and shall provide any such estimate to the person making the request, unless providing such an estimate would harm an interest protected by the exemption in subsection (b) pursuant to which the denial is made.”

SEC. 9. COMPUTER REDACTION.

Section 552(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended in the matter following paragraph (9) by inserting after the period the following:

“the amount of information deleted shall be indicated on the released portion of the record, unless including that indication would harm an interest protected by the exemption in this subsection under which the deletion is made. If technically feasible, the amount of the information deleted shall be indicated at the place in the record where such deletion is made.”

SEC. 10. REPORT TO THE CONGRESS.

Section 552(e) of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(e)(1) On or before February 1 of each year, each agency shall submit to the Attorney General of the United States a report which shall cover the preceding fiscal year and which shall include—

“(A) the number of determinations made by the agency not to comply with requests for records or information from the agency under subsection (a) and the reasons for each such determination;

“(B) the number of appeals made by persons in subsection (b)(3), a description of whether a court has upheld the agency to withhold information under each such statute, and a concise description of the scope of any information withheld;

“(C) the number of requests for records pending before the agency as of September 30 of the preceding year, and the median number of days that such requests had been pending before the agency;

“(D) the number of requests for records received by the agency and the number of requests which the agency processed;

“(E) the number of days taken by the agency to process different types of requests;

“(F) the total amount of fees collected by the agency for processing requests; and

“(G) the number of full-time staff of the agency devoted to processing requests for records under this section, and the total amount expended by the agency for processing such requests.

“(2) Each agency shall make each such report available to the public including by computer telecommunication, or if computer telecommunication means have not been established by the agency, by other electronic means.

“(3) The Attorney General of the United States shall make each report which has been made available by electronic means available in hard copy. The Attorney General of the United States shall notify the Chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight of the House of Representatives and the Chairman and ranking minority member of the Committees on Government Affairs and the Judiciary of the Senate, no later than April 1 of the year in which each such report is issued, that such reports are available by electronic means.

“(4) The Attorney General of the United States, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall develop reporting and performance guidelines in connection with this section by October 1, 1997, and may establish additional requirements for such reports as the Attorney General determines may be useful.

“(5) The Attorney General of the United States shall submit an annual report on or before April 1 of each calendar year which shall include for the prior calendar year a listing of the number of cases arising under this section, the exemption involved in each such case, the disposition of such case, and the cost, fees, and other expenses under paragraphs (E), (F), and (G) of subsection (a). Such report shall also include a description of the efforts undertaken by the Department of Justice to encourage agency compliance with this section.”

SEC. 11. REFERENCE MATERIALS AND GUIDES.

Section 552 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding after subsection (f) the following new subsection:

“(g) The head of each agency shall prepare and make publicly available upon request, reference material or a guide for requesting records or information from the agency, subject to the exemptions in subsection (b), including—

“(1) an index of all major information systems of the agency;

“(2) a description of major information and record locator systems maintained by the agency, and

“(3) a handbook for obtaining various types and categories of public information from the agency pursuant to chapter 35 of title 44, and under this section.”

SEC. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), this Act shall take effect 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) PROVISIONS EFFECTIVE ON ENACTMENT.—Sections 7 and 8 shall take effect one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] and the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN].

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I will take 2 minutes, and then I am going to yield to the gentleman from Washington [Mr. TATE] for the explanation of the bill.

The hallmark of a free society is that those who are governed have access to the information within the control of those who govern. James Madison put it very well when he wrote very elegantly over two centuries ago:

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be the governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.

Madison, whom we honor with the Memorial Day holiday, noted that during Congress, was certainly one of the most thoughtful of our founders and considered by many to be the Father of The Constitution.

In this spirit, 30 years ago Congress passed the Freedom of Information Act, commonly referred to as the FOIA. The committee report that accompanied the original bill summarized it as providing “a true Federal public records statute by requiring the availability, to any member of the public, of all executive branch records” described in that act. Since its enactment, the annual number of requests which departments and agencies received has grown to more than 600,000 requests a year.

The benefits that the Freedom of Information Act provides the public matter deeply to Congress. In 1995, the very first report issued by the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight was A Citizen’s Guide on Using the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act of 1974 to Request Government Records. This popular publication, available from the Government Printing Office helps average citizens understand their right to obtain government records.

