

The Postal Service is being totally unreasonable on these facts.

I understand that decisions about which stamp requests to approve and which stamp requests to reject are difficult decisions to make and that in the end there will always be a person or group who will not be happy with such decisions. I respect the fact that the postal service cannot please everyone. I have no qualms with these aspects of the stamp-approval process. I do, however, have serious concerns and reservations when decision-making processes yield results that do not logically follow based on established precedent.

Mr. Speaker, it is inequitable and unreasonable to deny American Samoa what the Postal Service has routinely granted other U.S. territories and states.

I will not stand by idly, Mr. Speaker, when my constituents, the people of American Samoa—people who are deeply patriotic and appreciative of the relationship American Samoa shares with our Republic—are unequitably treated by a semi-independent agency of our Federal Government. Neither will my colleagues in the House and Senate. Numerous Members of Congress have written to the Postal Service urging the Postal Service to treat American Samoa's request in the same manner it has treated similar requests by the other territories. Despite these efforts to persuade, using precedent and reason, the Postal Service to this day refuses to issue a commemorative stamp honoring the 100th anniversary of the union between the U.S. and American Samoa.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to do what is right, what is just, what is fair, and what is reasonable on these facts. Nothing more. I ask that you join the people of American Samoa in urging the Postal Service to reconsider its position and to grant American Samoa's request for a postal stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of its political union with the United States.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET REVISIONS TO AGGREGATE SPENDING LEVELS

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

Mr. KASICH. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Sec. 314 of the Congressional Budget Act, I hereby submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD revisions to the aggregate spending levels set by the interim allocations and aggregates printed in the RECORD on February 3, 1999, pursuant to H. Res. 5 for fiscal year 1999 and a revised allocation for the House Committee on Appropriations to reflect \$1,030,000,000 in additional new budget authority and \$430,000,000 in additional outlays for defense and non-defense emergency spending. This will increase the allocation to the Appropriations Committee to \$573,828,000,000 in budget authority and \$576,909,000,000 in outlays for fiscal year 1999.

The House Committee on Appropriations submitted the report on H.R. 1141, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Revisions for Fiscal Year 1999 which includes \$1,030,000,000 in budget authority and \$430,000,000 in outlays for defense and non-defense emergency spending.

These adjustments shall apply while the legislation is under consideration and shall take effect upon final enactment of the legislation.

Questions may be directed to Art Sauer or Jim Bates at x6-7270.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY IN WASHINGTON, D.C., AND SECURITY FOR ALL AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk to my colleagues tonight about our work to secure America's freedom.

First, I am pleased to be part of the Committee on Budget that has finally delivered what the American people want, fiscal responsibility in Washington and security for all Americans. It is a budget that achieves one of the most important goals, one of my most important goals: Assuring that no one will be left behind as we enter the 21st century.

Our priorities are very simple, yet they are very important: Preserving Social Security, paying down the debt, establishing farm security, increasing funding for education and defense, and providing tax relief for American families. These are issues that are important to the folks back home in Kentucky, as well as to the folks across America.

Last night we passed a budget out of committee that locks away 100 percent of the Social Security surplus, including every penny of the Social Security tax as well as the interest, to preserve and protect Social Security and Medicare. For the first time in over a generation, Social Security will be used for one thing and one thing only, our Nation's retirees.

The President's plan would have only saved 62 percent while spending the rest on more Government programs. The difference, he would have locked up \$1.3 trillion, but we are locking up \$1.8 trillion and still providing \$800 billion in tax cuts for all Americans.

My health care amendment was also included in this budget. It addresses two key issues critical to central Kentucky and to America: The availability of home health care for Medicare recipients and addressing the need to provide accessible and affordable health care. I would encourage the President and my colleagues to work together for this important reform.

The President has already blocked Medicare reform and proposed \$9 billion in Medicare cuts. Let us put people ahead of politics and provide the highest quality of health care for all Americans.

We also focused on the needs of farm families in Kentucky. This budget includes \$6 billion to address the critical issue of crop insurance. We are upholding our commitment by securing these important funds, while the President did not secure a dime of increases for our family farms and our tobacco farmers in Kentucky.

Most importantly, we have achieved all of these important priorities and goals while living within the balanced budget agreement and paying down the national debt.

Ultimately, this budget is about making sure the American dream is not gambled away here in Washington. I hope we can pass this historic budget next week in this House with bipartisan support. I will look forward to supporting the budget when it is considered in the full House. It is a budget that is about truth, priorities, fiscal restraint, and hope.

Additionally, we moved to secure America's freedom. Economic, social, and educational security are all very important. However, what is a balanced budget, a strong economy, tax relief, or anything else for that matter without an adequate national defense?

Unfortunately, missile attacks could threaten every security that we work so hard to protect and the freedom that we all have taken for granted. We need to be concerned about this and focused on the growing number of rogue nations who are working to acquire capabilities to strike at our cherished freedoms.

