

their bill helped Americans with health care, false. It leaves out secretaries and clerks and other workers without health insurance, and it does so by breaking the backs of hard-working minority entrepreneurs who, since 1978 and with the FCC's section 1071, have moved from less than one-half percent minority radio and TV broadcast ownership to now about 3 percent.

Why slam all of our desires for good health care with the divisive dismantling of the mere empowerment of minority purchases of broadcast media? Let us reform FCC section 1071. I want to do that. I am a taxpayer, and I support taxpayer reform.

However, let us not stop the access to the first amendment of hard-working business persons never before given such a chance. This is simply a back door attempt, poised to further undermine racial cooperation in this country. If it was not, we would not have heard the Republicans raising the high platitudes of color blindness and the raising of Hispanic and African-American self-employed persons as a reason for their support of busting a program that would allow minorities for the first time to own radio and TV stations. The money to pay for the health insurance deductions for the self-employed and hard-working employees, as I voted for, is already there. Without the talk show fodder already being prepared for tomorrow, "we won the first blow to show those minorities that we live in a color-blind society." Well, the headline will already be stated and will read tomorrow, and should really be reading, "The Republicans do it again. Real working Americans, secretaries, clerks, and others left with no health insurance deductions and, yes, minorities again sent into media darkness, again, another blow to the first amendment."

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized for 46 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to convene tonight's special order to discuss dramatic improvements in how the Federal Government does business. These improvements have come thanks to the Clinton administration and the 103d Congress' efforts to reinvent government. The American people's faith in government is at a historic low. Recent surveys show that only 17 percent of Americans believe in the ability of their government. Outcries for change in both the 1992 and 1994 elections speak for themselves. But stump speeches denouncing government have successfully obscured the fact that government is changing. It is getting smaller, more efficient and more user friendly.

For the past 2 years, we have been working to implement the rec-

ommendations of Vice President GORE's National Performance Review. Implementation of these major reforms involves hard and patient work in the nuts and bolts of government management.

It is not flashy or eye-catching, but it is getting results.

Tonight my colleagues and I will offer real-life examples of how government for the first time in a generation is actually working better with less people and fewer resources than it did the year before. As I mentioned earlier, the restructuring was first announced by Vice President GORE in a report of the National Performance Review from redtape to results, creating a government that works better and costs less.

□ 2230

This ongoing initiative has four main themes: customer service, procurement reform, eliminating obsolete programs, and reducing the Federal workforce.

Think back for a minute to a memorable sporting event, the Super Bowl or the World Cup. Think about the size of the stadium, like the Rose Bowl, one of America's largest, filled to capacity. That is the net number of people, over 100,000 to date, that the Clinton administration has taken off the Federal payroll, 100,000 people whose salaries and benefits the taxpayers no longer have to pay.

Madam Speaker, 2 years from now, that number will grow to 272,000, enough people to fill nearly three Rose Bowls. This year, Penn State won the Rose Bowl, but Vice President GORE deserves the national championship for leading this downsizing effort.

Today the number of employees of the Federal Government is at the lowest level since the Kennedy administration. Because of this action taken by President Clinton and the Democrats in Congress, there are fewer Federal employees than under the so-called Republican fiscal conservatives: Presidents Nixon, Ford, Bush, and even the Gipper. This, Mr. Speaker, is an amazing accomplishment.

I just want to show it on this chart. This was in 1963, the Kennedy years; it has gone up, and for the first time it is going down, and we have reduced government by over 100,000 employees.

Due to other initiatives in reinventing government. Employees still working for the Federal Government are able to interact with the public in a more intelligent and friendly manner. I will give one example from my district in New York City.

For years, the Veterans Administration has carried a terrible reputation among veterans. Notorious even within the VA was the New York regional office. Before Clinton and GORE, an application for veterans benefits would be handled by at least 12 employees working in 4 separate operations.

However, if a veteran actually showed up in person, they would not meet with any of the 12 people who handle the application. Instead, he or she would meet with a benefits coun-

selor, employee No. 13, but the benefits counselor would not have access to all the necessary information. The counselor would have to go to yet another unit of the office on a different floor and get the file from another clerk, employee No. 14. That is the way it used to work.

