

measure that actually weakened, in the name of clean water, the existing law, because it had been written behind closed doors by the various polluters who had a vested interest in this matter.

Mr. PALLONE. Exactly. And the fact of the matter is a lot of the provisions in that dirty water bill are still attached as riders to these appropriations, as well as some of these stopgap spending bills that continue to come up, so they are not going away. They are still there, but now they are sort of hidden a little more.

I think it is incumbent upon us, as Democrats, and whether Democrat or Republican Members of this body who feel that the environment needs to be protected, in celebration, if you will, of Earth Day, that we continue to be vigilant and make the point that this Congress has been terrible, has been the worst Congress on record with regard to environmental protection. We have to bring to the light and to the public the fact of how they are going about this, and how the Republican leadership continues with this antienvironmental agenda.

So I want to thank the gentleman again for being here tonight, and I know we are going to continue to make this point leading up to Earth Day next Monday and beyond.

Mr. DELLUMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to focus our attention on the upcoming Earth Day commemoration. Earth Day is a day we should all pause and consider where we are, where we have been, and where we are going. Earth is our home; we have no other. If we exhaust her resources; if we pollute her water, air, and land, there is no other place we can go. Rachel Carson first apprised us of the danger to our environment in "The Silent Spring" in 1962. Consciousness about the overharvest of renewable resources, endangered species, and pollution resulted in efforts on the local, state, national, and international levels to address these issues. Acting in the best interest of all the people and in the long term, Congress passed a number of laws that significantly improved the living environment of all Americans and helped to heal the damage done out of ignorance and greed the previous decades.

The Clean Water Act was passed in 1972. It protects surface and ground water. It provides water quality standards to control industrial and municipal pollution. It also provides federal grants to help states modernize public sewage treatment plants and reduce sewage discharges. As a result of this act, millions of pounds of industrial pollutants have been eliminated from our drinking water and from our rivers and lakes. Although the nation's waters are cleaner than they've been for decades, 40 percent of the Nation's waters are still not clean enough for fishing and swimming. Thus, we still need to maintain a strong Clean Water Act.

However, the Republican majority wants to substantially weaken the Clean Water Act. They want to exempt 70,000 chemicals from the act, allowing industries to pollute the Nation's waters as much as they like without any hindrance. They want to slough off the costs of their industrial production onto the American

people. The big industries want the American people to pay for industrial pollution, and we will pay—with environmental losses. Fish will be poisoned, rivers and lakes will die, and we will be unable to swim and fish. The Republican majority wants to reduce funding for cleanup projects, which may reduce taxes in the short-term, but it will raise them later, because if we don't clean up the mess now, our grandchildren will have to do it.

The Safe Drinking Water Act has also been the focus of Republican attacks. The Republican majority killed Safe Drinking Water Legislation in 1994, and has made significant cuts in funding the safe drinking water infrastructure. Currently, a weaker bill—the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1995—is being considered. Without a strong Safe Drinking Water Act, we will pay with our health, from the potential negative effect of ingesting chemicals over the long term.

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act [CERCLA] Superfund was created in 1980. Its purpose is to clean up the most polluted hazardous waste sites. It requires polluters to pay 75 percent of the costs of cleaning up the sites they pollute. The Federal Government pays the balance of the costs. Of the 1,400 sites identified for cleanup, only 349 have been completed. Because of the lack of commitment to cleanup by previous administrations, 60 percent of these sites have been cleaned up during the Clinton administration alone.

The CERCLA Superfund needs to be made more effective and efficient, not less. The Republican majority wants to change CERCLA to provide fewer cleanups. Instead of cleaning up hazardous waste sites, they want to merely contain them. They also want to shift more of the cost from the polluters to the government, making government—the taxpayers—pay 50 percent of the cost instead of 25 percent. The Republican majority has also halted designation of new sites and reduced the amount appropriated for cleanups.

The Republican majority has also been giving away America's natural resources to special interests. In years past, Congress created the National Park system, wildlife refuges, and National Forests. In 1995, the National Park system alone enabled 270 million people to commune with Nature. The National Park system includes National Parks, seashores, preserves, scenic riverways and trails. While these areas are in need of maintenance, the Republican majority has cut its operating funds.

In addition, the Republican majority wants to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to drilling for oil and natural gas without important environmental safeguards. ANWR is home to a wide variety of animals and plants, which will be negatively affected by drilling. They are also attempting to open up over 20 million acres of America's Redrock Wilderness to development.

The Republican majority wants to open up national forests to logging above the levels that are sustainable over the long term. They want to allow logging in old growth forests, the home of many endangered species of animals, birds, and plants. In the guise of salvage logging of dead and dying trees, they have passed legislation that opens up logging in these ancient forests, without compliance with environmental laws. The Republican majority

is even proposing to dissolve the Tongass National Forest (America's largest rainforest), transfer ownership to the State of Alaska, and open it up to logging and other development. Thus, the heritage of all Americans is being sold to oil and timber companies, who don't care about the long-term health of the forests or the animals, birds, and plants that are dependent on them for their survival.

The Republican majority has also been attempting to gut the Endangered Species Act. Masquerading as reform, the bill was drafted by timber, mining, ranching and utility interests who would prefer to do business without regard to the harm it causes to endangered species and their habitat.

The Republican majority has resisted reform of the Mining Law of 1872, which allows mining companies to take minerals from federal lands without paying royalties for them. Companies need only pay \$2.50 to \$5.00 per acre to carry off all the minerals they can extract. These are nonrenewable resources that are literally being given away to mining companies. The American people has a right to a reasonable return for their common property. But the Republican majority is resisting this needed mining reform.

The Republican majority has done all they can to cripple federal environmental laws. In addition to weakening individual environmental laws, they are attempting to undermine the enforcement of environmental laws by drastically cutting the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and by limiting the authority the EPA has to implement and enforce those laws.

In the guise of "regulatory reform" the Republican majority is attempting to undermine the environmental laws passed during the past 25 years. Calling environmental safeguards "red tape," they are trying to trick the American people into allowing big businesses: to pollute America's water, air, and land; to pay less than full value for America's timber and minerals; and to destroy America's wilderness and wildlife. In true Orwellian fashion, the Republican majority is trying to steal the common heritage of the American people, obfuscating it with anti-government rhetoric.

Earth Day is an excellent time for all of us to take the time to consider what kind of home we want to live in, and what kind of home we want to leave for our grandchildren. Will there be clean water, air, and land? Or will they be polluted, ugly, and toxic? Will we have any forests left? Will there be any wilderness and wild animals left? Clean water, air, and land is the birthright of all Americans. Forests, wilderness, and wild animals are our heritage too. Will our grandchildren curse us because we wasted their inheritance?

