

Mr. SKEEN. If the gentleman will yield, we would like to finish title I, if we can. We will test the waters.

Mr. OBEY. We will not go beyond title I?

Mr. SKEEN. No, we will not, unless we get a chance to.

Mr. OBEY. If the gentleman will yield further, I also thought the understanding was that there would be no further action taken after 10:15 p.m.

Mr. SKEEN. That is correct. I am sorry I did not mention that to the gentleman, but 10:15, we will try to wind it up here this evening by as early as 10:15. There will be only one vote.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1976, and that I be allowed to include extraneous and tabular material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 188 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1976.

□ 2047

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1976) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, with Mr. KLUG in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN].

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

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to bring before the House today H.R. 1976, which makes appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies.

Before I begin in this discourse, I would like to say that I appreciate very much the opportunity to serve once again with the distinguished Member of this body, Mr. DURBIN, as my ranking member. He was my chairman in our life a year or so ago, and it has been a real pleasure and it is a real compliment to me that he would come back on this committee as the ranking member.

I also want to thank the members of the committee that have worked so hard and diligently and given of themselves to this process, and also the great staff that we have that support us all. I want them to know that I appreciate all their help, all their associations in the work we have done. I think the work product will reveal the quality of that work.

Mr. Chairman, I know many of my colleagues think of this simply as the Agriculture appropriations bill. It does, of course, provide funds for the very diverse activities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but its scope reaches every American citizen and goes far beyond the borders of this great country.

Before I begin, I want to say we have been living in sin for a certain great span of time, Mr. Chairman. That is, as the Committee on Appropriations, we have poached on the area of the authorizing committee, so we have decided to have a prenuptial agreement and divide this territory up and to get a property settlement and so on.

But, anyway, we are working together, and I am delighted to have the cooperation of the House Agriculture Authorization Committee. We understand the problems that we have had to go through to make this an equitable and very harmonious situation, and we hope that it continues.

This bill provides funds for:

A system of agriculture which allows less than 2 million farmers and ranchers to produce a safe and abundant supply of food for nearly 250 million Americans and others around the world;

Research programs at our universities, which keep us the most competitive producer of agricultural products in the world;

The Food and Drug Administration's efforts to ensure safe supplies of foods, drugs, and medical devices;

A wide variety of domestic feeding and nutrition programs, including food stamps, the Women, Infants and Children feeding program, known as WIC, and food distribution programs for the elderly and homeless, some 26 nutritional or feeding programs we handle on a renewable basis every session of this Congress;

Housing and economic development programs, rural areas which provide not only shelter, but also create jobs and economic activity throughout the country;

Export programs for bulk products and processed foods which this year will reach a record \$50 billion, generating millions of jobs in the production, processing, and transportation indus-

tries, and contributing to yet another year of agricultural export trade surpluses;

And food aid for developing countries and for emergencies such as the tragic situation in Bosnia.

Mr. Chairman, this bill is the result of 8 weeks of hearings in which 325 witnesses testified, for which we have 7 volumes of hearings available to the public, covering every detail of the programs covered by this legislation.

The bill totals \$62.5 billion, which is \$5.5 billion less than fiscal year 1995, and \$4.4 billion less than the President's request.

Mandatory spending is 80 percent of the bill and totals \$49.2 billion. Discretionary spending is 20 percent of the bill and totals \$13.3 billion, which is \$1.6 billion less than the President's request and \$85.5 million less than the current year's spending.

The bottom line is we are right on our discretionary allocation for both budget authority and outlays.

Mr. Chairman, there are very few accounts in this bill which have not been reduced or frozen at current levels of spending. I would like to remind my colleagues that this comes on top of nearly 10 percent in cuts in the fiscal year 1995 bill.

There are few small but essential increases in the bill including:

The food safety and inspection service which protects every one of us as consumers;

Conservation technical assistance for farmers as well as rural and urban communities;

Guaranteed loans for rural housing which help offset a large cut in direct loans; and

Money for USDA to begin an information sharing program to support the Department's plan to close field offices and consolidate operations which actually saves money in the long run.

There is an additional \$260 million for the Women, Infants and Children's program, known as WIC, but this does not, and I repeat does not, provide for an increase in the program. It only maintains program participation at the end of the fiscal year 1995 level of 7.3 million individuals.

Otherwise, we have made large cuts in rural housing and development programs, freezing other accounts at current year levels, and eliminating some entirely.

Mr. Chairman, there is no money for university construction, either for new buildings or to complete ongoing projects. More than 80 special research and extension programs have been eliminated.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the bill provides for current level funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and allows the Rural Telephone Bank to begin privatization.

Mr. Chairman, I want to take a minute to explain the difficulty in comparing this year's accounts with last year's. As most of you know, the USDA is the first Federal department

in many years to undergo massive reorganization. As that is happening, there are many well-known agencies such as the Farmers Home Administration and the Rural Electrification Administration that have disappeared. As their functions were consolidated and placed elsewhere in other agencies, such as the Consolidated Farm Service Agency and the Rural Utilities Service, it is very difficult to show increases and decreases in the budget.

As often happens in the formulation of appropriation bills, the authorizing committee raised certain objections to provisions in our bill which were limitations on spending and mandatory programs. I have had several meetings with my good friend, the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS] God love the gentleman, I do, too, and I am pleased to say we have worked out an agreement on these differences, at least for now.

Mr. Chairman, shortly, I will offer an en bloc amendment which makes several changes in the bill as agreed to by the authorizing committee, and this amendment, which is part of the rule, makes the following changes to H.R. 1976:

The limitations on the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Export Enhancement Program are stricken, as is a provision that would have prohibited certain disaster payments for livestock feed producers who refuse crop insurance;

The salaries and expense accounts of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency is reduced by \$17.5 million;

The Great Plains Conservation Program is eliminated for a savings of \$11 million;

The loan level for section 502 direct housing is reduced from \$900 million in the bill to \$500 million, while the guaranteed program is increased from \$1.5 billion to \$1.7 billion, for a net savings of \$83.6 million;

The Rural Development Loan Fund, one of several programs supporting economic development in rural areas, is eliminated, for a savings of \$37.6 million; and

Funds available for the Rural Development Performance Partnership Program for rural utilities, which is essentially a block grant for water and waste disposal loans and grants and solid waste management grants, is reduced from \$562 million in the bill to \$435 million.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment is budget neutral. Producing this bill has been a long and difficult effort, Mr. Chairman, and I have told several of my colleagues that my joy at finally being in the majority and being a subcommittee chairman has been severely dampened when I finally got there and found out there was no money.

But as difficult as producing this bill was, it would have been absolutely impossible without the active participation of my subcommittee colleagues from both sides of the aisle.

I would like to personally thank my good friend, the gentleman from Indiana, Mr. MYERS, and my other Republican colleagues, JIM WALSH, JAY DICK- EY, JACK KINGSTON, FRANK RIGGS, GEORGE NETHERCUTT, and our chairman, the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. LIVINGSTON, and their hard-work- ing staff members who put in so many long hours on this bill. A special thanks again to my good friend from Illinois, the distinguished former chairman and now ranking member of the subcommittee, DICK DURBIN.

The programs funded by this bill have been supported for years by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike, and, likewise, I would like to express deep appreciation to my other Democratic friends and colleagues, MARCY KAPTUR, RAY THORNTON, NITA LOWEY, and to the distinguished ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. OBEY, and to their staffs for all their hard work and contributions to this effort.

Mr. Chairman, this is a good bill, and it makes its fair share of contributions to the goal of a balanced budget. It looks out for the interests of farmers, ranchers, consumers, urban America, rural America, and I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

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

□ 2100

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

I want to personally thank my colleague and friend, the chairman of this committee, JOE SKEEN of New Mexico. There are accolades which are tossed around this floor very loosely. I want those who are listening to know that I am genuinely sincere in saying that my service in this Congress has been enhanced from the time I arrived by the fact that the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] and I have worked together, first on the Committee on Agriculture and now on the Committee on Appropriations.

He is a gentleman. He is an honorable man. He is very bipartisan. It has been my pleasure to work with him, and I consider it to be one of the highlights of my service in the House of Representatives.