H.R. 3802 clarifies that records kept electronically are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The bill also makes procedural changes in the administration of the law. It strengthens agency reporting requirements. It also requires that more information be available to the public via the Internet.

The Electronic Freedom of Information Amendments of 1996 was introduced by the gentleman from Washington [Mr. TATE], our subcommittee’s ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY], the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. PETERSON], and myself. We were the original cosponsors.

I understand that Senator Leahy intends to offer this identical bill on the floor of the other body as a substitute for H.R. 3802. The Senate Committee on the Judiciary had previously favorably reported that legislation. We have worked very closely with Senators Leahy and Specter and the administration in producing a bill that now enjoys broad support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington [Mr. TATE], my colleague, the prime author of this legislation.
Mr. TATE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman CLINGER and Representative HORN for their hard work and leadership.

As chairman of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee—Chairman HORN is a great gentleman—I played a vital role in bringing H.R. 3802—the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996—before us today.

And Chairman HORN of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology—has served on the front lines in our efforts to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of Government operations.

I have been fortunate to work alongside Representative HORN in the area of Federal information policy and the Electronic Freedom of Information Act amendments.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of Representative CAROLYN MALONEY and Representative COLLIN PETERSON. Their contributions have ensured that H.R. 3802 is a truly bipartisan effort.

Opening the work of the Federal Government to the watchful and vigilant eyes of the American taxpayers and the public is an effort that both parties and the administration can and should embrace wholeheartedly.

Thirty years ago—Congress passed the Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] to advance one of the basic tenets of our Constitution—that our Federal Government is always open, accessible, and accountable to the American people.

Government works best under the watchful and vigilant eyes of its owners—the American people.

The more visible and accessible we make the work of the Federal Government to the watchful and vigilant eyes of the American taxpayers and the public is an effort that both parties and the administration can and should embrace wholeheartedly.

Before the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act—agencies and departments of the Federal Government regularly resisted the public’s access to information.

FOIA was enacted in order to honor—preserve—and promote the public’s right to know—ensuring that Government information is—within very few exceptions—public information.

Unfortunately—time after time—FOIA’s promise to make Government information open and accessible has been broken.

On many occasions—simple requests for information have languished—unanswered—for years.

In addition—many agencies have not responded to the needs of a public that has already moved into the information age—focusing on answering with volumes of paper rather than with CD-ROM’s or computer disks.

In the 30 years since the implementation of the original Freedom of Information Act—our Nation has witnessed enormous technological advances.

My area of the country—the Puget Sound region in Washington State—is the home of Microsoft—the largest computer software company in the world.

My district has welcomed a manufacturing plant for Intel—the largest of the Pentium chip that goes into computer—cellular telephone—fax—and internet possible—brining the public into the information age.

It is only fitting that we now work to use modern-day technology to deliver common-sense efficiency and Government accountability to the American people.

H.R. 3802 puts FOIA online—on agency websites, ensuring that citizens in every home—in every town—in every city—across the Nation will be able to access Government information from the comfort of their own homes.

My neighbors will be able to turn on their computers—click onto the internet—and download information made accessible by the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996.

Our Government should be user-friendly by making an effort to deliver information to Americans in the format of their choosing.

H.R. 3802 requires Federal agencies to make a concerted effort to produce records in the preferred format—such as CD-ROM or computer disk—ensuring that Government information is not only readily available but also readily usable.

The use of the latest technology by Government agencies will harness the benefits of computer technology and deliver to everyone increased Government accessibility.

This legislation also addresses the problems many citizens face when requesting Federal records—unacceptable delays in getting an answer.

This bill encourages Federal agencies to develop multitrack processing based on the complexity of requests.

For example—simple requests should be answered as if they were going through the express line at your local supermarket—quickly and efficiently.

Those whose information—which relates to life or safety or is of urgent public interest—will receive the timely processing that they need.

In addition—agencies are given an incentive to actively work with the public to deliver the most useful information as fast as possible.

These changes send a clear message that the Federal Government—and its public servants—must always strive for increased Government openness—efficiency—and accountability.

Openness—efficiency—and accountability are the hallmarks of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments.

The American people expect their Government to deliver no less.

In a March 21 letter to Chairman HORN, I and Representatives SCARBOROUGH, DAVIS, FOX, BASS, and FLANAGAN urged House consideration of EFOIA and I am delighted to have H.R. 3802 before us today on the House floor.