□ 1900

REFORM INITIATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Fox] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I come to speak to my colleagues tonight here in the House to discuss some of the reforms that we have achieved thus far and where we need to

go in the next few months to make sure we complete our agenda to create jobs, to have reforms and to make sure the institution that we are serving in and the public we are serving for are being properly represented in every way imaginable inasmuch as in a bipartisan way as possible, in that total effect.

Let me just review, Mr. Speaker, if I may, with you some of the important reforms we have achieved.

First on opening day we cut one-third of committee staff, eliminated 3 committees, 25 subcommittees. At the same time we also passed a rule for this 104th Congress in the House, there would be no tax increase unless with three-fifths of the Members present voting for that tax increase, and I can report to you we have had no tax increases to date.

We also have one-third cut in the franking privileges, the free mailing privileges that Members have, and since that time some other additional reforms I think are worth repeating and worth underscoring for my colleagues.

We have passed a ban on gifts from lobbyists. Up until December 1995, lobbyists could give gifts to Members, whether it be a trip, or a dinner, or anything like that. And we took a stand, I think very strongly, very properly, saying since no Member in this House would want the adverse inference that their vote would be changed by a lobbyist giving a gift, we have now banned those gifts, the first Congress in history.

And we certainly are on the right direction as well, requiring lobby disclosure. We now know because we passed a bill that is signed by the President, bipartisan Congress, House and Senate. Lobby disclosure for the first time has been effectuated here, and because of the task force on the form, which I now serve on, a bill will be forthcoming to bring about campaign reform, as well, which I think would be the final chapter of this Congress' achievement, a ban on gifts, lobby disclosure, and filing campaign reform.

We have already saved through these reform measures, Mr. Speaker, \$150 million on just the operation of the House. I think that is a testimonial to the kind of hard work that the Republicans have initiated as a majority party, and we have had bipartisan support in all of those initiatives, and I think that says a lot about the membership reflecting the will of the people back home.

But beyond those reforms in the institution, we have also made great strides, moved forward to our agenda to try to make sure that we have a balanced budget. This House has passed for the first time since 1969 a balanced budget. Now, since we started that balanced budget, which was presented to the President and not yet signed, we have moved \$440 billion closer to the President's figures in trying to achieve the kind of an agreement that will not

only bring us a balanced budget, but we are still \$440 billion on Medicare, Medicaid, environment and education, four areas that in a bipartisan way the Congress is moving to protect.

We just saw a week ago, Mr. Speaker, that a line-item veto was signed into law by the President. This will allow the President for the first time, like 43 Governors, to be able to cut out wasteful pork-barrel projects, ones that House Members in the past or Senators may insert into the budget just to get a reelection effort or just to take care of their districts, but would not have regional or permanent value, that would be a project worthy. Now the President will have that line-item veto, and that is certainly a reform that this Congress can be very proud of.

We have also passed congressional accountability. That law says that anything that we pass will be applied to our staffs as well. In prior Congresses, as you know, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Congress itself was exempt from bills in the past, whether it is OSHA, or fair labor standards, or whether it is civil rights law. It is the last paragraph; Congress is exempt from the application of this law. And that was wrong in two ways. First, it was wrong because we did not understand the pain or the suffering put through some individuals and businesses with requirements of Federal law; and, two, it was unfair to the staffs of the Congress in being able to have the protections that laws can afford. And so the President did sign that law into effect, sometimes called the Shays Act, and CHRIS SHAYS, who is from Connecticut, deserves a great deal of credit for having moved that bill forward, and we adopted it here in the House and the Senate, and the President signed the law.

The unfunded mandates reform; I know that you back—Mr. Speaker, and served in Washington State, and you know that the Federal Government for years before you arrived here in Congress would send mandates back to Washington State or to your home community or your school district and said the Federal Government requires this, you got to pay for it. Well, that almost bankrupt some local communities, trying to see to the wishes of the Federal Government, least sensitivity of the funding that goes along with these programs that we implement.

So the unfunded mandates reform has been passed, and no longer can the Federal Congress, the House and the Senate, and together with the President, send back a mandate to home without the money that goes with it. I think the benefit of that is that we can make sure that what we send back is certainly going to be something that is worthy of having the Federal Government be involved with the funding as well as the initiative.

We also passed in this Congress a new crime bill, not just for more police on

the street, which is certainly a positive step to take care of all local communities, but we also passed on this \$10.2 billion new program more funds for police officers on the streets, more money for police equipment, for crime prevention, maybe for a drug court, and leave to each community, county and municipality, or State the initiatives on their own part to decide where the anticrime, where the prevention programs, should have the money best spent.

In some communities it might be establishment of drug court. In other communities it might be prevention programs. Still in others it might be rehabilitation programs to make sure first-time offenders no longer become full-time or professional criminals.

These kinds of initiatives will go a long way to improve our anticrime programs and to work with the attorneys general in each State and our U.S. Attorney General in trying to bring about more safety in our communities and in our States.

We have also passed initially in this House welfare reform. Now, the President said in 1992, when he ran, he wanted to end welfare as we know it. Now we send a bill over to the White House; it was welfare reform in a bipartisan fashion, passed by the House and Senate, has been vetoed. But we are still hopeful here in the House that there will be a bill upon which we can have the consensus and can get a final passage.

The kinds of things we are trying to get is to make sure there is a safety net for those who are unemployed or unemployable, but those who are able-bodied, what we are trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is make sure they have job counseling, job training, job placement, and day care, if necessary, to make sure that every individual who wants to work, who has the ability to work, will be able to work and have the pride of work.

But also part of the welfare reform legislation was appropriate funding and increased funding for food nutrition programs for schools and the WIC Program, the Women, Infants and Children Program. We think this goes a long way in trying to get the problems addressed because while we have spent 15 percent in the cost of one of those two programs, the WIC and the food nutrition, in the proposal that we have before the House right now is to have those programs block granted to the State, but the way we do it is we told the Governors you can only spend 5 percent on administration; with the other 10 percent that is in the budget, the money must go toward feeding more children more meals under the national standards of the National Science Foundation.

So, with those kinds of safeguards, we think the programs, closer to the people without the fraud, abuse and waste for anything will give us a better job back home, will give us a better chance to feed those children and to serve them well.

Our pro-jobs agenda has been one that I think that we can take a lot of pride. You know, many people said, well, what kind of health care provided for workers, for those employed? Well, H.R. 3103 passed last week in the House provides several things. Most notably, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3103 is going to make sure that our people who employed, when they move from one job to the other, or if they lose their jobs, that the insurance is portable. And that is very, very important. It also insures that no matter what preexisting condition you have you cannot be denied the coverage. It also provides medical savings accounts.

So these are very positive things for workers that we want to make sure, hopefully the Senate will agree, and the President, as well, will sign.

We also want to try to get 100 percent deductibility on health insurance to encourage employers to provide the health insurance for their workers.