That is not to say that we will not disagree on a few elements in this bill. I am sure we will. But the fact is that we work closely together to try to come up with a bill that addresses a very serious problem. We have an important area of Federal spending here when it comes to agriculture, rural development, the Food and Drug Administration and related agencies. And this year as last year, we were asked to cut more than \$1 billion in discretionary spending.

These are not the kind of illusory cuts that you might have heard of in other bills. These are real cuts and real programs. Some of them are cuts which

I am not happy with and the chairman is not happy with either. But this is our fate in life, to meet this responsibility, to help reduce this federal budget deficit.

I might say that the gentleman from New Mexico has done his very best, as I have, too, to preserve important programs for American agriculture which is too often taken for granted. I regret that some of the programs that we have cut which are important to rural development will in fact reduce the opportunity for building new housing in small town America and modernizing sewer and water systems. We will debate that a little bit later, I am sure.

I do want to salute my colleague from New Mexico for one effort which he made at my request, and I know he took some grief for it. He insisted on maintaining the level of funding for the WIC program at this year's case load level. For those who are not familiar with the program, the women, infants, and children program is an effort by the Federal Government to make sure that low income and poor mothers and children do not go hungry, either during the pregnancy or after the child is born.

This program has been a spectacular success. Across America, in clinics far and wide, men and women come together to counsel pregnant mothers on the appropriate nutrition during their pregnancy in the hopes that their children will be born healthy with a bright future. Time and again we have succeeded. What is a modest investment in tomorrow's leaders in America has paid off handsomely.

The administration had hoped when elected that we could expand this program dramatically. Budget realities have reduced that prospect. But the gentleman from New Mexico was very diligent in his efforts to make sure that the case load of people, women and children, served this year, this fiscal year, would be maintained into the next fiscal year, which required several hundred million dollars of additional expenditure.

I can assure the gentleman that I personally appreciate his efforts in this regard and his efforts overall in putting together a very difficult bill. As I said, we may disagree on some particulars as we go into the bill, but I know that he has come to the table in good faith in an effort as the new chairman to do a professional job. I can assure all those listening on both sides of the aisle he has done just that.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR].

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I wish to rise in support of our agriculture appropriations bill this year, to commend our very distinguished chairman in his maiden voyage as chair of this subcommittee and also to thank our ranking member for his terrific service.

This will be the last bill that, second to the last bill, that he will be handling

on this floor. We thank him for the tremendous contribution that he has made over the years both as chair and now as ranking member of this committee.

I wanted to insert my full remarks in the RECORD tonight, because the subject of agriculture is so important to not just rural America but to urban America, to the nutrition needs of our people. But I wanted to say beyond that, as a member of this committee, I cannot think of a better committee in this Congress to serve on.

In listening to some of the debate that occurred here this afternoon, frankly, I was embarrassed at the level of dialog on both sides of the aisle. At one point I had teenage students here with me from my district, and I had to usher them out of the gallery because I was so embarrassed at some of the language being used here on the floor.

If I had to pick one committee in this Congress to say how the whole place should function, it would be this particular subcommittee, with the comity, the good will, with the gentlemanly and ladylike behavior that members of this committee display toward one another; frankly, the good humor as well.

I think a lot of that is due to the leadership of our chair, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] who is truly a man for all seasons. We appreciate what he is as a person as much as what he does as chair of this committee. Frankly, I think if we had more Members like him, with his spirit on both sides of the aisle in this institution, I think the Nation would be much better off.

I rise in support this evening of this measure. I know with its passage, the Nation will have been bettered.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Agriculture appropriations bill and commend our chairman, the gentleman from New Mexico, and our ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois, for their outstanding leadership in putting together a responsible bill. This bill continues our support for American farmers which are the most productive in the world as well as fulfills an important commitment for advancing agriculture and nutrition to rural and urban America.

The bill is fiscally prudent and includes a total of \$13.3 billion for discretionary programs which is \$135,571,000 less than the amount appropriated in Fiscal Year 1995 and \$1.6 billion less than the budget request.

For mandatory programs, which are 80% of the funding in this bill, the committee provides \$49.2 billion a decrease of \$5.5 billion below the amount available for fiscal year 1995 and \$4.4 billion below the budget request.

The committee faced difficult decisions in meeting the needs of U.S. agriculture and related programs in this bill. Only three programs, meat and poultry inspection, conservation and the Women, Infants, and Children's Feeding Program received increases in funds.

Those who serve farmers and work with Agriculture are taught over and over again that there is a big difference between money and wealth. Our job on this Committee on Agriculture is to help create the wealth of America through the investments that we make through this department.

To call this an agriculture bill is a bit misleading. Nearly 60 percent of the programs funded by our subcommittee are nutrition programs, primarily foodstamps. The bill also funds rural development, food assistance, and export programs as well as the Food and Drug Administration.

Mandatory spending not under the jurisdiction of this subcommittee accounts for a majority of the appropriations in this bill. Discretionary spending in this bill amounts to \$13.4 billion in budget authority.

I would like to commend the chairman and the members of the subcommittee for putting together a bill that meets the budget mandate bill. We were faced with tight budget constraints that forced us to eliminate a number of programs including the Great Plains Conservation Program as well as 80 special research and extension projects. The bill also places a moratorium on funding for all university research buildings and facilities.

Tough choices had to be made. Yet while faced with tight budget constraints we were still able to shift resources to priority programs.

We continued funding for TEFAP, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, which provides vital support to our community food pantries and senior centers.

The Women, Infants, and Children Feeding Program is provided with a \$290 million increase to cover inflation and food cost increases to maintain 1995 participation levels. WIC decreases infant mortality rates and investments in WIC are offset by decreases in long term Federal Medicaid expenditures.

Traditional farm programs however continue to receive a decreasing portion of our spending. With the upcoming debate on the 1995 farm bill, it is my hope to begin targeting our scarce agricultural dollars to small family farmers.

In the decade of the 1980's we have slowly eroded the basis of American agriculture—the family farmer—and are moving in the direction of large corporate farms. We must ensure that to ensure that prices are maintained at a level high enough to compensate for costs or production and to maintain standards of living in order to attract and retain individuals in farm production. We must also negotiate trade agreements which encourage and enhance the ability of family farmers to compete in world markets.

In agriculture trade, we must also work to recapture lost markets and increase exports. As American agricultural exports grow, foreign agriculture exports are being shipped to the United States in greater magnitude. Since 1981, our agricultural exports have declined from \$43.8 billion to a low of \$26.2 billion in 1986 and back to \$42.2 billion for 1992. Under the USDA programs, the profit has gone to the exporter but the cost is charged to the farmer.

Since 1981 agricultural imports have increased from \$10.8 billion to \$24.3 billion in 1992. In many cases these are products our own farmers could be selling.

In closing, I want to again commend the chairman and the ranking member for putting together a solid bill under difficult budget constraints. I urge the Members to support this fiscally responsible measure.

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

I would like to engage in a colloquy with my good friend from Kansas, Mr.

ROBERTS, chairman of the authorizing committee, if I might.

While I understand that some Members are anxious to see certain policy changes in the Federal farm programs, I am concerned that if the appropriations process becomes the vehicle for these legislative changes, the chances for true and longlasting reforms may be lost. I know my friend from Kansas shares these concerns, and I ask if he can offer any assurances to Members with amendments that their issues will be addressed in the coming farm bill debate.

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

Mr. SKEEN. I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for his question, and I thank my longtime friend and colleague from New Mexico for the opportunity to really discuss this problem.

Let me say that I would like to associate myself with the remarks from the distinguished gentleman from Illinois in regard to the accolades that are due to the gentleman from New Mexico. They are not loose, as he has described. There is a snug-fit accolade that is well deserved on the floor of the House. The gentleman from New Mexico should wear it proudly.

Let me begin by saying how much the members of the authorizing committee appreciate the hard work that the gentleman and the members of his subcommittee and staff have really put into fashioning this very, very difficult bill. We have worked very closely with him to develop the legislation on the floor today, and this bill has our support.