Today the application is handled by a single team responsible for processing, filing, and dealing with the veteran face to face. When a veteran comes in, he or she deals with someone who knows their file, their history, and can tell the veteran exactly what is going on. This change has brought a tremendous increase in customer satisfaction for the veterans.

We have reduced the Federal workforce, and we are doing more with less. But taxpayers should be most excited about procurement reform. I know that the word "procurement" can put a lot of people to sleep, but there are more than 200 billion reasons for taxpayers to stay awake and be very concerned about procurement. That is because the Federal Government spends over \$200 billion on procurement every year. That is \$800 for every American spent on goods and services.

There is no more important area in which to control spending and better manage our limited resources. The Federal Government's record on procurement before 1993 was terrible. We all remember stories about the \$600 hammer or the \$2000 toilet seat, but one you may not have heard occurred during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

During the Gulf war, the Air Force needed 6,000 standard, commercial Motorola radios for the troops, like this one. They wanted to order them so they could communicate with each other. But even in that emergency, the Government could not just buy commercial products at competitive prices.

Under the regulations at the time, Motorola would have had to supply records of what it cost to make these, and documents, proving they had never charged anyone less for them. For quite a while, the U.S. Government could not purchase these radios.

It is hard to believe, but finally, Japan had to buy the radios from Motorola and give them to the Air Force. That is how bad it was.

Last year's procurement reform legislation solved this problem by eliminating requirements that the Pentagon obtain cost and pricing data for commercially available items. In other words, if they are commercially available, you can buy them and cut out the redtape.

I am certain that this historic law will simplify and streamline the Federal procurement process, while ensuring fairness, accountability, and integrity.

Let me give you another example about how procurement reform is making the Government work more intelligently and effectively. For a long

time, the Government, particularly the Pentagon, spent enormous amounts of time and money developing its own specifications for easily available products, like salad dressing.

Instead of being able to buy commercial brands of salad dressing, like this one, off the shelf, like every other American, the Government ended up buying products like this one, paying more for less quality, but this salad dressing was designed for Government specs. No more. If it is available on the shelf, you can buy it off the shelf.

As a result of changes initiated by the Vice President and the 103d Congress, the Defense Personnel Supply Center, which buys all the food, clothing, and medical supplies for our troops has been able to undertake commonsense procurement techniques that make ordinary commercial products like this Wishbone dressing available to the troops like it is to every other American.

To date, the supply center has realized savings between 5 and 10 percent, and for those lower prices, our troops get better tasting, nationally recognized products.

Lastly, we also save money because we now get our commercial products delivered when they are needed, so there is no longer any need to warehouse enormous quantities of Government-designed salad dressings.

In addition to this commonsense program, this new law will reduce paperwork, especially for contracts under \$100,000, and encourage the Federal Government to buy commercial products at the fairest prices. It will strengthen oversight and procurement, improve integrity, and standardize the procurement code by eliminating obsolete and redundant laws.

It incorporates many of Vice President GORE's National Performance Review recommendations, such as providing for multi-year contracts, promoting excellence in vendor performance, and allowing State and local governments to use Federal supply centers. In a nutshell, the law is going to save the taxpayers billions of dollars.

This is what is projected to be saved: from the downsizing, \$46 billion; procurement reform, \$12 billion; and in other areas, five, coming to a total of \$63 billion.

However, President Clinton plans to reform the procurement process even more. Today there was a hearing in the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight to outline the administration's plans for more improvement to America's procurement laws.

I would like to enter the entire record of that committee hearing today into the RECORD, so that the American taxpayers can have easy access to read everything that took place in this hearing today.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, reinventing government means one more thing, abolishing obsolete programs. Senator James Byrne once said "The closest thing in this world to im-

mortality is a government agency." But President Clinton has demonstrated that immortality for Federal programs is no longer a sure thing.

For example, more than 50 years ago, wool and mohair were deemed important for making Army and Navy uniforms, so a Government subsidy was started. That program survived and grew under every President from Roosevelt to Bush until Bill Clinton.

In 1993, the President and Congress affirmed eliminating the wool, mohair, and honey subsidies, thus saving the taxpayers \$695 million. That is a lot of money. We are just getting started reviewing other obsolete programs. That was just 1 of the more than 300 programs that have been eliminated so far.

