

[Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. KUCINICH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### S. 768—MEILI FAMILY RELIEF

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

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 768, legislation to provide permanent residency status for the Meili family. This legislation would provide relief for the family of a courageous hero who deserves our gratitude and admiration. Mr. Meili's actions in Switzerland not only endangered his personal safety, but also that of his family. We should offer protection to Mr. Meili and his family to ensure the truth is told regarding Holocaust-era Swiss bank practices.

In January, 1997, Michael Christopher Meili was on duty at a Swiss bank where he noticed that employees were shedding Holocaust-era documents. Meili reported the destruction of documents, which is a violation of Swiss law, and turned over some of these documents to members of the Jewish community in Zurich and to the Swiss police.

Subsequently, Mr. Meili was fired from his job and investigated for violating Swiss bank secrecy law. After receiving death threats, Mr. Meili and his family came to the United States in April on a temporary visitors visa. This visa will expire in the near future, and we must provide special relief for the Meili family to protect them. This legislation would provide permanent residency status for the Meili family, as they are not eligible for either a political asylum or work-based visa exemption. I am pleased that we are considering this critical

legislation in an expedited manner. We must ensure that the Meili family and other whistleblowers are encouraged to tell the truth.

As a member of the House Banking Committee, I participated in two hearings on the disposition of Jewish assets in Swiss Banks. We heard testimony on the courage and determination of Mr. Meili to protect these documents. Without these documents, it may be difficult for Jewish families and their heirs to determine the outcome of assets they deposited in Swiss accounts. It is imperative that the world learn the truth, heirs be compensated and we put an end to this final secret of the tragedy of the Holocaust.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and to protect the Meili family so the truth can be known.

#### A CLARIFICATION ON THE TIAHRT AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2158

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

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, the debate that we just concluded was about the Corporation for National Service. It was about the Tiahrt amendment. As the chairman for the oversight subcommittee, I just want to share with my colleagues some of the information that the oversight subcommittee has uncovered over the last 2 to 3 years in dealing with the Corporation for National Service. I visited a Corporation for National Service site yesterday. I met with some AmeriCorps volunteers. I have no doubt that they are doing good work, they are doing good work in this project.

But I think it is time to also take a look at this agency. I have no doubt that in the future, if AmeriCorps survives in 10 or 15 years, we would say that without the Corporation for National Service, we would not have volunteerism in America, just like we say we would not have arts in America without the National Endowment for the Arts.

But we have to recognize that we do have volunteerism in America. It is thriving. Volunteers in America are active in all of our communities, making heroic efforts to improve the quality of life in their local communities.

Now let us take a look at the Corporation for National Service. This was an organization that I voted for in 1993, believing that it could do well, that it could make an impact, and reading the document and reading what the President said about this program, believing what the authors of that bill suggested, that the Corporation for National Service would become the model for Federal Government agencies, that it would model its performance after the private sector.

When I assumed as chairman of the oversight subcommittee, we found some very troubling things. Remember, this is an organization that the AmeriCorps portion spends about \$400 million per year. What did we find? In

October of 1995 Arthur Andersen, a major accounting firm, reported that the corporation's financial reports were unauditable; listen, unauditable, meaning that they had 99 management control and accounting weaknesses, 33 of which they determined to be material, the worst classification for a weakness. What does that mean? It means that the Corporation for National Service could not tell us where the money was going that we were sending it, and what they were spending it for.

A follow-up report issued in December of last year noted that the corporation had not corrected 71 of the 99 identified management control and accounting problems, this despite congressional hearings and assurances from Mr. Wofford and the corporation that these problems were being fixed.

Now we find in a report that was issued yesterday, so we have moved from October of 1995 to July of 1997, and where are we? Arthur Andersen in their update states that the corporation has again to fix 33 of the 99 material weaknesses. They also have an additional 9 other accounting or managerial weaknesses.

The bottom line, what does it mean? It means that the Corporation for National Service, the agency that was going to be modeled after the private sector, spending \$400 million to \$600 million of taxpayer dollars, cannot produce auditable results for 1994. They cannot produce them for 1995. They cannot produce them for 1996. Now it appears they will not be able to produce them for 1997, and still with major accounting weaknesses, as I predicted earlier, they probably will not be able to produce auditable books for 1998. That is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, a second problem is as we have AmeriCorps volunteers, we are trying to match up the education awards with individual volunteers; a brand new program, a brand new agency, and what happens? A report released by Peat Marwick 4 months ago noted that the corporation has failed to keep adequate management controls and records relating to the trust fund, the National Service Trust Funds. What does this mean? It means that the Corporation for National Service does not have an accounting system in place that will enable it to match up young people who have worked in the corporation, who have worked in AmeriCorps, with their stipend. We are now putting student scholarships at risk.

There are other troubling activities within the corporation. Mr. Huang has worked at the corporation, or the activities of his fund-raising have reached into the Corporation for National Service.

There are other questions about five executives for the Corporation for National Service that were kept on despite the fact that their jobs had been eliminated.

There is concern about close to \$400,000 that the Corporation for National Service has spent in training and development funds. We are going to be having hearings next week to take a look at the \$13 million that the Corporation for National Service spends every year in training and technical assistance.

There are fundamental weaknesses at the corporation. This is not debating whether the kids and the young people are doing good work, but they are doing it for an agency that does not have good financial controls, and they are doing it at a very expensive cost. The average cost for an AmeriCorps volunteer is about \$27,000 per member.