However, it would be unfortunate if the hard work he has done to really create a good bill was overshadowed by some amendments that are really inappropriate. I do share the concern that this bill should not be the vehicle to take up major farm policy debates. The Committee on Agriculture will be bringing a major and comprehensive reauthorization of all farm programs to the floor later this year.

During the course of committee consideration of the farm bill, we will be considering major changes of all the programs addressed by the amendments that are proposed here today. The difference is that in the farm bill these changes can be considered, in the context of the total policy package that will provide long-term coherent framework for the farm and rural sector. The Committee on Agriculture encourages all Members of the House to bring their concerns to us and work with us as we mark up the farm bill.

Let me repeat that: To every Member who has a concern about agriculture program policy, to all watching in their offices and all the staff that may be watching, the committee encourages all Members of the House to bring their concerns to us and work with us as we mark up the farm bill. Bring

them to me or bring them to the former chairman and the distinguished ranking member, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA].

Let me assure the Members with interest in specific policy changes that, if the farm bill we bring to the floor does not satisfy the Members' policy concerns, there will be an opportunity for any Member to bring those concerns before the House at that time.

The gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA] shares in that concern and also shares in regard to that policy opportunity.

Today we need to get down to the serious business of appropriating funds for rural America in the fiscal year of 1996. Issues concerning farm policy for the rest of this century should be deferred until the authorizing committee brings the farm bill to the floor. That will be in September.

I urge my colleagues to withhold their amendments until the Committee on Agriculture has had time to consider the issues individually. This is not the appropriate time or place for authorizing amendments.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman and my friend for his assurance that all Members will be given an opportunity to address the issues that they deem important, and I thank him for the partnership that we have.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SKEEN. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I take the time only to echo the words of our chairman and to agree with all of the accolades that he has made about the chairman and about our ranking member. We certainly appreciate the concern and the dedication and the sensitivity which the distinguished chairman has shown to the authorizing committee and to those that work in that area.

I associate myself strongly and wholeheartedly with the remarks of our chairman, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS].

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY], the newest member of our subcommittee.

I guess it is odd for people to be watching this and wondering what a resident of New York City is doing on the Committee on Agriculture. But I can tell you that she has noted, as many have, that this bill goes far beyond addressing the concerns of rural America. It addresses nutrition programs and environmental concerns which are of as much importance to her home city and home State as well.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the chairman and our minority ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN], for the cooperation they have shown me on this committee.

This is an extraordinary bill, in fact, because, as our member said, Mr. DURBIN is from Illinois, this bill serves all of our communities across this country. It has really been an honor and a privilege for me to serve on this committee. I want to especially thank the chairman and the ranking member for their help and for the knowledge which they have offered, and certainly our staff.

At this moment I would like to engage the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS] in a colloquy.

I understand that there is quite a bit of discussion about the proper venue in which to alter the federal peanut program. But I must say that those of us who favor elimination of the program have heard that we are not going to be able to sufficiently debate and vote on this matter during consideration of the farm bill.

I would ask the gentleman if he believes that debate on the agriculture appropriations bill is the only time during which we will be able to get a vote on this issue?

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. LOWEY. I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, I would inform the gentlewoman, and I appreciate the question, the answer is no. I know that you and some of your other colleagues have serious concerns about the peanut program. I want to assure you that the Committee on Agriculture has heard those concerns and is working on some real policy changes and a plan to reform the program.

It is my hope that we can come to an agreement on a reform plan that all the Members of this body will be happy with and that we can avoid a protracted floor fight at the time of the farm bill. With that in mind, I would ask the gentlewoman if she would consider withdrawing her amendment and let us continue the progress, and let me add, we are making real progress, to address your concerns about this program and the concerns of the growers and everybody connected with the program.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I am particularly pleased to know that there is progress made on this issue, because I think the gentleman is aware of the serious concerns that I and many of our colleagues have with this program.

I look forward to seeing the result of the Committee on Agriculture deliberations, but if the reform plan that the gentleman's committee comes up with does not adequately address the problems I and many of my colleagues have with this program, can the gentleman assure me that there will be an opportunity to discuss and vote on this issue on the floor during debate on the farm bill?

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, if the gentlewoman will continue to yield, I will tell the gentlewoman, the answer is a firm yes. If the Committee on Agriculture cannot reach an agreement on

reforming the program that satisfies the concerns of you and your colleagues, I can assure you, as I have said in my previous colloquy with the gentleman from New Mexico, that you and your colleagues will have an opportunity to address these issues simply during the farm bill debate.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman. I will not offer the amendment this evening. I appreciate the gentleman's consideration of this very important issue.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. LOWEY. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Chairman, I also wish to thank the gentlewoman for her cooperation and agree with the chairman in assuring her that because of her generosity and understanding our situation on this legislation, we will work nonetheless to assure her and those that feel like her that we will give them ample opportunity. In the meantime, we ourselves are trying to correct any deficiencies in the program. So I am assuring her we will work together, and we appreciate her understanding of the issue this evening.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the gentleman for his comments. I want to also make it very clear that those of us who consume the products of all your hard work on the farm are very involved with this issue, and we appreciate the gentleman's comments and we look forward to working with him.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MILLER].

□ 2115

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments of the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Agriculture concerning the ability to offer amendments on the agriculture reauthorization bill later on this year. As the gentleman may know, I am the author, along with 95 other Members of Congress, of a bill to repeal the sugar program.

As we balance the budget, the American people want a fair process and must see that everything is on the table. America's wheat growers, corn growers and others have seen farm programs slashed since 1985. Yet unlike the other programs of wheat and corn, the sugar program has conspicuously not been on the table. The generous benefits to the large cane and beet producers have not been reduced at all during the last two farm bills. Meanwhile, benefits to wheat farmers have been effectively reduced by 40 percent since 1985 and the budget process may require cuts amounting to another 25 percent.

In fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's equity analysis dramatically indicated that the Federal government supports sugar growers at \$472 per acre, more than 20 times the \$23 per acre

that wheat farmers receive. Faced with a broken sugar program and the farm bill inequity, we believe our bill, H.R. 1687, which has 96 cosponsors, a fair way to provide America's sugar farmers with a market-oriented sugar policy.

It removes the excessive price supports and domestic cartel-like provisions, taking the government out of micromanaging the sugar industry, yet it leaves in place the program's import quotas to protect our farmers from subsidized sugars.

Many in the House of Representatives are eager to see what the Committee on Agriculture will do with respect to sugar.

Mr. Chairman, at this time I would like to engage in a colloquy with the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS], the distinguished Chairman of the committee, and inquire about his intentions regarding the sugar program.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask the gentleman what are his intentions with respect to the sugar programs?

Mr. ROBERTS. We have very good intentions.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I hope so.

Mr. ROBERTS. The road to a good farm program is paved with good intentions.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MILLER] and some of his other colleagues have serious concerns about the sugar program, as well as other farm programs. I want to assure him, as I have assured the gentleman from New Mexico and the gentlewoman from New York, that the Committee on Agriculture plans to pursue a market-oriented policy to this program.

It is my hope that we can come to an agreement on policy changes that all Members of this body will be happy with and that we can avoid a protracted floor fight at the time of the farm bill.

With that in mind, I would ask the gentleman, as I have asked the other Members of this body, to withdraw his amendment and permit the authorizing committee to address these issues.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, then I understand and appreciate the chairman's commitment to reform the sugar program. I look forward to seeing the results of the Committee on Agriculture's deliberations. Indeed I have already testified before the specialty crops subcommittee for over two hours, a very enjoyable two hours I might remind the gentleman, of my concerns about the programs.

Many members have expressed concerns with the domestic marketing allotments and the high loan rate. After the committee finishes its work, if Members believe that more needs to be done, can the gentleman assure us that we will be afforded the opportunity to debate and vote on our amendment to the sugar program?

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes, I would tell the gentleman. And after the Committee on

Agriculture finishes its consideration of the sugar program, if he is not satisfied with the committee's actions, I can assure the gentleman and his colleagues that they will have an opportunity to amend the sugar program during the farm bill debate.

