

vote coming up in the next month on MFN for China. It is going to be very difficult for people to justify this in the light of the human rights violations that are occurring in China.

RESTORE WIC PROGRAM FUNDING

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

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I would just say that to start my 5 minutes I am delighted to see that we are on 5 minutes because that means that the rule for the bill that we were going to undertake has been defeated.

I think one of the reasons that the rule was defeated was because we did not allow, through the Committee on Rules, the opportunity to offer a bipartisan amendment that would have restored the entire amount of WIC funds, Women, Infant and Children Program funds to make sure that the program continues to help women that are pregnant not deliver anemic or underweight children.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the best programs and one of the best bipartisan programs that we have in Government, yet the Committee on Rules had locked out and shut down and prohibited us from offering and discussing this bipartisan amendment with the self-executing rule.

So I am delighted that the Committee on Rules now is back to discuss ways by which to improve that bill. I think it was defeated in a bipartisan way, with 43 Republicans joining the Democrats, because we do want to discuss the importance of WIC. We also want to make sure that that bill is not loaded up like a Christmas tree with the branches sagging to the floor with pork barrel ornaments.

So there are two problems with that bill. I am hopeful that we can get that bill back to the floor right away because it does involve natural disaster relief that is very important for a number of States, including States in the Midwest, it involves funding for human disasters, which would help women and children with the restoration of \$38 million in the WIC Program.

Why do we need this funding for the WIC Program? There are a number of reasons. One is because the administration, the White House, recognized, with the help of some Republicans, that we were going to have an increased caseload, that disability payments through Social Security for children were frozen, and that we had increases in milk prices. So we needed to make sure we got this \$38 million put into the WIC Program to ensure that 180,000 children were not cut off from WIC.

Mr. Speaker, we were able to do that defeating the rule in a bipartisan way. I am hopeful that the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR], the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA), the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] and whoever wants to will

go to the Committee on Rules and make sure that we get a fair rule to discuss and debate this WIC Program, which is a wonderful program to help our women and children throughout this country, and I would be happy at this time to yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] who has done a marvelous job fighting passionately for a wonderful program such as WIC.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana for his strong support of the WIC program, making sure that there is a funding stream for WIC that is not smoke and mirrors, one that we can depend on and one that is not just invented a few hours before a bill comes to the floor.

I can say that I serve as a member on two of the subcommittees of concern here, the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, dealing with the WIC funding, and the Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies as well, which includes the NASA budget. We never had any kind of hearings with NASA on taking money from that account and placing it in the WIC account.

It was very unclear to us yesterday when we went before the Committee on Rules. We were told, well, maybe they might make a rule in order where we could debate the funding issue. Then it turns out to be a self-executing rule, and when we asked the Committee on Rules yesterday when we testified, well, where is the money coming from, they said, well, we think it may be coming from a NASA account. I said which NASA account? Well, was it the wind tunnel account? They said, well, maybe it is section 8, maybe it is not NASA.

It was very confusing up in the Committee on Rules, and then today we are presented with a self-executing rule where apparently the money is being taken from some NASA account.

This was never, never talked about, as the gentleman from Georgia knows, in our Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, and I can assure the gentleman that as a member of the Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, which includes the NASA budget, we never talked about this and had the opportunity to deal with the agency people from NASA.

So I think for those of us who are fighting for the WIC Program and for certainty, not just after next fall, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] said he wants to hold hearings next fall. We have people being taken off the rolls today around the country, including in his own State of California, where the Governor has written us and said he needs an additional \$27 million just in California alone.

SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR THE WIC PROGRAM

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support our Nation's future by calling for full funding for the WIC nutrition program. All too often the debate in this great House of democracy focuses on estimates, projections, baselines, adjustments, or some other technical term that we hear every day. We are asked to ponder piles of paper filled with facts and figures and then make a judgment about how those numbers or how changing those numbers will affect the everyday lives of millions of Americans.

Today I ask that instead we take a moment and focus on the foundation of our Nation, indeed, its future, our children. I think it is more important to focus on the valuable benefits and help services WIC provides to its participants rather than haggling over census numbers and terms like full participation. When discussing the WIC Program, we must remind ourselves that it has a 22-year track record of providing valuable and, in fact, critical services to some of our Nation's most vulnerable citizens. The WIC Program provides specific nutritious foods to at-risk, income-eligible, pregnant, postpartum and breast feeding women, infants and children up to five years of age. WIC gives women and young children the means to obtain highly nutritious food like iron-fortified infant formula, calcium rich milk, eggs, juice, cereal and other staple foods necessary for healthy development. More than food, WIC is designed to influence a lifetime of good nutrition and healthy behavior by providing valuable nutrition education for its participants as well as referrals to other local health and social service organizations.

During pregnancy, Mr. Speaker, one of the most fragile periods in a woman's life, WIC enhances dietary intake, which improves weight gain and the likelihood of a successful pregnancy. After birth, WIC continues to promote the health of infants and is responsible for reducing low birth rate and infant mortality. Children who participate in WIC receive immunizations against childhood diseases at a higher rate than children who are not WIC participants, and WIC also helps to reduce anemia among children.

As we know, children receiving nutritious meals are in a better position to focus on their daily studies. I recently visited an elementary school in my district and spoke with the very people providing meals to students. They, along with many others, told me that proper nutrition is an integral part of our children's educational experience. In this regard WIC has been linked to improve cognitive development among children. Stated plainly, WIC children are more prepared to learn compared to those children who lack proper nutritionally balanced diets.