We also are discussing investment tax credits and research and development tax credits for the purpose of making sure we encourage investment, encourage new jobs, retaining jobs, and to make sure that we keep our businesses here in the country and not overseas.

We also are looking for regulatory relief, and our purpose is to try to make sure that we do not duplicate what States are already doing. Mr. Speaker, we cannot really have regulation upon regulation when they have already have made sure that they done in the States, they have to duplicate in the Federal Government.

We have with us tonight our colleague, Congressman TAUZIN, who I hope will join us here and talk about some of these reforms that we have had in the Congress and where we go in the future of this second session of the 104th Congress. I will yield to him to give us his thoughts on where he thinks the continuation of this revolution will go.

Mr. TAUZIN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I particularly wanted to join you because I listened to the special order that preceded you, and if you were to listen to that special order, you would assume that much of the regulatory reform efforts that you just referred to that were conducted during the previous year in this Congress were somehow aimed at destroying the environment, creating dirty water and dirty air and somehow making life unsafe and unhealthy for us, when nothing could be further from the truth.

The fact is, as we approach Earth Day and we celebrate a much cleaner environment for America, the fact is that we ought to reflect upon what we fought for earlier this year, that some of which remains yet undone and some of which needs to be accomplished in this session of Congress or the next.

Now, one of that is regulatory reform. Now, again, if you would listen to that special order that just oc-

curred, you would think, for example, that the clean water bill that this House produced was somehow a partisan special-interest piece of legislation that was not designed to do anything about clean water in America. The truth was that it was supported by a large majority of this House, bipartisan in nature, Democrats joining Republicans, attempting to bring some rationality to the section of laws that deal with clean water regulations in America, particularly trying to define wetlands in a way that we can properly respect the preservation of real wetlands and at the same time respect the rights of property owners and people in America who are affected by those regulations.

Now, the properly rights bill itself was one that was supported by many Democrats in this House, and we sent it down to the Senate. It was a bill that simply set up due process rights for property owners who were affected by some of the regulations dealing with either the Endangered Species Act or the pull for wetlands regulations.

In regulatory reform, you will recall that when this House passed its regulatory reform bill, the Republican majority was joined by many Democrats who agreed with us that it was time to put some risk-benefit cost analysis into the process by which the government makes regulation. Why? Because we simply want to make sure that regulation makes common sense, that you look at the real risk you are going after, analyze it carefully and look for the least-cost method of achieving a reduction of that risk in our society, making sure, in fact, that regulations issued by bureaucrats made common sense.

Was that an attack on the environment? Of course not. We want a safer, cleaner, healthy environment for America, but we simply want the regulators in Washington, who are sometimes out of control, sometimes not living in the real world, to simply take people into account and to make their regulations make common sense.

This House overwhelmingly endorsed that proposal and sent it down to the Senate. We have still not seen that enacted into law. But we stand for those propositions tonight as we did earlier this year. We stand in this week when we celebrate the planet and clean air environment, we stand for a cleaner healthier, safer place for Americans to live, but one in which Federal bureaucrats start treating people with a little less arrogance, when they start making regulations that take risk and cost into account, that they start respecting property rights in America, that they start respecting the very people they are supposed to serve in America rather than ramming regulations down their throat that sometimes do not make sense.

In short, we are looking for more effective environmentalism, more effective regulatory structures that really work. We are looking for as much vol-

untary agreements and conservation, voluntary agreements, as possible, consultation with local folks, bringing, in fact, environmentalism back home where it belongs instead of here in Washington in some Federal agency.

I remember recently when Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of Interior, visited Louisiana, he went down and talked about the Republican assault on the great outdoors. My comment was, Mr. Babbitt, you don't understand something. Sir, we love the great outdoors as much as you do, perhaps more than you do, in Louisiana. We grew up in the great outdoors. It's the great indoors that we complain about, the indoors where all these Federal bureaucrats who have lost sight of reality and make all these regulations that just don't make sense that Americans can't live with and that in many cases disrespects constitutional rights, civil rights, like the right to own private property in our country.

And so as we fight to balance those things, as we fight to bring some common sense to regulatory reform, respect for property rights, and some regulations dealing with wetlands and clean water and clean drinking water that indeed are based on good risk analysis, cost-benefit analysis; in other words, regulations that achieve their results more accurately for Americans. As we make that fight, we will also celebrate with our colleagues on the other side Earth Day this week.

□ 1915

We are going to try to see to it in the coming weeks and months, for example, that we make a new Superfund law for America, one that does not waste all the money that is collected in a courtroom with lawyers and others making all the money in the system and nothing getting cleaned up.

The President in his State of the Union address, his first State of the Union address, pointed out to us how awful that was, and called upon us to change that law. We are going to try to do that, JON, to pass a good Superfund law, a good clean drinking water law, and get the Senate, hopefully, to agree with us eventually on good, safe, clean water acts and property rights and regulatory reform.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would say this to the gentleman. One of the items he brought up about being commonsensical about the environmental laws, our chairman of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, BOB WALKER, said we should have strong environmental laws but they should be science-based, based on what—we know we can improve the environment, but based on those who are expert in the field coming forward and telling us how can we achieve that end. I think that is very important.

Certainly you hit an item on Superfund. We have seen since 1980 when Superfund was first created, most of the funds have been spent unfortunately not on the cleanups, which are

in some cases not that great a deal of money, but we have been fighting over who the potentially responsible parties are under the Superfund law. So the money is going into lawsuits instead of the cleanups.

I think with the reform that you are speaking to, that the House is going to be addressing, it is going to finally get some of these cleanups going. Most of the companies that have been involved want to do the cleanup, but they are in court because of one party or the other is disputing what percentage of liability they have.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, why they do that, the reason they spend so much time in court battling over liability, is that the current law as it is written has this so-called deep pockets provision in it. So if you contributed 1 percent of whatever is in that site, you could be liable for 100 percent. If you are caught having contributed that 1 percent and you are told that the other parties are not found liable, you are going to have to cough it all up, you are going to try your best to bring them all to court and fight over that liability forever.

The result is the government spends the taxpayers' dollars in that courtroom, the private parties spend interminable amounts of time and money in that courtroom, and in the meantime the citizens out there waiting for the cleanup to occur wait and wait and wait, and the money is wasted and no cleanup occurs. That is what is wrong with this system. It lacks common sense.

If we had a system, for example, that said if you are known to have contributed 20 percent and you are willing to put up your 20 percent cost up front without a legal fight, so we can take that 20 percent and go start cleaning up that site, would that not make better common sense?

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. It certainly would.

Mr. TAUZIN. Of course it would. That is what we are trying to do in this reform. In short, we are trying to bring commonsense environmentalism to America. We are not trying at all to back away from our commitment to the environment.