What does this reform add up to? It adds up to \$46 billion in savings to the American taxpayer, and an estimated \$60 billion over the next 2 years.

Madam Speaker, we have more obsolete programs to abolish, and more procurement reforms to achieve, but thanks to the Reinventing Government program, the American people have reason to believe that their Government can work again, and America can compete and win again in the world economy.

We have taken important first steps toward the day when business as usual in Washington will actually have positive connotations.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to yield to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Maryland [STENY HOYER].

□ 2240

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight with my colleagues to highlight the many achievements thus far of the reinventing government efforts under the Clinton administration.

With the leadership of the Vice President and the strong support of the House Democrats and, I might say, the Republicans, we were able to enact many more reforms which have already had a positive impact on the people they were designed to help, the American people, the taxpayers. Congresswoman MALONEY has cited a number of examples. The opportunities for reinvention in the Treasury Department under the jurisdiction of the appropriations subcommittee I chaired were great. As a result of our efforts, the Treasury Department and related agencies are more customer-friendly, more cost-effective, and much, much more efficient. Where we could eliminate waste, we have. Before reinvention, every time the Government made a small purchase, it spent on an average \$50 in paperwork over and above the cost of the item. This obviously accounted for tens of millions of purchases last year, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars in paperwork costs.

I want to show this Visa card, which has Bill Clinton's name on it. Now with this purchase card, the very same purchases are made with no paperwork cost at all. Let me reiterate that. No paperwork cost at all. Eliminating an average \$50 cost on millions of purchases. That is tens of millions of dollars instantly saved by our Government because of this little card that all of us use all the time.

Let me show you what that meant. We used to purchase this stapler for \$54. Outrageous. That did not mean that the stapler cost \$54, but in order to purchase it, we had to spend \$54 on the paperwork.

Bill Clinton and AL GORE came to town and said, "That is done." Bill Clinton and AL GORE said we can save the American taxpayers millions and millions of dollars if we cut out all that paperwork and simply use this little card.

Now with Bill Clinton and AL GORE's reinvention of government, we pay \$4 for this stapler, which is what we ought to pay for this stapler. Fifty dollars on just one item. That is the kind of government American taxpayers expect and want.

The American people have asked us to cut our pork and justify Federal projects. As a result of reinventing government, the General Services Administration now carefully reviews all Federal construction projects in a program called Time-Out and Review. They assess the Federal need and appropriate size and design of these projects and ensure that the costs are fully justified.

Very frankly, Mr. Johnson, who is the administrator of that agency, was asked by President Clinton and Vice President GORE to look at these projects, see if we can save some money. Some of these projects are in districts that are represented by Democrats, some in districts represented by Republicans. This was not a political matter. This was a commonsense matter. How can we exercise common sense and save our people money?

Madam Speaker, I know you will be pleased to hear that so far over 200 projects have been reviewed and, you are not going to believe this, a \$1.2 billion savings has been effected, now that Bill Clinton and AL GORE are looking at these things very carefully.

These reforms have taken what was wasteful and inefficient and reinvented these programs into efficient successes.

Madam Speaker, how many times have we heard tragic stories of people who have never received or lost their Government checks and have had to wait for countless weeks for their new checks to be processed? A critical problem, a crisis for some. Many times these checks, often Social Security checks, are vital to pay for medical expenses, rent, food, medicine. Checks missed that created crisis in home.

Because of reforms instituted as part of Vice President GORE and President

Clinton's reinventing government initiatives, the Financial Management Service office of the Treasury located in my home State of Maryland has turned their once horrible 54-day turnaround into a more customer-friendly less than 2-week turnaround and alleviated the concerns of many average working Americans and Americans who are retired and concerned and reliant on those checks. This office now processes 8,000 check requests a month, over 400,000 claims each year, quickly, efficiently, and in a way that is customer friendly.

Perhaps, Madam Speaker, what is most surprising about this success story is that this office improved their customer service and productivity with 32 percent less staff, which is what the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] was talking about in terms of that little graph going down. And in the face of a 28 percent workload increase. Twenty-eight percent increase in workload, 32 percent decrease of staff, and doing it in 25 percent less time than it used to take. Those Federal workers should be commended, Madam Speaker, for their efforts at not only taking part in initiating these reforms but also for successfully implementing the new techniques and procedure.