Many are called; few are chosen. The gentleman from Florida will be one of the chosen.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's commitment to the honest and open debate on the issue. We respect the right and the prerogative of the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture to have the initial opportunity to address the sugar program and I will not be offering the amendment to the appropriations bill.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman. I think the gentleman from Virginia would like to be recognized to address the same concerns and questions that the gentleman from Florida has.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

(Mr. DAVIS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Chairman, I will be brief. First of all, I want to thank my colleague from Florida, Mr. MILLER, for his leadership in this matter and I thank my friend from Kansas for the assurances he has given us today.

This fall, in the House we will be debating a new farm bill. We will also be debating the budget reconciliation bill that will balance the Federal budget in 7 years, which is going to force substantial cuts in farm commodity programs, such as wheat, dairy, corn, cotton and rice.

While these programs have faced an average 40 percent cut since 1985, sugar has not been cut one iota. I believe this is unacceptable and we can face this issue during the farm bill.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to add I think every citizen is paying a hidden tax today because of the sugar program. It takes money out of the pockets of American consumer to the tune of \$1.4 billion every year in higher food prices. I thank my colleagues for their efforts.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to discuss the Miller amendment to repeal the government sugar program. There is no plausible reason why our government is involved with setting and controlling the price of sugar. It is big government at its worst. It benefits a wealthy few. It promotes the destruction of one of our prized environmental landmarks—the Florida Everglades.

The November elections signaled that the American people wanted a change in the way we in Washington do business. Getting the Federal Government out of this program is a very good place to start. Every citizen pays a hidden tax that takes money out of the pockets of American consumers to the tune of more than \$1.4 billion every year in higher food prices according to GAO. This hidden tax

has cost Americans more than \$10 billion over the last decade. In addition, the consumer interest group Public Voice has recently estimated that the sugar program has cost the Federal Government \$110 million annually because of higher purchase prices for sugar and sugar-containing products used in domestic feeding and food programs. This is money that the American people could be saving, investing, or using to buy needed items for their families. But because of this program, they must pay higher prices on everything containing sugar all because of the Federal Government controls in the marketplace.

I have great respect for the distinguished chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Mr. ROBERTS and also respect his committee's right to deal with the future of the sugar program. I want him to know that the nearly 100 co-sponsors of the Miller amendment to repeal the sugar program are watching his committee closely. We look forward to working with him in this endeavor, and working with my friend, Mr. FOLEY, from Florida, who represents many of these growers and shares a different perspective on this issue.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON].

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Chairman, I also want to add my commendation and also observation that the authorizing committee in agriculture works with a certain amount of respect across party lines. And it is good to also see that the appropriating and authorizing committees are also working well with each other.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend both my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY], who is respectful of the fact that with the farm bill we will have the opportunity to discuss the issues that she is concerned about.

Mr. Chairman, I do want to raise some concerns that I have about this particular bill, not because it has not been well intended, but there are some cuts, Mr. Chairman, that I think we need to observe and bring to the attention of our colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, Speaker GINGRICH last week cautioned this House about a mindless march towards a balanced budget, without regard to the merits of certain programs, I agree with that statement.

The Agriculture appropriations bill, which we are considering, is typical of that kind of budget cutting, a mindless march, without regard to the great pain and suffering we will cause a large number of people, and without regard to the dislocation of communities.

It is for that reason that I intend to support and perhaps offer amendments, designed to spare programs of merit that are slashed by this bill or by other amendments.

Agriculture has consistently reduced spending and has absorbed drastic cuts over the last several years.

Again, we will absorb reductions in operations and support of our commodities programs. But, much in this bill goes too far.

This bill intrudes heavily into the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Committee, legislating, in many instances, instead of appropriating.

Among the many provisions to H.R. 1976, there is one that is particularly egregious to Republicans and Democrats alike—the unamendable en bloc that is to be offered by our colleague, Congressman JOE SKEEN, who is, acknowledged, a very considerate person and a good person to work with.

That amendment, among other actions, zeros out funding for the Rural Development Loan Fund Account.

That account funds the vital empowerment zones and enterprise communities program, including loans and grants for water and waste disposal; community facilities; guaranteed business and industry loans and other programs.

We are also facing drastic cuts in two housing programs that effectively serve rural and low-income Americans—the 502 Direct Loan Program and the 515 Rural Rental Housing Program.

Section 502 provides the opportunity for home ownership for people who otherwise would have no chance to own their own home. It also provides loans to farmers for housing for themselves and their workers.

Section 515 is the only housing program available for very low income people. It is essential to the housing needs of citizens in rural areas.

All of these programs should be the recipients of our unwavering support; instead they face decimation.

These programs often provide the only means for rural communities to support local initiatives and also provide avenues in which to combine Federal, State, local and private funding initiatives—thus allowing limited Federal dollars to be expended with the support from other resources.

Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities are prime methods through which government can encourage self-sufficiency, a key element of the Contract With America.

In my district, funds from the Rural Development Loan Fund Program Account have been allocated to renovate a defunct hospital site into a facility the citizens of Wilson can use for jobs, training and business expansion.

In addition, it is expected that in fiscal year 1995, the Rural Housing and Community Development Service will provide over 30,000 home ownership loans to rural families.

Moreover, thousands rely on the Section 515 Program. At one time, this program was funded at \$540 million. Last year, I and others joined in an effort to restore the program to its current level of \$220 million, after a proposed cut which nearly eliminated the program.

Another cut in the Section 515 Program will render it nearly ineffective.

What happens next year? How much more deeply can we cut? It is our intent to phase out all rural programs?

And, while this bill is cutting programs to help people survive, it is also

cutting programs that could allow them to thrive.

The bill severely limits the Export Enhancement Program, for example. Agriculture exports have been vital to our balance of trade situation, yet this bill will make it more difficult for us to compete globally.

Cooperative State research, education, and extension programs are cut.

The implementation of new meat and poultry inspection regulations are hindered by this bill.

The list seems unending.

It would appear that we are engaged in a mindless march.

A balanced budget is important, but if in seeking to balance the budget, we create a serious imbalance among our citizens and in our communities, this march could lead us to places we do not intend to go.

Let's heed the admonition of the Speaker.

Let's balance the budget, but let's make program cuts that are meaningful, not mindless.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY].

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] for his fine work on this document dealing with agriculture. I would like to thank our colleagues for their colloquy earlier on the sugar and peanut program.

Mr. Chairman, let me suggest to all Americans listening and to Members of Congress, when we talk about America's food supply we have one of the finest, safest, most affordable food supplies in the world. I think it important when we talk about these programs that we put them in the context that they deserve; that we are feeding America's families.

We are doing it efficiently, we are doing it safely, and we are supplying the world's food needs. So when we talk about farm bills and we talk about in the abstract of eliminating programs, let us look at the consumers that would be affected by our actions.

Let us remember that when we order ice tea in the restaurant, they give you sugar. When we are riding on the airplanes, they give you peanuts. There is a reason for that; because they are inexpensive, because they are abundant, and because they are available.

So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MILLER] and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] tonight to give us the opportunity in September to fully debate the farm bill in the appropriate forum, in the farm bill where it belongs.

I thank the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS], the chairman, for his efforts to bring this bill to the floor ultimately when we can discuss it, debate it in the full context of making certain that America continues to be the leader in food production, not only for ourselves and our citizens, but for occupants around the globe.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Montana [Mr. WILLIAMS].

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Chairman, I want to say a word to my colleagues from America's great cities, or from those places that do not have farms or agriculture production at all. I know that sometimes the farm portion, the ag portion of this bill, and particularly the ag bill that will come later out of the House Committee on Agriculture, can get a little arcane if you do not deal with production farming. But there are a couple of facts that I want to share with my urban or non-agriculture colleagues.

One out of every six jobs in America happens because of agriculture. Agriculture makes up 16 percent of America's gross domestic product. Now, what are the cost of farm programs and are they going up or are they coming down? In less than the last 10 years, in just 9 years, since 1986, the cost of agriculture programs has dropped 60 percent. The Federal cost of farm programs has dropped 60 percent in 9 years.