I believe, and I know most Members of this House believe, that we are here as guests on this planet and that we share it with other forms of life, and we all breathe the same air and drink the same water. We all cherish clean water and safe environments for our family. But we ought to have commonsense regulation out of this Federal Government, and very often we do not. We end up wasting the money, the precious dollars that ought to go to cleaning up places in America and making it a safer, healthier place for our children.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. I think what we need to do is to work with the EPA, work with the advocacy groups, with our colleagues, to make sure this

is a bipartisan issue, because there is no one party that is for the environment. Both parties are for the environment and both the Congress and the White House are for the environment. Now it is a question of how do we get up there.

Mr. TAUZIN. Yes, but you would not believe that by listening to some of this debate on the floor. The fact of the matter is there are quite a number of lobby groups in this town on both sides of this equation who have very special interests. There are environmental lobby groups who have very special interests in keeping a fight going, raising more money and fighting some more. There are other groups out here who obviously would like to not see any environmental protection in the land.

Neither one is right. What we have to do is find the balance to make sure that neither one of the lobby groups sneak away with the issue and we never get anything done, but that in fact Americans get a cleaner, healthier, and safer place to live in out of this maze of regulation and legislation.

The bottom line is we ought to be asking the simple question, does this work. If it does not work to bring us a cleaner, healthier place, if it does not work to save a species, if it does not work to really protect wetlands, then let us build a better system. Let us build one that makes common sense and works and delivers for Americans what they are paying for, which is cleanup of hazardous sites, which is protection of endangered species, which is protection of valuable wetlands, and protection of the clean water and the air and the lands upon which we live. If we deliver on that promise, it will be the best bipartisan gift we can give to America, not only on this Earth Day, but on every Earth Day.

But if you listen to some of the debate on this floor, I mean, you would believe that some of us really do not want clean air and clean water and a clean place for our families. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is we all want it, we just disagree on how to achieve it. We disagree on how in fact to attain that good environment for our families.

In the end, that is a debate that we ought to have, but we ought to do it with a little less of this partisanship, a little less of this acrimonious sort of name-calling and get-ready-for-the-next-election, which seems to pre-occupy this Chamber too much.

If we remember as we approach Earth Day that we have a common goal here to make regulations work for the good not only of our environment but for the citizens who live in it, then I think we will be on solid ground.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. I think we will.

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman's approach, which is one that is global, that is pro-environment, pro-people, and one that is going to bring about

positive change with common sense, I think that is what the American people want. They do not want to see anymore rhetoric, they want results. I think by following the Tauzin plan, we will achieve that.

I think just as important as achieving the protection of our environment, as the gentleman has outlined, whether it be Superfund or endangered species, clean water, clean air, we also need to have FDA reform. I have been working with you and others on your Committee on Commerce, and I know the gentleman from Texas, GENE GREEN, was the task force chairman that the gentleman from Virginia, TOM BLILEY, has appointed, and I am very excited about the progress we are going to make in that area not only on the drugs and medical devices, but also in the food area, to make sure that we speed up the approval of drugs and medical devices so life-extending drugs and life-saving drugs will be approved more quickly, because we do not want that technology or the work force or the jobs to be going overseas. We can keep it here, whether we reorganize FDA, that they need more people, or they need to be out of their morass of over-regulation. We need to save lives. That is what the name of the game is. With FDA reform and environmental protection, we might find people living much longer and much better.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, in all this process of RDA reform, we have to keep our eyes, again, on the ball. The ball in this case is to make sure that food products Americans enjoy are safe products. That has to be our preeminent goal. Our second preeminent goal ought to be to make sure as we regulate good and drugs in America, that we do have a climate where new inventions and developments can reach consumers as rapidly as possible after they have been appropriately tested, so Americans do not have to run to other countries to get treatments that should be available in America, so that new devices and new drugs and new treatments can be available to citizens here, and so that in fact they can be available at an early date to save a life or prolong a life.

FDA reform is critically needed in that regard. I want to join you in the hope that we can accomplish that before the year is out.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the average drug now might take 12 years and \$350 million to come to market. Some people cannot wait 12 years to get that miracle life-extending drug, and \$350 million is a lot of money for a company to invest without ever getting approval.

Mr. TAUZIN. Guess what, too, after they have invested 12 years in that drug and \$350 million, where do you think they get that money from? It goes into a much higher costing drug that Americans may need to save their lives or prolong their lives.

If we can simply have a better process that does not take 12 years, that

does not cost \$350 million, we will also be providing life-saving and life-prolonging drugs and treatments to Americans at more decent prices, which is a critical component of our health care reforms. We hope to accomplish again some of that this year.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. The work that has been done so far by the gentleman from Texas, JOE BARTON, the gentleman from Wisconsin, SCOTT KLUG, and, as well, the work of the gentleman from North Carolina, RICHARD BURR, they have been appointed along with the gentleman from Pennsylvania, JIM GREENWOOD, in your committee to move this initiative forward. I am very much heartened that it has been a bipartisan area of legislation.

I think besides the environmental protections you have discussed and some of the pro-jobs things we have also discussed, getting FDA reform this year is one of the most important areas in which I think that we have accomplished.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, did he mention the success this House had in passing a health care reform bill this year? That came from our committee as well. For the first time, we finally got a bill out of this House that deals with the terrible issue of portability, as Americans move from job to job and lose their insurance.

This bill now says you can take your insurance with you when you move jobs. It also takes care of this terrible problem of preexisting conditions. When you move from one job to the next, you might not have been able to get insurance for the thing you had, that you had coverage for at your old job.

That bill dealt with that preexisting condition problem, and made other good cost-saving reforms in malpractice insurance, in paperwork reform, waste, fraud and abuse. It was the first real targeted effort to begin the process of reforming insurance for medical care in America, and reforming the availability and affordability of those systems for more Americans.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. While still retaining the choice of doctor and hospital for each patient.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. GIL GUTNECHT, join us in this dialog. It is very important. He has been one of the very hardworking reformers in this 104th Congress, trying to make sure we move forward in our agenda to be responsive to the American people, and I thought he might want to join us.

I yield to him for the purpose of giving his reflections on where we have been up until this point and where he might see us going for the remainder of the 104th Congress.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a privilege to be part of this 104th Congress. The gentleman and I, and I think most of

us, went home and had town meetings, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN], and I suspect you did as well. One of the most frustrating things that I found was how many times what we really have accomplished, what has really happened in this Congress, has been in some respects misrepresented by some of our adversaries and not always accurately reported by the press.

As a matter of fact, one of the things we did in our town meetings, talking about reform and saving the Medicare system, it has been difficult sometimes, because we have to go over the same ground, and I found in my town meetings where we could explain exactly how much we are spending today in Medicare, how much we are proposing to spend in Medicare, and it goes from about \$161 billion in fiscal year 1995 to \$247 billion in the year 2002.