As the Vice President has correctly pointed out on many occasions:

We don't have bad workers, we have bad systems. We have worked hard and succeeded at reinventing the bad systems into systems that work and work well.

Madam Speaker, I want to close with one of the biggest examples of wasted paper and inefficiency. During the previous 12 years prior to Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore coming to town, the Federal personnel management manual had been thousands of pages. They spell out many of the policies and procedures for Federal employees. But unfortunately it contains too much unnecessary information and red tape.

Because of our efforts last year, and I want to show a picture here of Mr. King, Jim King, who is the director of OPM. He has a wheelbarrow full of paperwork.

I know all of us on both sides of the aisle have talked about, "We need to get rid of all this paper." Well, here is a wheelbarrow that Mr. King is pushing full of paper. We have reduced those forms.

Madam Speaker, you will recall when our President was talking about the Federal budget. This is the paperwork that we had when we came to town. Mr. Gore and Mr. Clinton, this is what they have gotten rid of.

We no longer have that to deal with. Luckily, the table withstood the impact of all that paper. We are getting rid of it.

Why? Not just for the sake of having a gimmick that I can put on the table here and make sort of a funny little demonstration of, but because all of us know that America is drowning in paper. Business complains about it,

educators complain about it, citizens complain about it, and we are doing something about it.

The Vice President in his leadership of reinventing government at the direction of President Clinton has said, We hear you, Mr. and Mrs. America. We hear that you want a smaller, more efficient, less costly government. We hear you, that you want you government reinvented so it does more with less and does it better, like those checks getting to recipients in a much quicker fashion.

I am very pleased to join my colleague from New York in saying that we are not there yet. We have more to do. There is still 10 percent. Ninety percent of the paperwork we have gotten rid of. But there is 10 percent left.

□ 2250

We are still looking at that to make sure that manual is as lean and effective as we can make it.

As important, Madam Speaker, as these reforms and other reforms are, it is equally crucial that we continue to build on these many successes and continue to enact more reforms in this Congress.

We are pleased that our Republican colleagues are joining us in the effort to reinvent government. Yesterday's government is behind us now and we must continue the task of doing our share in developing the government of the 21st century.

I have high hopes that the success of reinventing government in the 103d Congress that the Democrats so proudly enacted with the help of many of our Republican colleagues is only the beginning and that the second National Performance Review will be as successfully implemented in the months ahead.

I thank my colleague from New York, Mrs. MALONEY, for her leadership on this issue and for yielding to me for this time.

Mrs. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman so much.

Madam Speaker, our next speaker is Congresswoman ROSA DELAURO, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO].

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join my colleagues here tonight to talk about what we have been doing over the course of the past 2 years to address a major concern of the American people—reducing the size of the Federal Government and making it work better for them. I want to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. HOYER, Mrs. MALONEY, and Mrs. THURMAN, who have already spoken. And I want to add my voice to theirs in welcoming our House Republican colleagues who have joined the efforts of congressional Democrats and the Vice President to remake our Federal Government.

While some of our efforts have been mentioned by previous speakers, I believe they bear repeating because I'm not sure the magnitude of our suc-

cesses has gotten the attention it merits. Why? Because there are those who, in order to try to score political points, would have the American people believe nothing has changed. But President Clinton and Vice President Gore ran on a platform of change in 1992, and together, change is what we have delivered.

We passed legislation that has produced a record amount of deficit reduction—more than \$600 billion. For the first time since the Truman Administration, we have reduced annual deficits for 3 consecutive years. And the deficit will soon be the smallest its been in nearly 20 years relative to the size of our total economy.

We have enacted legislation that will reduce the number of Federal employees by 272,000. Already, we have cut more than 100,000 jobs and we will soon have the smallest Federal Government workforce in nearly 40 years.

We have cut 300 programs, eliminated others altogether, and we have cut more than one-quarter of a trillion dollars in spending.

My colleagues, we should all be proud of these accomplishments. We are delivering on what we set out to do.

But these numbers don't tell the whole story. Not only have we made dramatic cuts, but we have set out to fundamentally re-tool the way our Government conducts its business so that it provides better service to its customers—the American people—while it gets more for each tax dollar it spends. Let me give you one example from my home State.