By the way, entitlements, the Federal cost of entitlements, have doubled during that same time period.

Farm programs amount to less than 1 percent of Federal spending, so the farm portion of this program that we may vote on tonight and will complete tomorrow, will be less than 1 percent of all the Federal spending we will be called upon to enact this year.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to make this point to my colleagues. Americans paid just 8 percent of their income for food. Our European friends spend an average of 17 percent of their income for food and our Japanese friends spend 20 percent of their income for food. Why? Because Federal farm programs stabilize price by stabilizing production.

□ 2130

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON], a committee member.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, fellow Members of the House and Representatives representing grocery buyers, let me talk to you a little bit about what the previous speaker just said about our European counterparts spending 17 to 20 percent of their energy on groceries.

In America we do not do that, and yet every time I pick up the Readers Digest, it seems that the way to balance the budget is always on the back of agriculture. Americans spend 11 percent of their income on farming. And what is the investment your government makes in order to make this possible?

Look at this chart right here. We see what the Federal Government spends money on: Social Security, defense, Medicare, Medicaid, interest on the debt. Where is agriculture? Under 1 percent. That is what the farm programs are costing our taxpayers, and

yet time and time again you hear, "Cut the farm bill, cut the farm bill."

Have we ever cut the farm bill? This is what we have reduced in discretionary agricultural spending since 1986, almost \$26 billion, and today, 1995, we are at \$10.6 billion.

What other Federal Government program has dropped like that?

Support the farm bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. ROSE].

(Mr. ROSE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Chairman, I want to rise and thank the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY] and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MILLER] for their colloquy with the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, and I want to also associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY].

I held a hearing on the General Accounting Office audit of the peanut program and the sugar program, and what we found was that the General Accounting Office was saying that the consumer was paying too much, and by that they meant the first purchaser of sugar and the first purchaser of peanuts, who is not the housewife, not the consumer, but the manufacturers. I asked them, "Did you ask the sugar and the peanut people if we give them a reduction in the price level, will you pass that on to the American housewife?" They said, "Yes." We asked them, "What did they say?" "They said 'no,' they could not do that."

My friends, we could give sugar and peanuts to the candy manufacturers of this country, and that is who is driving this train, we could give them the peanuts, we could give them the sugar, and you would not see one nickel decrease in the price of a candy bar.

I hope that between now and the farm bill we can have an opportunity to go into this. I would be glad to reduce the price of port levels of both of these commodities if the savings were passed directly to the American housewife.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR].

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise to discuss in support of this appropriation. I represent the State of California. You are always hearing about California being a state of 32 million people. But what you may not know is the largest industry in California is agriculture.

Per year, \$18 billion in farm sales generates over \$70 billion in economic activity annually and employs over 2 million people on the farm and related jobs. Nearly 1 out of every 6 California jobs depends on agriculture.

The fastest-growing sector of this economy is the agricultural export market, which now derives nearly \$13 billion in economic activity and supports over 137,000 jobs in California.

Despite the Uruguay round agreement on GATT, California's agricultural exports are up against the heavily subsidized foreign competition that still dominates the global marketplace. The European Union, for example, outspend the United States in export subsidies by more than 6 to 1 and will be able to maintain this historical advantage under GATT.

Chile just announced a \$25 million export promotion, and Norway has initiated a \$20 million program to promote just salmon exports.

This is the real world of global competition.

With the help of the market promotion program, we run a trade surplus of \$14 billion per year with Japan, our biggest agricultural export market, and it grew by \$500 million just in last year alone. The market promotion program helps California agriculture develop, expand, and maintain foreign markets. Eliminating the market promotion program would amount to unilateral disarmament.

The USDA estimates that for every dollar in the market promotion program, the funds generate an average of \$16 in agricultural exports. I support the market promotion program in this bill and would urge my colleagues to reject any amendments to delete or diminish it.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois [Mrs. COLLINS], who has been a leader in this Congress on many issues and has a recognized expertise in the area of meat inspection and food safety.

(Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from New York for withdrawing his language that would have blocked issuance of the new meat safety rule. The Agriculture Department has been working on this rule for about 6 years and is finally about ready to issue the rule.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN], who has worked very, very hard on this issue, and even though he has mentioned that I have been a hard worker on this particular matter, so has he. He has been a yeoman on this particular issue which is critically important—to all Americans.

To block it now would only further delay bacterial testing of meat and poultry which is the only way, I repeat, the only way to determine whether meat has the deadly E. coli or other bacteria.

Bacteria contamination of meat is what caused the death 2 years ago of young Alex Donley of Chicago, IL. It is also what killed 4 children and made 600 others gravely ill 2½ years ago in the Jack-in-the-Box food poisoning incident in Washington State.

Mr. Chairman, the new meat rule has been the object of constant attack from the very beginning of this Congress. Opponents of the meat safety rule tried to kill it in the regulatory moratorium bill; they tried to kill it last week in the Senate's regulatory reform bill; and they tried to kill it in this bill.

I, for one, completely oppose any further delay in the issuance of this regulation. Only bacterial testing can tell us whether the meat and poultry our families consume may be deadly.

Mr. Chairman, again I thank the gentlemen, both gentlemen, in fact, for withdrawing, first of all, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. ROTH] for withdrawing his amendment. I thank the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] who worked so hard on this issue, and I am very pleased the Agriculture Department will be able to go forward with this important new meat inspection program.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Miss COLLINS of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, I must register my very strong opposition to the Republican proposal to limit the number of people who can participate in the WIC program, a program that for decades has sought to reduce some of the effects of severe poverty on infants and children in this country.

WIC's annual appropriation already limits the number of women, infants, and children who can be served. An additional participation cap, as proposed by the Republicans, would likely result in serving fewer eligible people next year, by creating additional administrative burdens.

Currently, some 3 million eligible women, infants, and children are unable to receive WIC benefits. These are overwhelming statistics, given the fact that WIC saves lives and is highly cost-effective. WIC reduces infant mortality, low birthweight and anemia and therefore, saves money by averting medical and other related expenditures. For every dollar spent by WIC on pregnant women, taxpayers save between \$1.92 and \$4.21 in Medicaid costs for newborns and their mothers.

Not only is such a cap morally wrong, but it simply does not make good fiscal sense. The participation gap would discourage State innovation, cause taxpayer dollars to be spent less efficiently, and result in participation declines. There are better ways to achieve the Appropriation Committee's goal of fiscal responsibility. We owe it to our country to show greater moral leadership than my Republican colleagues have shown. And we owe it to our country to show the kind of compassion that will lead to a brighter, healthier future for our children.

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Chairman, I rise today with regard to the Federal peanut program. There are several members of this House, including myself, which would like to see major reform or the outright elimination of this program.

I am pleased that the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Mr. ROBERTS of Kansas, has made a commitment to this entire body that this issue will be addressed when his

committee takes up the reauthorization of the entire Federal farm programs later this year.

The peanut program has two peculiar aspects to it. First, and foremost, the peanut program subsidizes the price of peanuts received by farmers and raises the cost of peanuts and peanut products for the consumers. Second, in order to grow peanuts to be sold for human consumption, peanut farmers have established a quota system that forces potential farmers to rent licenses from a few "quota-holders" that were granted over a century ago. This license system along with other Federal Government restrictions raises the cost of peanut production by 26 percent. This cost is also passed along to the consumer. These consumers are the individuals who make up my Congressional District in northern New Jersey.

The General Accounting Office estimates that the peanut program costs American consumers between \$314 and \$514 million a year in higher prices. In an era of tight budgets and a promise to achieve a balanced budget it is clear this program needs to be restructured. We have made a promise to make the Federal Government smaller, smarter, and less costly, and ending this program would be another step toward that end.

All businesses are required to produce revenue or face the harsh reality of termination, why should the Federal Government treat peanut producers any differently? In a country that values competition, a peanut program that shelters the industry from competitors is contrary to the very principles that founded this great nation.

Mr. Chairman, this is why I call upon the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee to restructure or eliminate the quota and price supports for peanuts. I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to eliminate the peanut program from the folds of the Federal Government's wings.

Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. Chairman, this Member rises in support of H.R. 1976, the Agriculture appropriations bill for fiscal year 1996.

This Member would like to commend the distinguished gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN], the chairman of the subcommittee, and the distinguished gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN], the ranking member of the subcommittee for their hard work in bringing this bill to the Floor.

Mr. Chairman, this Member certainly recognizes the severe budget constraints under which the subcommittee operated. The subcommittee was forced to make some difficult funding choices in order to stay within its budget allocation. In light of these limitations, this Member is grateful and pleased that this legislation includes funding for several important projects of interest to the State of Nebraska.

First, the bill provide \$423,000 for the Midwest Advanced Food Manufacturing Alliance. The Alliance is an association of twelve leading research universities and corporate partners. Its purpose is to develop and facilitate the transfer of new food manufacturing and processing technologies.

The Alliance awards grants for research projects on a peer review basis. These awards must be supported by an industry partner willing to provide matching funds. During the first year of competition, the Alliance received 30 proposals requesting nearly \$1 million, but it was limited to funding 14 proposals for a total of \$393,617. Matching funds from industry to-

taled \$623,148 with an additional \$134,000 from in-kind funds. These figures convincingly demonstrate how successful the Alliance has been in leveraging support from industry.

Mr. Chairman, the future viability and competitiveness of the U.S. agricultural industry depends on its ability to adapt to increasing world-wide demands for U.S. exports of intermediate and consumer good exports. In order to meet these changing world-wide demands, agricultural research must also adapt to provide more emphasis on adding value to our basic farm commodities. The Midwest Advanced Food Manufacturing Alliance can provide the necessary cooperative link between universities and industries for the development of competitive food manufacturing and processing technologies. This will, in turn, ensure that the United States agricultural industry remains competitive in a increasingly competitive global economy.

This Member is also pleased that this bill includes \$200,000 to fund a drought mitigation project at the Agricultural Meteorology Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This level of funding will greatly assist in the further development of a national drought mitigation center. Such a center is important to Nebraska and all arid and semi-arid states. Although drought is one of the most complex and least understood of all natural disasters, no centralized source of information currently exists on drought assessment, mitigation, response, and planning efforts. A national drought mitigation center would develop a comprehensive program designed to reduce vulnerability to drought by promoting the development and implementation of appropriate mitigation technologies.

Another important project funded by this bill is the Alliance for Food Protection, a joint project between the University of Nebraska and the University of Georgia. The mission of this Alliance is to assist the development and modification of food processing and preservation technologies. This technology will help ensure that Americans continue to receive the safest and highest quality food possible.

This Member is also pleased that this legislation includes \$1.5 billion in loan authority for the Farmers Home Section 502 Middle Income Loan Guarantee Program. This is a housing program this Member proposed and pushed through his membership on the House Banking Committee. After a very successful 20 state demonstration program in 1991, the 502 unsubsidized loan guarantee program was expanded to all 50 States in 1992. The subcommittee members are to be commended for recognizing the value of this program and providing funding levels more in line with the demand for the program from lenders, borrowers, and future homeowners.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, this Member supports H.R. 1976 and urges his colleagues to approve it.

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Mr. Chairman, as a former member of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, I recognize the difficulties faced by the Chairman and ranking member and I commend them for their efforts on this bill. H.R. 1976 provides \$15.9 billion in agricultural programs but still saves \$5.2 billion, compared to spending last year. However, with tough challenges come tough decisions, and I am faced with one today. I am concerned about an amendment to be offered later during this debate and the effect this will have on

low-income housing for people in my State of Nevada and throughout the Nation. Specifically, 502 direct housing loans help those low and very-low income families who are unable to obtain financing elsewhere. Without these funds, it will be difficult or impossible for people to achieve the American Dream of owning their own home. In addition, I am concerned about other reductions to rural programs including rural waste disposal projects and rural development.

Although reluctant, I will support this amendment because it does have some good provisions in it regarding the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program. However, I urge the Chairman to continue to fight to restore funding for the 502 housing program and some of the other rural programs in conference.

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Chairman, the sugar program fixes the price of sugar, guaranteeing business high profit margins in an industry that is not suffering significant losses. In fact, the Federal Government takes it a step further by limiting imports to further increase the price of sugar. These efforts swell the price of sugar to double the price paid in most foreign nations.

My colleague, DAN MILLER of Florida, has been a leader in the effort to reform this program. Congressman MILLER should be commended for going against an interest which has a strong representation in his home State. He said, long before the election results told us, that the American people expect changes in Washington, beginning with the elimination of programs like the sugar subsidy. I am pleased that Mr. MILLER has received the commitment from the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Mr. ROBERTS, to work to restructure this program.

While the wealthy sugar producers claim that the industry can not survive without the subsidy, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Mr. Chairman, the sugar program subsidizes the wealthiest plantation owners. The 33 plantations represent only 0.2 percent of all sugar producing farms, yet they receive one-third of all farm-level benefits from the program. In addition, the General Accounting Office estimates that the program costs American consumers \$1.4 billion a year through the increased prices of products that contain sugar.

The citizens of my district sent me to Washington with a specific goal in mind. That goal was to eliminate or restructure all the Federal programs that are outdated. The Federal sugar program is exactly the type of program that I seek to eliminate from the government books.

Mr. Chairman, I urge the Federal Government to get out of the sugar business. While it may be a sweet deal to the sugar producers, it leaves a bittersweet taste in the mouths of the American public.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment printed in House Report 104-185 is now pending. That amendment shall be considered read, shall be debatable for 10 minutes, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations, and shall not be subject to amendment or to a demand for division of the question.

If that amendment is adopted, the bill, as amended, shall be considered as

the original bill for the purpose of further amendment under the 5-minute rule.

Further consideration of the bill for amendment shall proceed by title and each title shall be considered read.

Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment made in order by the resolution.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may reduce to not less than 5 minutes the time for voting by electronic device 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.

AMENDMENT MADE IN ORDER BY HOUSE
RESOLUTION 188

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment printed in House Report 104-185.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment made in order by House Resolution 188:

On page 25, line 20 strike \$805,888,000 and insert \$788,388,000.

On page 34, line 16 strike the "and" and all that follows through "590p(b)," on line 20; and on page 35, line 13 strike \$47,000,000 and insert \$36,000,000.

On page 35, line 25 strike \$77,000,000 and insert \$210,000,000.

On page 40, line 10 strike \$2,400,000,000 and insert \$2,200,000,000; and on line 11 strike \$1,500,000,000 and insert \$1,700,000,000.

On page 40, line 20 strike \$191,460,000 and insert \$107,840,000 and strike \$2,550,000 and insert \$2,890,000.

On page 46 strike lines 8 through line 2 on page 47.

On page 50, line 22 strike \$562,000,000 and insert \$435,000,000.

On page 67 strike lines 10 through 17.

On page 67 line 18 strike 717 and insert 715.

On page 67, line 21 strike 718 and insert 716.

On page 69, line 6 strike 719 and insert 717.

On page 69 strike lines 12 through 18.

On page 69, line 19 strike 721 and insert 718.

On page 70 strike lines 5 through 11.

On page 70, line 12 strike 723 and insert 719.

On page 70, line 15 strike 724 and insert 720.

On page 70, line 20 strike 725 and insert 721.

The Chairman. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] will each be recognized for 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN].

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

Mr. Chairman, I would like again to explain the en bloc amendments.

Mr. Chairman, the limitations on the Conservation Reserve Program, the Wetlands Reserve Program and Export Enhancement Program are stricken from the original bill, as is the provision that would have prohibited certain disaster payments for livestock feed producers who refused crop insurance.

The salaries and expenses account of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency

is reduced by \$17.5 million. The Great Plains Conservation Program is eliminated for a savings of \$11 million. The loan level for section 502 direct housing is reduced from \$900 million in the bill to \$500 million, and the guarantee program is increased from \$1.5 billion to \$1.7 billion, for a savings of \$83.6 million.