Once people get those numbers, some of them actually scratch their heads and say, "Well, wait a second, I keep hearing you are cutting Medicare," when in fact we are making big increases in Medicare. As a matter of fact, a few say, "GIL, maybe that is true, you go from \$161 billion to \$247; yes, that is probably an increase, but if you divide it by the number of seniors, there are going to be more seniors in 7 years than there are today, so what is that number?" That number is \$4,800, and it goes to over \$7,100 in just 7 years.

Mr. TAUZIN. Even accounting for the increase in seniors.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Exactly. That takes into account all the new seniors that are coming. One of the things that I found that really began to get people's attention is when I would stop after I had made that presentation, giving the real numbers and our budget numbers, and said if we do this we can save the system. If we continue to do what we have always done, the system goes bankrupt.

Then I would always tell them that I was born in 1951, and that may not be significant, but when I graduated from college, the Speaker at our commencement address was the director of the U.S. Census. He told us something that day that I think is very important. He said that there were more babies born in 1951 than any other year. We are the peak of the baby boomers. There are more people right now 45, and, well, that has probably changed somewhat, but at that time there were more people 22 than any other single age.

Both of my parents are living, and God bless them, I am happy to have my parents both living and we are delighted, and it is a blessing to have them with us. They are both on Social Security, they are both on Medicare. As a baby boomer, I feel that I have a moral responsibility to my parents. But on the other hand, I have three teenagers. I have a moral responsibility to them, too. I think we ought to offer them the same kind of opportunities, the same opportunities of the kind of standard of living which we enjoy today.

So in some respects, I think baby boomers stand on the hinges of history. I think we have a moral responsibility to seniors to make sure they get the kind of care and benefits they are entitled to, but on the other hand, if we allow the system—as my grandmother used to say, if you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten. What we have got is a system that is going bankrupt.

Frankly, I think we have a moral responsibility to do what is right, to save the system, not only for current seniors but for future generations of seniors. I am proud to say this Congress has been tackling that issue head on, and by using competitive forces, some of the marketplace changes that are happening out there in health care today, we can save Medicare. The same is true with the environment.

One of my favorite Presidents was John Kennedy. He said that we all inhabit this same small planet, we all breathe the same air, and we all cherish our children's future.

□ 1930

I might add, parenthetically, we are all environmentalists. Is there anyone who does not want clean air and clean water for their kids? I do not think there is anybody. But the question is, will we continue to impose \$50 solutions, Washington-based solutions on those problems out in the States and the districts?

I think if we work together, if we have an honest dialog, we can have a cleaner environment, we can have a balanced budget, we can have a lot of these things we are talking about, because we have got to get the whole notion that all good ideas reside in Washington, we have got to get that out of our system, because it has not worked. The evidence is overwhelming.

In fact, if Washington-based solutions worked, Washington, DC, would be the most efficiently run city in the world, and we all know that is not true, because we live here. We see it every day. There is a lot of common sense in Louisiana, in Pennsylvania, in Minnesota, all over this country. We have got to tap into it.

So I am proud of what we have done in the 104th Congress, I think we are doing the right things, making the reforms that need to happen. I must confess that we have not always communicated very well, but we have got to do a better job of that.

I think once the American people understand what we are trying to do and how we are trying to do it, to decentralize the bureaucracy, put more of the decision-making back in the districts and in the States and in the hands of individuals, all sharing the same goals, I think we are going to change the course of history. I think once the American people understand that, they are going to be far more supportive than sometimes the polls show them.

Mr. TAUZIN. I want to thank the gentleman for joining us and congratulate him on an excellent statement.

My mother is on Medicare. I got a wonderful call from her just today telling me that she is finally out of the hospital, been discharged, doing well. She is a twice cancer survivor on Medicare. Do not think for a second that I am going to not do everything I can to make sure Medicare does not go bankrupt, for her and for everybody's mother and father that we cherish and love as much as I love my own mother.

The bottom line is, we cannot let that system go bankrupt. If we do not face that problem head on, as the gentleman has said, and provide new solutions for it while at the same time increasing the benefits per beneficiary, as our plan did, and preserve for every Medicare recipient the right to go to the doctor of their own choice and to stay in the Medicare system if that is what they choose, if we do not do that kind of a reform, how are we going to save this system?

And if we do not save it, 7 years from now, when it is about to go bankrupt, are we going to let that happen? No. We know what is going to happen around here. There will be a doubling of the payroll taxes to save it, and then the next generation will be threatened with bankruptcy. We will have been imposing an undue burden on the children and grandchildren to save a system that we should have saved and could have saved today, and the gentleman is so right in that regard.

When it comes to the business of finding common sense in America, I agree with him. The best common sense resides in those town hall meetings back home. That is where I really learn the truth about many of the issues we debate here in Washington. That is where folks really tell us how the real world works and where the good ideas are, and more of us I think ought to spend time in those town hall meetings and less time here in Washington.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. They do not feel any qualms about telling us where to go and how to get there. That is good. That is how we learn.

But let me say this about the Medicare situation. We are the individuals in the majority party that said, look, we think seniors are very important. We want to roll back that unfair 1993 tax on Social Security. We passed a bill to that effect. We are the ones who said, look, we want to raise the income eligibility from \$11,280 without deductions from Social Security for those under 70 to \$30,000 a year. We passed that.

We are the same ones who are saying, look, we love our seniors, want to make sure they live long and well, as long as possible, but what we want to make sure of is we take out the waste, fraud, and abuse in the system, \$30 million a year, and make sure we keep those savings for health care only, not to go somewhere else in the budget.

We also want to take the medical education, now part of Medicare, for direct and indirect costs for interns and residents, a very valuable program but it should be a separate line item in the government. We should make sure that those dollars also go to Medicare for seniors.

We want to see paperwork reduction from 12 percent of Medicare costs to 2 percent while still offering Medisave accounts and managed care for Medicare.

Doing all that together, we are talking about a 7.5-percent increase a year for Medicare, double the rate of inflation. And frankly, knowing the bipartisan House we have here now, if we need to make increases in Medicare, we will do it.

But to have people say through demagoguery or rhetoric that any one party does not want to do what is right for seniors is absolutely wrong, because we are looking for increases here to make sure Medicare works but get that fraud, waste, and abuse out of it, because I want to make sure those dollars are being spent for seniors' health care and not for a provider to become rich.

Mr. TAUZIN. The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] said something worth repeating. At one of the town hall meetings during the break, it happened to occur on the 4-year anniversary of my father's death. I spent that morning with my mother.

We recalled together how one of the things my dad had always asked me to try to do as his Congressman, as his son and friend, was to do something about that awful income earnings limitations that we put on seniors under Social Security. My father was living under Social Security until his death, and the idea that we told him and other seniors, "Don't go try to earn more money to have a good life, because we're going to take your Social Security away if you dare go out and continue to work," was an insult to him.