The Defense Contract Management Area Operations office in East Hartford, CT, manages Department of Defense contracts in parts of four northeast States, including most of Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts and part of New York. Recently, this office overhauled its method of operation to improve oversight of defense contracts by changing to a team approach to customer service. Under this new system, whenever a contractor has a problem, with one phone call it gets rapid assistance from one team of expert professionals whose job is to solve the problem. In the old days, that contractor might have had to make several phone calls to people with overlapping responsibilities before it could get that same problem resolved.

As a result of this new system, 23 fewer employees are covering the same 33,000 square miles of territory. So the taxpayer wins—to date nearly \$1 million has been saved—and the Government wins—it is better assured of receiving high quality products that can be delivered on time.

For their efforts, the employees of the Hartford Defense Contract Management Office have been recognized by the Vice President as heroes of reinvention and they received the Hammer Award for doing their part in responding to the National Performance Review. And their success in

reinventing Government has been accomplished by Federal employees in dozens of agencies all across our country. These dedicated men and women have proven that they are a far cry from the stereotyped lazy unproductive Federal worker. They have taken their cue from the Vice President, embraced his call for change and are producing for all of us.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. Our task of making Government smaller and more efficient continues. I remain committed to working with my colleagues to carry on with this effort, and I look forward to hearing about more success stories this evening.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York for spearheading this effort tonight and really being in the forefront of the fight not only to reinvent government but about trying to get the message out and the word out about what has been done over these past 2 years. And I want to compliment the gentlewoman for her efforts tonight.

Mrs. MALONEY. Our next speaker is a member of the committee, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN].

Mrs. THURMAN. Madam Speaker, I think that has a wonderful ring to it and to the gentlewoman from New York who is my colleague and who came with me to Congress in 1992, and we have worked very hard together on the Governmental Operations Committee, I want to take this opportunity to thank the gentlewoman for doing this tonight.

It is not a sexy issue, or not one of those pounding issues that people want to do all of the time and raises the spirit, but I think it is a great story that needs to be told and I certainly think that it is one that I think that the American people just are not aware of because it does not happen every day in their districts, or things that are happening to them. But it is something that I believe that ought to be talked about to give our American people the idea that there is a changing government and it is going to take some time, but it is changing and we are working to their betterment and we are trying to really achieve what many of us believe is a good idea in downsizing our government.

We are eliminating burdensome red tape which we think is important, and at the same time we understand that the primary focus of reinventing government programs still is remaining by putting customers, the American taxpayers first.

During the last Congress, we passed over 30 bills containing reinventing government proposals, and I just want to kind of go through some of that legislation.

We looked at reducing the Federal work force by 100,000 full-time positions, which has already been talked about. It is a work force that is going to be the smallest since the Kennedy

administration. We had a thing up here a little while ago on that.

We consolidated education programs under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. In doing so, we have created multipurpose technical assistance centers while eliminating 49 categorical centers and 50 State national diffusion network contracts.

We also improved overall government management under the Government Management Reform Act of 1994 and the Federal Management Act of 1994. In addition, we simplified the Federal procurement procedures under the Federal acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994.

In the Federal agencies there are numerous examples of reinvention at work, and I am going to give some examples of that.

□ 2300

The Federal Aviation Administration recently started using the quality through partnership process to design and implement a new radar facility in southern California that will eventually consolidate 35 existing facilities. In Miami the Customs Office—and this is in my home State—has developed a government-industry partnership where major exporters are instructed on how to do their own inspections. By allowing companies to conduct their own routine inspections, Custom agents are free to do more spot checks. But, more importantly, exporters now make more than 40 percent of the drug busts in Miami alone while moving the entire process at a much more efficient pace.

NASA has provided technology to test for lazy eye in children through another government-private sector partnership. A Marshall space flight engineer and a private sector scientist developed a testing system now available commercially under an exclusive license from NASA. In 1993, one of our natural resources, our children, over 300,000 children were tested for lazy eye at 5 major test projects in Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, and Ohio.

This is a type of Federal-private partnership that not only reduces bureaucracy but also produces a beneficial result for all Americans.