I thank all my colleagues on the Government Reform and Oversight Committee for their hard work and support in ensuring that the advancement of free information to the American people is pursued on a bipartisan basis.

H.R. 3802 has received endorsements from a broad array of groups—including Americans for Tax Reform—the Newspaper Association of America—the National Association of Broadcasters—and the American Library Association.

Better for the average American taxpayer; the Paperwork Reduction Act, the debt collection bill which Treasury estimates will save taxpayers $10 billion over 5 years, the Federal Acquisition Reform Act, the Single Audit Act, and the General Accounting Office Act, to name a few. These achievements are a credit to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. CLINGER] and the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN], who chairs the Subcommittee on Government Management Information and Technology on which I serve as the ranking member. They are also a credit to a ranking member of the full committee, the gentlewoman from Illinois [Mrs. COLLINS], whose leadership will be greatly missed when she retires at the end of the year. On this particular bill I want to thank the gentleman from Washington [Mr. TATE], for his active leadership and Senator PATRICK LEAHY who has been the driving force behind the bill in the Senate.

I appreciate the majority’s willingness to adopt my amendments, in particular one amendment that would track how agencies are responding or not responding to Freedom of Information Act requests. As Senator LEAHY testified at our committee hearing, long delays in access can mean no access at all.
Mr. Speaker, in short, the Electronic Freedom of Information Act will bring the Freedom of Information Act from the technological stone age into the information age. It has been 30 years since President Johnson set upon signing the original Freedom of Information Act, and I quote:

"This legislation springs from one of our most essential principles, a democracy works best when people have all the information that the security of the Nation permits."

That principle still holds true today, but the Freedom of Information Act is woefully outdated, drafted for a time when personnel computers were unheard of and cyberspace was no more accessible than outer space.

This bill will change all of that. It clarifies that there is no legal distinction between Government records stored on paper and Government records stored electronically. That records maintained in an electronic format can be subject to FOIA requests.

Government agencies are increasingly storing their information on personal computer databases and electronic storage media such as CD-ROM's. But some Government agencies have denied freedom of information requests for information stored electronically. They are seeking the green light of Congress to provide access to that information, and this bill gives it to them by placing substance over form instead of form over substance.

The rationale for this provision is obvious. Today our information warehouses are on computer and compact disks, not in huge buildings in industrial zones. By using technology, Government bureaucrats can avoid going through endless file cabinets hunting for information, often to provide identical or overlapping information from previous FOIA requests. And ordinary American citizens can access that information without leaving their desks or driving to the post office, or in some cases having any contact with Government workers at all.

With Government downsizing, Government employees' workloads are mounting, so avoiding the need for contact with them at all can dramatically expedite fulfillment of freedom of information requests, as in the case of identical FOIA requests which have been filed before.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also forces agencies to exercise foresight when installing computer systems which must help expedite agency FOIA requests and operations, rather than impeding them. Furthermore, it would encourage agencies to offer online access to Government information, effectively transforming an individual's home computer into a Government agency's public reading room.

Most importantly, the bill would tackle the mother of all complaints lodged against the Freedom of Information Act: that is, the often ludicrous amount of time it takes some agencies to respond, if they respond at all, to freedom of information requests.

By the time freedom of information requests are fulfilled, the information is often useless to the requester, if the requester has not died of old age. If you request a document from the FBI, you may be forced to wait for more than 4 years before you receive it, if not longer.

This bill will make several commonsense changes. It will establish that all freedom of information requests are not created equal. The bill creates a compelling need standard, warranting faster FOIA processing.

Two categories of compelling need would be created. In the first category, the failure to obtain the records within an expedited deadline poses an imminent threat to an individual's life or physical safety. The second category requires a request by someone, and I quote, "priority in disseminating information," and "urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged government activity."

This would apply to our good friends at the nation's capital. Mr. Speaker, we talked about the need to constantly feed the beast, meaning the media, with information. This provision will help keep the media informed in a quicker and faster way.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would further differentiate and prioritize FOIA requests based on size, giving requesters an incentive to frame narrower requests. Agencies would no longer be able to delay responding to FOIA requests on the grounds of "exceptional circumstances" if those circumstances are nothing more than the predictable agency overload.