One of the sterling accomplishments of this Congress has been to raise that earned income limitation now to \$30,000, so now seniors can earn up to \$30,000 without affecting their Social Security check. I remember telling the audience that night, I said, "Dad, this one's for you."

This one is for all the seniors who have been asking us to do that for so long, and to stop this awful tax on their Social Security benefits that was imposed during the early years of the Clinton administration, and this House did that. It has repealed the tax on the Social Security checks that seniors get around the country. I hope, frankly, we can see that enacted into law in a much bigger income tax reform that all Americans can benefit from before this Congress is over.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. One of the other areas we are working on for seniors that the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] and the gen-

tleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] have been the leadership point for, and I think it is very important and worth repeating, is that we are also trying to make sure we have enough funds for in-home services. While people are living longer and better, we want them to live longer at home and less in a nursing care situation for as long as we can put that off by having additional funds for in-home services.

And also I think what is very important is that we are spending money, and it should be, on women's health care initiatives. That is a very important program that we in a bipartisan fashion are trying to move forward, additional funding of research for osteoporosis, for cardiovascular diseases, for cancer, for uterine, ovarian, and breast cancer, additional research in that area as well as for menopause. We are also talking about, instead of having every other year under Medicare for mammograms, doing them yearly.

Those are the kinds of changes this Congress is moving forward on because we want to make sure our seniors and others are living longer and living better.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. This is part of the frustration, the list that the gentleman just went through. I suspect most Americans, particularly American women, do not know how much this Congress has really done. It is so frustrating because it seems to me—and I do not mean to be critical of the press but maybe I guess I am—these are the kinds of things that need to be reported more, and frankly too many Americans do not know how much this Congress has accomplished.

But, again, I am proud of the 104th Congress. This has been a can-do Congress from the very first day. The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] remembers as I do that very first day, and the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] was on the other side of the aisle that day, but it is great to have him with us now.

But the point is that from the very first day, we were enacting reforms which a lot of people, and I am sure the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] included, had been trying to get reformed here in this Congress for many, many years. The very first bill, H.R. 1, the Congressional Accountability Act, the Shays Act, to make Congress abide by the same laws as everybody else.

We actually for the first time in I do not know how many years had an audit of the Congress, and frankly what the auditors found was, this Congress itself has not been very good at managing its own funds and has not been very accountable for its own funds. If we look at item after item, this Congress has really changed the course of history and we have changed the nature of the debate in this body.

Frankly, it is frustrating sometimes to go home and have to re-explain that, because I think in some respects the

press has done such a miserable job, in my opinion, of telling how many good things this Congress has done, and so sometimes it is very frustrating for us to have to go back and tell the story. But on the other hand, I guess that is part of our job, as well, to talk about what is happening.

Frankly, let us also admit we have made some mistakes. That is part of being a democracy, that is part of a democratic republic. We are going to make mistakes, but I think on balance I am proud of the record of accomplishment of this Congress.

It has been a Congress that has been dedicated to reform, whether it was welfare reform, Medicare reform, Medicaid reform, or even reforming the way we keep our environment clean and pure. We have been willing to take a look and take some of the tough votes, take some of the criticism, because I think in the long light at the end of the tunnel, at the end of the day, I think the American people will look back and say, hey, they were doing the right things, moving in the right directions, taking power away from Washington, decentralizing, using market forces wherever possible and ultimately trying to get more services, more good, more bang for the buck for the taxpayers who pay the bill.

I am proud of this Congress. I am delighted to have the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] with us as a Republican. The gentleman gave a great presentation at noon for the consumption tax, sales tax, whatever we want to call it. I think that is another issue.

We saw on April 15 the American people have had enough with our current tax system. I do not want to take too much of the time, but 6 billion man hours are invested in keeping records and filling out forms for the IRS. Frankly, the time has come for all Americans, we need a national tea party, because this country was founded by tax protesters who said enough is enough.

Six billion man-hours, and put that in perspective. That is how many man-hours that are used to build every car, every truck, and every airplane built in the United States. That is how much time is spent just keeping records and filling out forms for the IRS. We have had example after example. Money Magazine has surveyed, you can go to 50 different tax professionals, you can go to 3 different IRS offices and get different answers from all of them.

The truth of the matter is, we all know that the system we have in terms of collecting revenue for the Federal Government is broken. We have had the courage, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN], the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CHRYSLER], and others have had the courage to take this issue on, go forward and begin to put some programs on the table, some bills on the table, so we can have a national debate, a national dialogue, and really come to a conclusion in terms of what kind of tax policy we ought to

have, what is the maximum amount the Federal Government ought to get and what is the simplest way, the most efficient way for the Federal Government to raise the revenue.

I congratulate the gentleman. His presentation at noon was one of the best I had ever heard. I congratulate the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER] and the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CHRYSLER], as well, because they have all been working together. In fact, when they started on that proposal it was clearly bipartisan. We hope to encourage more Democrats to join that debate as well.

Mr. TAUZIN. I thank the gentleman. One of the reasons why I think this has been a do-something Congress that has been unrecognized is that much of what we have done and completed went to the White House and got vetoed. We have got to remember that.

We did pass Medicare reform through both houses of this Congress and it got vetoed. We did pass a balanced budget bill for this country and it got vetoed. We passed a Medicaid reform bill and it got vetoed. We passed welfare reform twice and it got vetoed. We passed product liability reform and it is scheduled to get vetoed.

We had a liability reform bill dealing with securities laws. That got vetoed. We mustered a two-thirds majority to override on that one, but most of these bills have been vetoed. We do not have a two-thirds majority to override.

But this Congress has produced and believe me, if we could, this Congress would produce a complete repeal of the IRS and the income tax, as our bill would do, and the whole mess of guilty until proven innocent and double taxation and the awful mess the IRS has created for this country. If we could appeal it this year and substitute an alternative tax system that was fair and made sense for Americans, I would love to see it done this year.

We have at least put an idea on the table. That is part of what this Congress has been all about, putting new ideas, new reform concepts on the table, passing many of them, as the gentlemen from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] has pointed out, some of which has become law, many of which we are still fighting over because they have been vetoed. But we are going to keep up that fight until we win those reforms.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. I think the people driving it frankly are the people back home. They are saying they want a simpler, fairer, flatter tax. They also say they want the IRS to be changed. Some want to eliminate it, to be sure. But the Taxpayer Bill of Rights which the gentleman has been active on, with the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON], is going to provide, I think, part of the first antidote for the problem.