Madam Speaker, since the House will be considering the reauthorization of the Paperwork Reduction Act this week, here is an example of an actual paperwork reduction. The Small Business Administration loan application went from a stack of forms 1.5 inches thick to a single page. Since the reinventing Government program began, over a quarter trillion dollars in spending and 300 domestic programs have been slashed. And I know we all talked about this, but this is a monumental achievement that we have come this far.

But I have to tell you we still have more to do.

Today, in the Committee on Government Reform, we actually had Steven Kelman, who is administrator for Federal procurement policy, come before the committee, the Government Re-

form and Oversight Committee, and in about, I would have to say, 7 or 8 pages here, he told us some great stories of what is going on in our Federal Government.

But what was important was that he talked about real-life people who made a difference.

You know, I remember when reinvention started and we kept saying, "You know, we need to let these employees have a little bit of room, we need to let them think, because they have been out there, they have been on the front line, they know best how to make things happen in our government."

We just never gave them any leeway which allowed them to be creative and use those ideas.

I am going to name a couple of areas in procurement particularly that they really did some good things.

Increasing reliance on commercial practices: We had Tony DiCioccio; we had Col. Craig Weston from the space-based program office; we had Jim Bednar, with the Federal Highway Administration.

Madam Speaker, when they had the earthquake, through using incentives to motivate contractors, they took what was supposedly going to be a 104-week project down to 10 weeks to rebuild the Santa Monica Freeway, 10 weeks instead of 104 weeks, through incentives to motivate contractors.

In the area of increasing use of purchase cards, we actually—and I think Mr. HOYER from Maryland mentioned this—for any purchases under \$2,500, we saved \$54 every time we used this.

But let me tell you what it does, more importantly: How many times in your districts have you heard, "You know, if you went over to so-and-so and bought this, you could buy it for half-price." You have heard it, I have heard it. It is incredible to me.

Now, here is one. At a Customs Service field office, the Government was able to purchase privacy panels from an office, from a liquidator, for \$2,450 compared to a low bid which they had received of \$4,000. We saved \$1,550 by using this particular card. That was done, by the way, by Annelie Kuhn, of the Department of Treasury.

In the area of "expanding the use of past performance," Paul Zebrowski, of the Defense Personnel Supply Center, DLA; "using multiple-award contracting," Kay Walker; "increasing use of performance-based service contracting," John Richardson, of the Law Enforcement Training Center, Department of Treasury; and in the area of "streamlining the award process," Harry Schulte, Lydia Butler.

These are all real people who have had these ideas, have had these concerns, and finally somebody said, "We want to hear what you have to say. We want to know what your experiences are, and we want to put them to work because we believe you offer us something in this government."

I think it is working. I just want to say that I have enjoyed the time I have spent on the Committee on Government Operations. We get an awful lot of time to look at GAO reports, learn about all the bad things about Government. Those are the ones that make the sound bites, they are the ones that get the headlines in the newspapers and stuff. I just hope as we go through this next couple of months that we all remember we have done some changes. We have done it on a bipartisan group basis. Most of these bills, I believe, were passed probably by the majority of this House. But we need to continue this on. Let us not make sound bites, let us not do it for political gain, let us do it for American taxpayers because they come first.

I thank the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] for the time afforded me, and I appreciate the gentlewoman's leadership and look forward to working with her again.

THE AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MOLINARI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. CHRISTENSEN] is recognized for 46 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, the American legal system is in serious need of repair. Frivolous litigation and overzealous litigators are stifling entrepreneurship, damaging competitiveness of American products on international markets and draining the U.S. economy.

The American people are tired of hearing about multimillion-dollar awards given to someone who has been injured due to their own negligence and then goes looking for the pot of gold at the end of the legal rainbow.

Commonsense legal reform is the needle that will sew up unrestrained access to the deep pockets of corporate America and the shallow pockets of nonprofit groups like the Little League and the Girl Scouts.

The American civil justice system needs reform and needs it now.

Last month an article on legal reform by the Los Angeles Times stated that in California alone lawyers made \$16.3 billion in legal fees in 1992.

My colleagues, \$16.3 billion is more than the gross domestic product of nearly three dozen Third World nations.

Madam Speaker, in the late 1970's two men illegally entered a remote section of the Miramar Naval Station through a breach in the fence. You all know Miramar as the place where "Top Gun" was filmed.