This clause would strengthen the requirement that agencies respond to freedom of information requests on time. However, this bill does recognize the great demands placed on agencies to fulfill FOIA requests by extending the deadline for responding to requests to 20 workdays from the current 10-day requirement, which is simply unworkable for many agencies.

The bill also gives agencies an incentive to comply with statutory time limits by allowing them to retain half of the fees. The amendment that I introduced, which has been adopted, acknowledges that we need to make agencies more accountable to the public by requiring them to report to Congress and the public on their efforts to comply with FOIA or their failure in complying with FOIA. Information delayed is certainly information denied.

The bill requires each agency to report on its FOIA workload during the year, the number of requests received and completed, as well as the amount of backlog and the steps the agency is taking to reduce it. Each agency will complete the report within 20 workdays from the date it normally takes to process the request. Finally, each agency will report on the resources, dollars, and persons devoted to responding. This will allow us to make a judgment about whether adequate resources are being devoted to these requests and whether agencies are making a sufficient effort to comply with the law of the land.

This bill also requires agencies to become more user-friendly to the public, informing average Americans in a readily understandable way how one makes a FOIA request, how long it takes for normal requests to be processed. The Government must respond to a request, and in what circumstances the Government is not required to fulfill the request.

One issue not addressed in this legislation is the recent D.C. Circuit Court decision in the case of Armstrong versus the Executive Office of the President. In that decision the court ruled that the National Security Council is not an agency. This is contrary to 20 years of legal practice and contrary to the way Congress has treated the National Security Council in other legislation. I hope the courts will correct this error; but if they do not, I am sure that we will add it in the 105th Congress.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, this is a comprehensive, bipartisan bill that facilitates the dissemination of public information. It makes the Freedom of Information Act for the 1960's. It helps make Government truly for the people, not just for Government insiders. In passing it unanimously, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has proudly lived up to its name.

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me say in closing on this I thank the gentlewoman from New York for her very constructive ideas, and the gentleman from Washington for his very constructive ideas, and the gentlewoman from New York for her most helpful suggestions. She has mentioned a few of the ideas. The Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology held a very thorough hearing on H.R. 3802. This has truly been, as have most of the bills from this subcommittee, based on bipartisan cooperation. Good ideas know no bounds, and what we need to do is get the good ideas into legislation. This is one aspect of that.

We mentioned earlier the 600,000 requests a year. The gentlewoman from New York mentioned the 4-year lag to get a file out of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That is simply unacceptable in a free society. How are we going to solve that? As we suggested in the hearings, and this was again, both sides of the aisle suggesting it to the executive branch, we need the Cabinet officers in charge of particular departments to take this seriously, to look at how their needs and how they might better staff and organize and the Government and the public with this information. The agencies need to put a price tag on the service. Do not necessarily come to Congress to solve
Whereas Mother Teresa has deservedly received numerous honors, including the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize and the 1985 Presidential Medal of Freedom;

Whereas Mother Teresa has worked in areas all over the world, including the United States, to provide comfort to the world’s neediest;

Whereas Mother Teresa through her Missionaries of Charity has established within the United States numerous soup kitchens, emergency shelters for women, shelters for unwed mothers, shelters for men, after-school and summer camp programs for children, homes for the dying, prison ministry, nursing homes, orphanages, after school and summer camp programs for children, homes for the dying, prison ministry, family counseling programs, and missionary work in the United States. She has also been awarded the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her work as well as the 1985 U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom and countless other honors. It would surely take up the rest of the day to list them all.

The Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa’s order, was founded in India in 1950. The order was established in the United States in 1971. There are approximately 4,500 sisters affiliated with the congregation. It is represented in the United States in the Archdioceses of Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Washington. Also in the Dioceses of Baton Rouge, Brooklyn, Dallas, Fall River, Gallup, Lafayette, Lexington, Little Rock, Peoria, Phoenix, and Memphis. It’s very possible that more have been added since the last official report. God only knows where Mother Teresa’s influence and good works may turn up next.

Mother Teresa is a woman of simple, yet eloquent, faith. This is best illustrated by an observation she once made. She said:

"We do not accept any government assistance or church subsidies, salaries or fixed income. The birds of the air and the flowers of the field do not have an income, but God takes care of them. Therefore, will God also take care of us, who are more important than the flowers and birds?"

But, it is Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity who, through their good works throughout the world have, in some way, shape, or form, taken...