Mr. TAUZIN. That was passed yesterday with a huge bipartisan majority.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. And it provides, if I recall correctly, that the tax-

payer will have an advocate at the IRS who will intervene on their behalf. It waives the interest charges and penalties when the IRS is at fault. It extends time for taxpayers to pay delinquent taxes without being subject to interest charges from 10 to 21 days. It expands measures to protect rights of divorced filers. It provides the IRS with authority to return levied property. It increases the maximum award amount from \$100,000 to \$1 million for reckless collection actions by IRS, and establishes accountability by requiring the IRS to file an annual report to the tax writing committees, of which the gentleman is a part, documenting misconduct by IRS employees.

So I think that it does take for the first time a bold step, saying, sure, there are good employees at IRS, we are not saying that. We are saying we want a system that is fairer. They are doing their job. We are saying we want to make sure that the taxpayers also have rights, they also are heard, and not treated as a number but as people who want to pay their fair share, want to pay it but they want to make sure they have their rights protected. That is what this law does in a very strong way for the first time.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I think if I could jump in here, I think the Taxpayer Bill of Rights is a giant step in the right direction, but ultimately what we need is a much simpler tax system than we have today.

□ 1945

The idea that Americans are spending six billion hours, are intimidated by an agency that has 110,000 employees, that idea is an idea whose time has passed. The idea whose time has come is a much simpler tax system, whether it be the consumption tax, whether it be a flat tax, or whatever. I am not certain what the right answer right now is. Representative TAUZIN does a beautiful job. I hope he will have some special orders between now and the end of summer so the American people can begin to understand what we are really talking about, what the problem is, and how your particular solution will address that.

But I think we need that national dialogue, and ultimately what we need is a much simpler tax. Frankly, the taxpayers Bill of Rights does begin to level the playing field. Because heretofore the IRS had a huge advantage and they used the power of intimidation over individuals.

Mr. TAUZIN. Think about it, there is no other place in America, not even our Federal courts, where you go and you are presumed guilty. Even in Federal criminal court you are presumed innocent, and until the State proves you guilty you walk out a free person. With the IRS, you are presumed guilty until you prove yourself innocent. What an awful type of situation Americans find themselves in.

Worse than that, as you know JON, the IRS is a double taxation system.

Not only does it tax your income, but every time you buy anything made in America, you are paying the tax of every business that contributed to the manufacture of that product. Economists tell us that could be a hidden tax of between 10 and 14 percent on the price of everything made in America. Unfortunately, we do not charge that tax to products imported. So, guess what? We import more products.

It is a system that tells us do not earn money, do not save money, do not invest because we are going to penalize you, do not try to leave anything for your kids because we got inheritance and gift taxes that will catch you then. Even when you spend money, you better buy foreign products, because if you buy anything made in America, we are going to double tax you.

It is a horrible system, and it is time we think about changing it for the good of every taxpayer; but, more importantly, for every wage earner and every business in America that would like to manufacture things here instead of manufacturing them all over the world.

If we have that debate, honestly and forthrightly and in a bipartisan fashion, to make sure whatever we substitute for this system is indeed a fair system, it is simpler, makes better sense, does not double tax us, does not tax American products only, but taxes fairly all products in our society, so we can encourage manufacturing again, if we have that debate as part of this agenda to do something in this Congress, move these reforms forward, I will feel a lot better than I do already about a Congress that has made some great progress to this date.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. If I can ask you, Mr. TAUZIN, beyond the discussion we had on flat tax, with or without deductions for mortgage, the Arney and Specter versions, as well as the Forbes version, and the consumption tax and national sales tax, what other programs are your committees looking at as far as tax reform?

Mr. TAUZIN. The Committee on Ways and Means is the committee doing it. I do not actually serve on it. BILL ARCHER is the Chair, and we are working closely with BILL. Mr. ARCHER actually supports this consumption tax concept. But he is not making that decision right now.

What he is doing is the right thing. He is going to hold hearings on this proposal for a national sales tax. He is going to hold hearings on the Arney flat tax proposal. He will hold hearings on alternative proposals, such as the value added tax or anything anybody wants to come up with.

By October, the Committee on Ways and Means will report to the American public. Hopefully the candidates for President will join in that debate, and by next Congress, maybe we can have an American tea party, and Americans can express themselves and dump this whole system into the Boston Harbor and rewrite something that makes sense for Americans again.

What we recommend is to pull the IRS and the income tax out by its roots, to get rid of the whole mess, to throw away the inheritance and gift taxes along with it, and substitute a simple national retail sales tax at the end of every purchase, providing a complete rebate to incomes under the poverty level, so that no one is hurt under poverty, and providing the same treatment for home ownership the current code does to encourage families to own their homes and build their families here in America.

It is an awfully interesting concept, but it is only one of many. The Committee on Ways and Means is going to look at them all and hopefully report to the American people by October which one they think makes the best sense, and we will have this debate next Congress.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. I think Congressman GUTKNECHT and Congressman TAUZIN, as much as it is important to reform the tax structure, and, believe me, the American people want that, they also want to make sure we have a more business friendly Congress and business friendly government.

What I am talking about now is people who have tried to deal with the Federal Government to do work. I had a gentleman who has a business in my district that wants to do business with the Federal Government, but he had 187 pages he had to fill out for a \$25,000 contract. He had to hire an accountant, an attorney, and an engineer to assist him in that regard.

I do not think we are not a business friendly government if we cannot figure out a way to make sure that we encourage people to be vendors, those who can come forward with their Government, give a quality product, and try to sell it to the Government on a bid process.

I am talking about getting the best product for the lowest price. Well, he may have had the best product, but the Federal Government will never have the chance to buy it, because he did not want to go through 187 pages of paperwork.

So I think that has to be part of our initiative, to make sure this is a government that works leaner and works better.

Mr. TAUZIN. Indeed, to go back to taxes, the Kemp Commission reported that the average small business in America spends \$4 complying with the Tax Codes for every \$1 they send the Federal Government. Think about that, when our forms and our regulations are so complex that you have got to hire so many accountants and go through so much paperwork to send the Government \$1 you have got to spend \$4 in your business. And guess who pays all of that? The consumer does in the end. When our systems are so complex that people cannot bid to do Government work because they cannot get through the bureaucracy and the paperwork, when businesses cannot even pay their taxes without spending

four times as much as the tax liability, spending it on paperwork and accountants and auditors, then something is wrong in America. We have got an inefficient system.

If it does say to people "Do not come do business with this government," we are locking out people that could be doing business for us, perhaps in a much more efficient way than our current vendors, our current suppliers. That ought to get changed.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. It is just as important as the tax reform.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I was going to say, whether you are talking about tax reform, health care reform, Medicare reform, welfare reform, reforming the way Congress does business, opening up the process, really what this debate is about is whose country is it, and whose government is it, and who is in charge, and whose money is it? And for too long we have sort of taken, or our predecessors have taken the attitude in Washington that it is Washington's money and Washington's government.