Now, ignoring numerous Government property no-trespassing signs, the two set out on their mission to steal valuable copper cable, attached to power poles throughout the base. After being assured by one of the men that the power lines were dead, his partner in

crime climbed the pole. As he began cutting the cable, he touched an exposed wire which knocked him unconscious, but he still clung to the pole. In an attempt to rescue his friend, the other thief began climbing the pole and also touched the live wire, which threw him to the ground and paralyzed him for life.

Well, obviously, this case went to trial, and plaintiffs' lawyers pleaded their case to a sympathetic jury, and, guess what: The verdict. The two thieves won. The court was found to say that the United States, as owner of the naval base, had a duty to protect the two thieves because it was reasonably foreseeable that they or thieves like them would enter and steal the copper cable.

Absurdity, you say? Yes, indeed. But it is the reality of the American civil justice system as we know it today.

Let me tell you another story about our civil justice system in the 1990's. There is probably not a Member today who has not enjoyed meeting with a visiting Girl Scout troop from their district, gathering excited and enthusiastic youngsters who come to the Capitol for the first time, and maybe the only time in their lives, to learn firsthand the meaning of that time-honored phrase, "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

□ 2310

You know how they pay for their trips here and all the other activities of their individual troop? They sell cookies. As a matter of fact, they delivered to my office today my order of Girl Scout cookies. But there is probably something you do not know about these legendary cookies. I have been told that the Girl Scouts of Illinois have to sell over a million cookies just to pay their liability insurance premiums. Why? Because they have been getting sued by overzealous plaintiff lawyers.

This organization known for teaching our Nation's youth about teamwork, community, and the value of volunteering has been beset by predatory lawyers looking for anybody with pockets to pick. My fellow colleagues, it is time that this stop. We stand ready to pass H.R. 10, the common sense legal reform bill and to shore up those organizations that teach our children about honesty and integrity as well as the corporations that employ their parents.

It is an important measure and one that we will have an opportunity to debate fully over the next 3 weeks.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Chatanooga, TN [Mr. WAMP], who sits on the Transportation and Science and Small Business Committees.

Mr. WAMP. Madam Speaker, I come tonight, thanking the gentleman from Nebraska, slightly under the weather tonight but I wanted to take the opportunity to come and talk about two in-

stitutions in this country, Madam Speaker, that are really not in very good shape. One is this institution, an outstanding heritage this institution of Congress has had, but today we are not in favor among the voters out there still looking at this institution as arrogant and out of touch. But you know, we are doing something about that. We came on the very first day and passed the Accountability Act, holding us to the same laws as the people in this country have to live under. And we are making major strides in the last few weeks here in Congress, to clean up our act and to be honest with the American people about what goes on here and be good stewards of the tax dollars, once again.

But another institution that I have to bring to the well tonight that is in dire need of a jump start right now in the legal institution in this country, where our lawyers have taken on the same kind of arrogance in many ways. I would argue that much like we have led the reforms of the last few weeks here and tried to clean up our act, the bar association and the attorneys in this country need to lead the way for tort reform.

I encourage our attorney friends to join us on substantive and positive reform of this system which the American people need to count on.

One of the basic tenets of our Constitution is the notion of a fair and speedy trial. If you are an American citizen that has been unfortunate enough to either be sued or have to sue somebody to pursue justice, you know that the concept of a fair and speedy trial is not easy to come by in this day and age. We have a system in this country of insurance law, where the attorneys actually work for an insurance company instead of the defendant, sometimes even instead of the plaintiff.

Once they work for that insurance company, that insurance company is just going to keep paying them until that amount that they designated that they would pay for legal fees is completely drained. And through that deep pockets theory, everybody sues everybody until everybody's insurance company is working with an attorney, and they keep working until all the money is gone. And the case is not going to be settled until the money is all gone.

We should not be about bashing lawyers. I do not want to do that. I do not want lawyers bashing Members of Congress. I think we need to uphold this institution and promote the institution and encourage our friends in the legal community to help us with their reform.

Lawyers are good people. Many of my friends are attorneys. Many of the people who helped me come to Congress are attorneys. Even some trial lawyers, I think, are good folks. But for too long they have made all the rules in this country. And it is time for the people to run the show again.