□ 2245

#### A GOOD PRIORITY FOR THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCHREST). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. TIAHRT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the amendment that just passed the House before we closed business for this day because it does establish a very good priority for this Nation and for this Congress.

We, for once, for the first time, I think, since the gulf war at least, we have established that gulf war illness is going to be a priority when it comes to solving or finding a cure for this illness that has been plaguing so many of our gulf war veterans.

We did so by making a good compromise to what we had before in the bill. What this amendment did basically is it took half the funding from the National Service Corporation and it transferred it to the veterans research account so that we can focus on the gulf war illnesses.

Let me tell my colleagues a little bit about it. In Kansas, we have got several people, quite a few people that are currently suffering from this. I want to thank first of all Dan Thimesch from the 93d District of Kansas. Representative Thimesch brought this very important issue to my attention and provided me with a lot of information on what is going on in Kansas.

He told me about Sgt. David Janda, a 35-year-old father of three from Hutchinson, KS, suffering from blinding headaches and a blistering rash. He has had this problem for 6 years. It includes chronic diarrhea and joint pain.

He talked to me about Kenny Schwartz of Great Bend who endures a stabbing pain in his left eye and stiffness in his joints. He has memory loss and scarring rashes.

Now we find out in that in Kansas that some insurance companies have decided that this is a war-related illness and they are going to be denying coverage based on a clause in their health insurance contract that says any health-related problems as a result

of war will not be covered by health insurance, so it leaves these people without coverage. But now we have a way of finding out a cure for these illnesses because of the research money that we are putting in place.

We are, in exchange, we are cutting back on a program that is largely inefficient and ineffective, AmeriCorps. It is a troubled organization and it does need to improve. And I hope through the course of this debate that we have had tonight, that Members are aware that there need to be advances in the way AmeriCorps conducts business.

Right now they are suffering a 39-percent dropout rate across the United States. They have unauditable books. They only expend 11 percent of the money that they are allocated by the Federal Government. Since its conception, we have allocated \$1.6 billion to AmeriCorps. Out of that \$1.6 billion, only approximately \$300 million has been spent or set aside for their trust fund for education that they have promised to the people that have participated in the program, the paid volunteers.

That leaves about \$1 billion, over \$1 billion that has yet to be expended. So if AmeriCorps was actually cut off today and no funds were allocated by this Congress, the 105th Congress, AmeriCorps could continue for 5 to 10 years just on the money that they have been already budgeted but not yet spent because of their inefficiency.

So it is an organization that needs to look at itself. I think they need to evaluate the trends they are using, the direction they are headed. Perhaps they need to rewrite their vision statement and come up with a more effective way of addressing the idea, the concept that they had in mind when it first came into service. It is this inefficiency, and in comparison to the great need of this illness that gulf war veterans are suffering from, that brought on this decision that we have made tonight of balancing the two.

The President is strongly in support of AmeriCorps. It has kind of been his pet program. And the amendment that was put in place tonight does satisfy the need that he has to have paid volunteers in government service, and it also provides a solution to the need that we have for more research on gulf war illness.

I think it was a good compromise that was reached tonight. It was not the original intent that I had when I put the amendment forward, but in this business it seems like sometimes we have to come up with the best solution to the problem, the best solution available that we have to the problem, and I think that we have accomplished that tonight.

I hope that this bill will pass when we get done with the amendment process at the end of the week, and that we can have not only a solution for our gulf war illnesses but also have a more effective AmeriCorps.

#### S. 768—MEILI FAMILY RELIEF

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

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I want to explain my support for S. 768, and say why this private bill serves an important public purpose.

In January, Christopher Meili made a simple moral choice. When he found financial records documenting accounts opened by European Jews while the Nazis were in power, he could have ignored them. He was a security guard at the Union Bank of Switzerland, and he could have followed orders. He could have allowed the records to go to the shredder, to oblivion.

Instead, Meili made a choice. He gave the records to Jewish leaders, to help them document the problem of assets stolen from the heirs of Holocaust victims. It's true that theft is less egregious than murder, greed less evil than race hatred. But justice demands a reckoning, a settling of accounts. Christopher Meili's choice placed him on the side of those against forgetting, in favor of justice.

Christopher Meili's employer, the Union Bank of Switzerland, acknowledged that an employee had destroyed records in a regrettable incident. But the chairman accused Meili of having some other motive than morality or compliance with a Swiss law mandating preservation of these records.

Christopher has also received death threats. He has had to leave his homeland, with his family. I support Christopher Meili's moral choice, and I support this bill.

#### ECONOMIC SITUATION FACING THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for half of the time remaining until midnight as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about a situation facing our Nation that brought many of us out of the private sector a couple years back and brought us here to Washington, DC, in the first place.

Several years ago we made the decision to sell our business and take the funds and use the funds to run for Congress, because we were very concerned about the growing debt facing this great Nation of ours, a debt of almost \$5.3 trillion facing this country today. And quite frankly, we were very, very concerned about the broken promises that had been made to this Nation time and time and time again. We wanted to see things be different in our capital.

This evening I would like to begin by differentiating between debt and deficit so that we comprehend that we really have two separate problems here. The first one is the deficit. The second one is the underlying debt.

What has been going on now since 1969, for a full generation, since I was a sophomore in high school, is that our Federal Government has been collecting tax dollars from the American people and literally, one can think of it as