One of my favorite Presidents once observed we are a people with a government, and not the other way around. And really all of these reforms are about opening up the process. The beauty of this Congress is for the first time we are having honest and healthy debates about what kind of a Medicare system we are going to have, what kind of welfare system should we have?

We have agreed that the problem with our welfare system is not that it costs so much money. The problem with our welfare system in America today is that it costs too much in human potential. We have created dependency.

When Representative TAUZIN talks about our tax system, it is a system riddled with perverse incentives. Throughout all of our programs, it is a system of perverse incentives. No good deed goes unpunished. Frankly, it is wrong, and the America people know it is wrong.

If there is a reform party, I think once the American people get a chance to look at these issues, what has really happened in the 104th Congress, how the process has been opened up, how we finally had honest debates about real reform, returning more power back to the people, I think they will agree that there is a reform party in the United States of America, and it is our party, and it is this party that forged those reforms, it is this freshman class, if you will, that has really forced the agenda to make those changes, to change the attitudes in Washington, and begin the process of giving the people the power back. And that is what this Congress is about.

I hope that as we go forward, we will have more opportunities this spring to have this kind of a dialog, this kind of a discussion, because I believe facts are our friends, and once the American people have the facts, whether it is about our budget, about Medicare, about tax reform, all of those other issues, I think it makes it very easy for

us to win the debate, for them to win the debate, because facts are our friends and, as John Adams said, "Facts are stubborn things."

Mr. TAUZIN. You know, the freshmen, JON, all of you guys, have taken a lot of heat in the press, being too hardnosed, too rigid, inflexible. The truth is, the freshmen came to this House with a very refreshing concept. It was a concept that the Government ought to be our servant, not our master. And you came with a simple notion that we needed to make Government user friendly again. It needed to be responsive to people and helpful to people, instead of control and mandating and, indeed, inaccessible to people because its formularies and regulations were too difficult for people to understand. It is a very refreshing attitude.

I often comment to folks back home, thank God we have a huge crop of freshmen that have that attitude. I think it is great that we have the infusion of new ideas and new thought. We have seen it in the form of a willingness to tackle issues that sometimes no one wanted to tackle before; to face head on the crush and calamity of Medicare collapsing into bankruptcy and to try to deal with it, to face head on the fact we have got a welfare system that is condemning people to dependency, instead of rescuing them from dependency; to face head on the fact that Medicaid in our country is about to cripple the ability of our States to take care of people who are uninsured and need the assistance of others for their health care; and to face head on complex issues like immigration policy, and issues like, indeed, environmental reform, which are very contentious and very difficult to debate sometimes.

Freshmen, in my view, have added a great deal to this Congress, and I am glad you are here.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Congressman TAUZIN, we certainly appreciate the fact you are an honorary freshman, you have joined us in that regard, because your enthusiasm to find bipartisan solutions and work to make a positive difference is what I think all the Congress is about.

You would not be here and would not have the privilege of serving if you could not make a positive difference. The thing we have to do is make sure we continue listening back home. Back home are the best ideas on keeping costs down, on keeping government accountable for what they want, and to make sure we in fact have a government that is user friendly. In that regard, for any final comments Congressman GUTKNECHT may have?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania and Louisiana for the special order. I appreciate the opportunity to participate. I want to thank you for the kind words about the freshmen. I think in many respects, though, the freshmen just represent the common sense values and views of the American people.

This Congress started with a lot of excitement and fanfare, but I will

never forget the day after this Congress started, I was out in the hall, outside the House chambers, and a reporter came up to DICK ARMEY, the majority leader of the House Republican Conference, and she said to him, "How does it feel now that the American people have given you all this power?" And he said something very important and very profound. He said, "The American people did not give us power. They gave us responsibility. They loaned us power."

That is part of the attitude I think reflected in this Congress. The American people have given us responsibility. For as long as we have that responsibility, I think particularly speaking on behalf of the freshmen, we are going to do everything we can to give the power back to them, because we know that ultimately here in the United States it is the people who are sovereign. For too long, they felt as if there was a government that had the people, rather than a people with a government.

Frankly, I think we are bringing fresh attitudes, I think we are willing to tackle the tough issues. Have we done everything right. No. Have we made mistake? Yes. We may make mistakes in the future. But we are always guided by the basic notion that it is the people who are sovereign, and we work for them, and ultimately we have a responsibility to this generation, but, more importantly, to the next generation as well.

So I want to thank Representative TAUZIN and Representative FOX. It has been a great special order. We need to do this more often. As I said earlier, facts are our friends.

Mr. TAUZIN. I just want to reecho that thought, that this is the people's House, and in this House the people rule. That is an awfully statesmanlike approach to take, and it is surprising, indeed, that more folks do not realize that in this Chamber.

In the end, when we go back to the town hall meetings back home, we are asked a simple question: Have you advanced an American agenda? Not a Democrat or Republican agenda. Have you advanced the cause of this country? Have you made it a place where there is more liberty, instead of less liberty? Have you made it a place where we can advance our family's future more easy instead of more difficult. Have you made this a place where indeed our children can have a brighter future than we ourselves have?

If we can say yes to all of those questions, then we can go home proud and pleased with the work we have done here. I think we are well on the way. We have accomplished a lot. We have a lot left to do. But I think this "do something" Congress will be heard from much more in the days ahead.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. I want to thank Congressman GUTKNECHT and Congressman TAUZIN for their leadership, not only in presenting the re-

forms that they have worked for, but in trying to forge a bipartisan agenda, one that is going to make this Congress continue to be pro-jobs, pro-reform, anti-tax, and one that relies more on the individual responsibility and relying on the fact that the Government does not run the country, the people do, and they do lend us that responsibility and that authority to act in their behalf.

So while we want to see term limits, we want to make sure the time we are here is made valuable, because what we have done is made positive changes. That will always be our guiding thought.

I thank you for letting us have this time period, Mr. Speaker, to have this dialogue. We will return again to give a further review in the future. We appreciate the input of our colleagues, from our constituents and the American people.

□ 2000

TRIBUTE TO A TRUE PATRIOT, RON BROWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE] is recognized for 60 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on and include therein extraneous material on the subject of the special order today by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE].

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, I wanted to take some time this evening to pay tribute to a man so many of us knew as a great friend and a real true patriot. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown was a person we all knew and loved. So many people across this Nation have been inspired by Ron Brown, it is fitting that we celebrated his remarkable life and legacy.

Even in the midst of our grief over his untimely passing, we recognize that Ron was the kind of person who would want to be remembered for how he lived his life rather than how he died. It has been said that a man's reach should exceed his grasp. Throughout Ron Brown's wonderful life he kept reaching, seizing each challenge with boundless confidence, with enthusiasm, with energy, with vision. Both in the private sector and in the public life he displayed that all-American can-do attitude, refusing even to entertain the thought that any obstacles would be insurmountable.

It was this spirit that won him so many firsts. First black fraternity