The Rural Development Loan Fund, one of several programs supporting economic development in rural areas, is eliminated for a savings of \$37.6 million. Funds available for the Rural Development Performance Partnerships Program for rural utilities, which is essentially a block grant for water and waste disposal loans and grants and solid waste management grants, is reduced from \$562 million in the bill to \$435 million.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, this amendment is budget neutral, and that is the en bloc amendment, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. OLVER].

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman yielding time.

I rise to oppose the chairman's en bloc amendment because it contains further reductions in direct loans available through the section 502 rural housing program. My district covers most of the rural areas of my State. Over the past year these low-interest loans have allowed 89 families in my district who otherwise could not secure a loan to buy or build their own home. These families earn an average of about \$22,000 a year, which is only a little bit more than half the average income in Massachusetts.

Even in the most rural areas of my district, homes cost upwards of \$85,000. The 89 loans this year in my district are worth almost \$5 million.

This loan program is the one chance that many families have to own their homes. In fact, it is the only Federal assistance for low-income rural homeownership.

Section 502 funding has already been cut by about 20 percent over the past 5 years, and the Skeen amendment would so reduce the funding for the direct loan portion of the program that only about 8,000 families in the whole country could be assisted next year. This is no way, in my view, to encourage people who are working hard to pay their bills and raise their kids, yet dream of owning their own home.

I would urge my colleagues to vote against the Skeen amendment.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CALLAHAN].

(Mr. CALLAHAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Chairman, I agree very much with the former speaker here with respect to the 502 housing program. It is a very valuable

and essential program that is working in America.

There are 130,000 people standing in line waiting for this.

We have 13,000 people here in America standing in line waiting for October 1 and waiting for the money under the 502 program. Unfortunately, we are not going to be able to put it in this bill at this time, but I will assure you that the chairman of the committee is sincere in his effort to work with us to try to find some opportunity, try to find some way to properly fund the 502 program, because he agrees with us that it is essential that we do it.

There is just not enough money under the agreement that they have with the Committee on Agriculture to do it now. I think that we have worked out a way where we can get an additional \$10 million put in. That will be offered by me under title III.

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

Mr. CALLAHAN. I yield to the gentleman from New Mexico.

Mr. SKEEN. We are essentially looking for other monies to put back in the program. If we find any, which I think we can, we will put it back in the 502 housing. We also have the concern for and respect for that program and how well it has worked.

Mr. CALLAHAN. I know you do, Mr. Chairman. That is my point here. I am encouraging people to support your en bloc amendment. Let us get on with it. Let us get to title III. We found a way to recapture some of it. We can probably recapture some more during the process.

□ 2145

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman would further yield, this is exactly what we have had to do because we did the en bloc very quickly, and so we are going to do everything that we can to make that program whole again.

Mr. CALLAHAN. I know that, and I appreciate that.

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

Mr. CALLAHAN. I yield to the gentleman from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, as chairman of the authorizing committee I want to make it very clear for everybody on the floor and who has concerns about the housing programs the gentleman will be offering an amendment under a different title, we have \$10 million, staff informs me that really leverages to \$50 million, and the gentleman has indicated that while he has some concerns over the housing situation, he will vote for the en bloc amendment. We will address that issue in other titles.

I would urge a yes vote on the en bloc amendment.

Mr. CALLAHAN. That is right. I encourage my colleagues to vote for the en bloc amendment.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY], the minority

spokesman on the appropriations subcommittee.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, let me simply say that farmers in my area have virtually given up on that expectation that they will get any kind of rational national farm policy which will be at all fair. They face, for instance, milk marketing arrangements which are ridiculously outmoded and biased against our region of the country. But at least they held out some hope that there would be some modicum of rural development which would help in terms of housing, and in terms of water, and in terms of sewer, and the problem with this en bloc amendment is that it further damages those programs. It cuts help for the program which provides people to buy their first home in rural America. I do not think that is a good idea. It amazes me that the reductions in the rural sewer, and water loan and grant programs will mean, for instance, that if this House buys the B-2 program, that we will spend more on just one B-2 bomber than the entire cost of all of those programs for 4 years on just one of those bombers.

Mr. Chairman, it makes absolutely no sense to me, it makes absolutely no sense to the farmers I represent or certainly to the nonfarmers who occupy rural America in districts like mine, and therefore, while I have great respect and affection for the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee, I do not much approve of the amendment which will be offered, and I would urge Members to vote against that amendment.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I understand the gentleman's concern and also appreciate the respect and so on, and I would be disappointed if he had not made some comment contrary to the best efforts of this thing. We are going to try to get there.

Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS].

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Skeen en bloc amendment. This amendment reflects the work done between the authorizers and appropriators to put forward a bill that both committees can support. This amendment makes the difficult choices in discretionary spending to reach the requirements of the budget resolution.

Many of the spending choices reflected in the en bloc amendment are painful. I wish we didn't have to make them, but we do. Later this year, the Agriculture Committee will be bringing a farm authorization bill to the floor that will contain ever harder choices. The en bloc amendment before us today will allow the House to make clearer and more accurate decisions on how we should approach all farm and rural spending.

The gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] and his colleagues on the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee have faced up to their budget responsibilities and provided in this amendment honest spending reductions in their discretionary area of responsibility. Adoption of this amendment is crucial to securing the support of all the agriculture community for this bill. I strongly urge the House to pass the Skeen en bloc amendment.

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

Mr. Chairman, let me say that I understand why the chairman entered into an agreement with the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture on this amendment, but I do not particularly care for the terms of it. Let me tell my colleagues two specific areas that I think are wanting in this en bloc amendment and give them two specific reasons to vote against it.

My colleagues have heard about the cuts in the rural housing program. Last year we spent \$1.2 billion on rural housing programs under 502, which is a single-family dwelling program, usually for communities of 50,000 population or less. The administration asks for the same amount of money. With this en bloc amendment we will cut the spending to \$500 million, less than half of what it is in the current fiscal year.

The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CALLAHAN] was correct. We have over 100,000 people hoping and praying that they will be able to realize the American dream in their small towns through this housing program, and we will be saying no to more than half of those. In fact, we will be saying no to virtually all of them in the outyears if we follow the course predicted by this en bloc amendment. So there is a substantial cut in rural housing.

Now my colleagues say, "Well, Mr. DURBIN, now that you've said that, where will you come up with the money?" One of the things the Committee on Agriculture insisted on was a provision which allows those who are in livestock to have special benefits. In other words, we have a provision in the law now which says:

If your livestock feed could be covered by crop insurance; in other words, if you had the ability to protect yourself in case of a disaster, then the Federal Government is not going to race to your rescue if a disaster occurs.

Now that is a provision in law that is sensible because we ought to encourage people, "Buy insurance. Cover yourself. Don't come begging to Uncle Sam."

Well, the Committee on Agriculture insisted on lifting that provision and saying that livestock feed that is lost because of a disaster will now be eligible for a disaster payment even if the livestock producer could have bought crop insurance and could have protected himself.

My colleagues, that is the wrong message. If we are going to cut back in Federal spending, and particularly in disaster spending, the message should

be, if insurance is out there, buy it, and if you don't buy it, it is at your own peril.

Please join me in opposing the en bloc amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment made in order by House Resolution 188.