In short, Mr. Speaker, WIC serves as a safety net for this country's most vulnerable citizens. However, the greatest testament to WIC comes from not from politicians or bureaucrats, but from those who actually participate in the program.

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Allow me to share some comments from a few of the dozens of letters one of the WIC directors in my district received over the past few days. Each of these women felt compelled to write and to urge careful consideration of full funding for WIC.

Erica Miner said that WIC "helped provide my son a better life than what I could before I started the program."

Laura Tadoun praised WIC for "showing me how to eat and drink properly so I could have a healthy baby." She continues, "I don't know how we could have made it without you."

Julia Bruno commented that "thanks to this program, my children are physically and nutritionally well. It is my sincere hope that WIC continues so that in the future we will have healthy, happy children and save money on medical costs."

Tina Donald wrote, "If it weren't for the WIC program I wouldn't be able to get by at all."

Finally, Nicole LeBaron pleaded, "Please take this service and the funding that they need into serious consideration before cutting it and cutting the families like myself that depend on it to help their children grow healthy."

These WIC success stories from my Florida district, Mr. Speaker, are representative of the performance of the program as a whole across the country.

However, in this era of budgetary constraints and fiscal conservatism, everything boils down to dollars. And yet on this count, WIC has indeed withstood fiscal scrutiny and, without question, actually increases the return, increases the return on our investment in the program.

Studies have shown that WIC provides a 350 percent return on the tax dollars spent on the program. For example, for every dollar that WIC spends, \$3.50 is saved in expensive neonatal and disability programs. Money spent on pregnant women in WIC produces similar Medicaid savings for newborns and their mothers.

At a time, Mr. Speaker, when we are reducing welfare rolls and stressing personal responsibility, I can think of no better way to encourage fiscal stability and certainty than by supporting and appropriating full funding for the WIC program.

Let me share with my colleagues the words of my good friend, Clara Lawhead. Clara is the Director of Nutrition of WIC Services in Pasco County, FL, in my Ninth Congressional District.

She succinctly explains the problem in my district, in terms we all can understand:

In Florida, we have faced the problem that this year's funding cannot support our cur-

rent caseload and we have already been forced to initiate a reduction in benefits to our WIC participants. This effort was necessary to maintain some level of service to our clients that have already been identified with a medical or nutritional risk. We began in February to carefully evaluate the diet prescription (food package) in milk and fruit juice for low risk clients. The next step is to reduce caseload.

Friends and colleagues, WIC is too important to the future of this Nation to leave to political games.

In short, WIC is supported by many people and continues to be a popular program. It yields tremendous returns on our investments and has been proven, time and time again, to improve the health and well being of pregnant women, infants, and children.

Mr. Speaker, if the greatest sin we commit is erring on the side of caution—on the side of children—I will be proud to make that mistake. I believe many of my colleagues feel the same and will support me in calling for the full \$76 million in supplemental funding for the WIC program.

Let me close with the simple yet eloquent words of Dawn Stamper, who lives in New Port Richey in my congressional district:

Our children are our future and need to be given the best chance and first steps needed to lead a healthy and nutritious life.

Our children are the future. This investment in WIC is one that, at the end of the day, we can all point to with pride, because we did what was right and we did it for the people who sent us here in the first place.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 5. An act to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to reauthorize and make improvements to that Act, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 66. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol grounds for the sixteenth annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, announces the appointment of C. John Sobotka, of Mississippi, to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic leader, announces the reappointment of John C. Waugh, of Texas, to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

FEC FUNDING

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, the last action on the rule that has resulted in this time for the Republican leadership

to kind of regroup is very important, because that rule was defeated in a bipartisan vote, and there is no fundamentally more important reason to defeat that rule than the fact that that rule eliminated the need for funding for the Federal Election Commission.

Mr. Speaker, last February, the FEC asked for a supplemental appropriation of \$1.7 million needed to address the campaign abuses from the 1996 campaign, which the Committee on Appropriations granted. Up until last night, there was every indication that the appropriation would go forward. But last night, the Committee on Rules unilaterally, and without warning, left the public hearing and behind closed doors deleted the appropriation for the bill. They did this even after the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY], the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] and myself asked that the specific appropriation be included and that certain restrictions be removed.

The FEC funding was the only funding deleted, and it was no accident. This, after all, was the first money that Congress would have appropriated to allow investigations into the congressional campaign abuses to go forward.

Make no mistake. What we have here is a total abuse of process, a total violation of fundamental fairness. In fact, today we now have the majority really committing a double abuse. First, the majority is abusing the legislative process which we were counting on to make sure that the FEC is able to enforce the law as a small first step to clean up our campaign system.

Second, Mr. Speaker, as a result, they are obstructing the FEC's ability to investigate congressional violations of Federal election law. This was a hatchet job, and it is especially outrageous in light of the Congress's alleged outrage over the 1996 campaign and its providing of millions of dollars to investigate politically charged investigations, allegations that have been ongoing over the last several months.

It was interesting, because just last week, Michael Kranish from the Boston Globe reported that an organization created by former Republican Chairman Haley Barbour to boost the GOP's image wrote a fundraising plan that relied partly on newly available documents disclosed. The organization, a Republican think tank called the National Policy Forum, wound up receiving a \$2.2 million loan guarantee from a Hong Kong business and then failed to repay \$500,000. Since that time, the Republican National Committee has agreed to return the money.

When are all of these stories going to stop, and when are we going to do something about campaign finance reform? The Federal Election Commission, and I just left a hearing before the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law of the Committee on the Judiciary where officials from