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

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

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 240, noes 173, not voting 21, as follows:

[Roll No. 535]

AYES—240

Allard	Fields (TX)	Martini
Archer	Flanagan	McCullum
Armey	Foley	McCreery
Bachus	Forbes	McDade
Baesler	Fowler	McInnis
Baker (CA)	Fox	McIntosh
Baker (LA)	Franks (CT)	McKeon
Baldacci	Franks (NJ)	Metcalf
Ballenger	Frelinghuysen	Meyers
Barcia	Frisa	Mica
Barr	Funderburk	Miller (FL)
Barrett (NE)	Galleghy	Molinari
Bartlett	Ganske	Montgomery
Barton	Gekas	Moorhead
Bass	Geren	Myers
Bateman	Gillmor	Myrick
Bereuter	Gilman	Nethercutt
Bilbray	Goodlatte	Neumann
Bilirakis	Goodling	Ney
Bliley	Goss	Norwood
Boehlert	Graham	Nussle
Boehner	Greenwood	Oxley
Bonilla	Gunderson	Packard
Bono	Gutknecht	Parker
Brewster	Hall (TX)	Paxon
Brownback	Hancock	Peterson (FL)
Bryant (TN)	Hansen	Peterson (MN)
Bunn	Hastert	Petri
Bunning	Hastings (WA)	Pickett
Burr	Hayworth	Pombo
Burton	Hefley	Porter
Buyer	Heineman	Portman
Callahan	Herger	Pryce
Calvert	Hilleary	Quillen
Camp	Hobson	Quinn
Canady	Hoekstra	Radanovich
Chabot	Hoke	Ramstad
Chambliss	Horn	Reed
Chenoweth	Hostettler	Regula
Christensen	Houghton	Richardson
Chrysler	Hunter	Riggs
Clinger	Hutchinson	Roberts
Coble	Hyde	Rogers
Coburn	Inglis	Rohrabacher
Collins (GA)	Istook	Ros-Lehtinen
Combest	Jacobs	Roth
Condit	Johnson (CT)	Roukema
Cooley	Johnson, Sam	Royce
Cox	Jones	Salmon
Crapo	Kasich	Sanford
Creameans	Kelly	Saxton
Cubin	Kennedy (RI)	Scarborough
Cunningham	Kim	Schaefer
Danner	King	Seastrand
Davis	Kingston	Sensenbrenner
Deal	Klug	Shadegg
DeLay	Knollenberg	Shaw
Diaz-Balart	Kolbe	Shuster
Dickey	LaHood	Skeen
Doggett	Largent	Skelton
Doolittle	Latham	Smith (MI)
Dornan	LaTourette	Smith (NJ)
Dreier	Laughlin	Smith (TX)
Duncan	Leach	Smith (WA)
Dunn	Lewis (CA)	Solomon
Ehlers	Lewis (KY)	Souder
Ehrlich	Lightfoot	Spence
Emerson	Linder	Stearns
English	Livingston	Stenholm
Ensign	Longley	Stockman
Everett	Lucas	Stump
Ewing	Luther	Talent
Fawell	Manzullo	Taylor (NC)

Thomas	Walker	White
Thornberry	Walsh	Wicker
Thornton	Wamp	Wolf
Tiahrt	Watts (OK)	Young (AK)
Upton	Weldon (FL)	Young (FL)
Vucanovich	Weldon (PA)	Zeliff
Waldholtz	Weller	Zimmer

NOES—173

Abercrombie	Gibbons	Olver
Ackerman	Gilchrest	Ortiz
Andrews	Gonzalez	Orton
Barrett (WI)	Gordon	Owens
Becerra	Green	Pallone
Beilenson	Gutierrez	Pastor
Bentsen	Hamilton	Payne (NJ)
Berman	Hastings (FL)	Payne (VA)
Bevill	Hayes	Pelosi
Bishop	Hefner	Pomeroy
Bonior	Hilliard	Poshard
Borski	Hinchey	Rahall
Boucher	Holden	Rangel
Browder	Hoyer	Rivers
Brown (CA)	Jackson-Lee	Roemer
Brown (FL)	Johnson (SD)	Rose
Brown (OH)	Johnson, E. B.	Roybal-Allard
Cardin	Johnston	Rush
Castle	Kanjorski	Sabo
Chapman	Kaptur	Sanders
Clay	Kennedy (MA)	Sawyer
Clayton	Kennelly	Schroeder
Clement	Kildee	Schumer
Clyburn	Klecza	Scott
Coleman	Klink	Serrano
Collins (IL)	LaFalce	Shays
Conyers	Lantos	Skaggs
Costello	Lazio	Slaughter
Coyne	Levin	Spratt
Cramer	Lewis (GA)	Stark
de la Garza	Lincoln	Stokes
DeFazio	Lipinski	Stupak
DelLauro	LoBiondo	Tanner
Dellums	Lofgren	Taylor (MS)
Deusch	Lowey	Tejeda
Dicks	Maloney	Thompson
Dingell	Markey	Thurman
Dixon	Mascara	Torkildsen
Dooley	Matsui	Torres
Doyle	McCarthy	Toricelli
Durbin	McDermott	Towns
Edwards	McHale	Trafficant
Engel	McHugh	Tucker
Eshoo	McKinney	Velazquez
Evans	McNulty	Vento
Farr	Meehan	Visclosky
Fattah	Meek	Ward
Fazio	Menendez	Waters
Fields (LA)	Mfume	Watt (NC)
Filner	Mineta	Waxman
Flake	Minge	Whitfield
Foglietta	Mink	Williams
Ford	Mollohan	Wilson
Frank (MA)	Morella	Wise
Frost	Nadler	Woolsey
Furse	Neal	Wyden
Gejdenson	Oberstar	Wynn
Gephardt	Obey	

NOT VOTING—21

Blute	Manton	Schiff
Bryant (TX)	Martinez	Sisisky
Collins (MI)	Miller (CA)	Studds
Crane	Moakley	Tate
Hall (OH)	Moran	Tauzin
Harman	Murtha	Volkmer
Jefferson	Reynolds	Yates

□ 2211

Mr. GILCREST and Mr. POMEROY changed their vote from "aye" to "no." So the amendment made in order by House Resolution 188 was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Mr. SKEEN. 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. KINGSTON], having assumed the chair, Mr. KLUG, 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. 1967) making appropriations for

Agriculture, rural development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS TO FILE PRIVILEGED REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, FISCAL YEAR 1996

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Appropriations may have until midnight tonight to file a privileged report on a bill making appropriations for the Department of Commerce, Justice, and State, the judiciary and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XXI, points of order are reserved.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communications from the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, July 18, 1995.

Re State of Illinois versus Melvin Reynolds.
Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule L (50) of the Rules of the House that my Office has been served with a subpoena issued by the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois.

After consultation with the General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and precedents of the House.

Sincerely,

SCOT M. FAULKNER,
Chief Administrative Officer.

□ 2215

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2002, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

Mrs. WALDHOLTZ, from the Committee on Rules submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-195) on the resolution (H. Res. 194) providing for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2002) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

CONGRESS MARCHES TOWARD BIPARTISAN REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I believe this has been a historic week for colleagues on both sides of the aisle. It is a continuation of the 104th Congress's march to bipartisan reforms. Looking over the last 6 months, some of the more notable days in the House have been those that have seen institutional change.

First of all, the accountability law, sometimes called the Shays Act, has been passed, which, in fact, requires that all the laws we pass here in Congress will, in fact, apply to Congress itself. In years past, we found there were laws passed such as fair labor standards, civil rights laws, and family leave that did not apply to Congress. Now, passed by the House and the Senate, signed into law by President Clinton, the accountability law requires that Congress be under the same laws that it passes for others, and our staffs will have the same protections.

We have also passed a one-third cut in franking. This is a measure which will give a reduction in the amount of free mail, or taxpayer-paid mail, for each Member, and, in fact, will restore some degree of an even playing field for challengers and incumbents.

We have also had a reduction in pensions for House Members. That is a measure which is closer to the level given to Federal workers in their pensions, and it is certainly a step in the right direction for this House.

We have also outlawed proxy voting in committees. If you are on a committee and you want to vote, you have to be there. It makes a lot of sense, and you might have thought it would have been adopted prior to the 104th Congress. But that was one of the early reforms adopted.

Also we have had legislation introduced which I support and many other Members on both sides of the aisle support, and that is a ban on gifts, Mr. Speaker, from lobbyists. No one can believe that a \$25 gift, whether it be a meal or a token of appreciation from a lobbyist, certainly is something we do not want to have. It would not influence our vote anyhow, so let's just ban them. That is a bill we hope will pass soon.

The audit of House records, this is the historic item this week which came to fruition. While we adopted the rule to allow the audit, this week the auditors came forward from Price Waterhouse and, after a thorough examination of the books, found that, first of all, the books are not clear. But what is clear is there are unpaid bills, there is a breach of the security system for our computers, and there is not a clear accounting. Mr. Speaker, of all the equipment that we have here in the House, to say the least.