We all know that, for the most part, times are good. That is why it is important and this is a perfect time to address this concern. I am pleased we have taken this important step today. It is a step toward establishing a national missile defense system for this great Nation. Most importantly, it is a step toward providing each and every American with a sense of security, a strong national defense, the best educational system possible, economic, health and retirement security. These are the securities that matter each and every day to this great country.

Let us stay on course and deliver on each of these important issues. Our parents, children, and grandchildren deserve nothing less.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL SPENDING BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last week the Committee on Appropriations passed the Emergency Supplemental Spending Bill that will provide desperately needed aid to defend America's farmers against depression-level prices, as well as to provide desperately needed assistance to the disaster struck nations in Central America.

This Congress now needs to move quickly to meet our obligations to our family farmers and to the devastated nations south of our border. I am also pleased to see this spirit of compassion alive in my hometown of Toledo, Ohio.

This past Monday, a delegation of 45 Toledo volunteers, including our Mayor Carlton Finkbeiner, traveled to Honduras to help the victims of Hurricane Mitch. Volunteers versed in housing

construction are working with care to build 600 homes in Marcovia. At the same time, volunteers with health care training are joining with the International Medical Corps and Catholic Relief Services to provide victims with basic health care in Catacamas, Choluteca, and Marcovia.

These goodwill ambassadors from Ohio's Ninth District deserve recognition in this well of the House today. I commend them for their wonderful efforts to bring aid to a devastated region and assistance to our fellow citizens in this hemisphere. I echo their call for action by this Congress on the Emergency Supplemental Bill to help the devastated people of Honduras and Central America but also our farmers here at home.

Let this Congress be as humanitarian as the people of Toledo, Ohio.

AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, in the next 5 minutes, I want to ask my House colleagues and the people watching at home to help me write a new chapter in the American story. Over the next years, we will be the authors of this new chapter. Tomorrow our children will live this story.

As a father of four, nothing could make me feel more secure than knowing that this story includes my children pursuing their dreams and living a life free from dependency on government. Surely, all of us want our children and grandchildren to live in a place where freedom's lamp shines brightly for all people.

This is how the American story is read for nearly three centuries. This story began with a band of freedom-loving people who escaped oppression to form a new land of liberty. It is a story of exploration and new beginnings, a story of faith, enterprise, tragedy, and success. Its pages are filled with the names of heroic men and women like Patrick Henry, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and others. It is also filled with lesser known names but no less special: The mothers, fathers, grandparents, teachers, coaches, doctors.

We, in every line, in every chapter, the American story is filled with a Nation defined by its people, governed by its citizens, and preserved by those who love freedom. But too many are still uneasy about our future.

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We lie awake at night worrying about tomorrow. Will our paychecks be enough to cover the bills? Will Social Security be around when we retire? Will we be able to provide the health care our elderly parents need and deserve? Will our children get the education they need to succeed in the next century?

We have the ability to give every American more security. But we will have no security, no hope, no opportunity if we trade away our liberty to achieve that security. I believe the gravest threat to our country is from those who promise security in return for our freedom. They promise security in exchange for more of our money and more control of our lives. Some of those in government even act as if they were elected to manage our lives. I believe we were elected to provide a framework of freedom so Americans can manage their own lives. We were also elected to provide a safety net for those in need when families, communities and States are unable to help. But the need for this safety net does not require the confiscation of our freedoms. We must remember that in America, we are most secure when we are most free, when we are in control of our lives.

Many believe that the debates in Congress are about which party is for Social Security, Medicare, education and the environment. The fact is we are all for these things. Every Member of the House wants to provide a strong and bright future for our country. The real debate in this Congress day in and day out is about who is going to control your life, you or the government.

Many of us here who call ourselves the GOP believe in a government of the people. This means, as it has for three centuries, that the government is controlled by you and your family, not the other way around. We believe in the GOP that we can secure the future for every child when we have an education system that is controlled by parents, teachers and local communities. And we will secure the future for every senior when we guarantee their Social Security benefits today and move towards giving their grandkids a choice to own and control their own Social Security accounts. We believe that we will secure the future for every older American when they have even greater access to quality health care and can choose their own doctors and make their own health care decisions. We will secure the future for our Nation when we rebuild our national defense and can control our borders and live free of the fear of missile attacks. And we will secure the future for every working American when we let them keep more of what they earn, a lot more.

Now is the time for us to write our chapter about America, an America that is free and secure and controlled by its people. Let no one edit the American story in a way that makes us dependent on the government or politicians. Let us write about a people that can overcome every challenge, education, jobs, health care, retirement, whatever we face. May our families live freer today than they did yesterday, and may we sustain a Nation that is dependent only upon God and the blessings of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, that is my prayer for this Congress and that is my prayer for this Nation.

THE FARMERS' PLIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, at the Farm Resource Center, a national crisis line for farmers, those seeking help cannot get through. The line is busy.

Small farmers and ranchers are struggling to survive in America. In fact, small farmers and ranchers are a dying breed. And because they are a dying breed, quality and affordable food and fiber for all of us is at risk.

Passage of the 1996 farm bill sounded the death knell for many of our Nation's farmers and ranchers. Farmers and ranchers, able to eke out a living from the land in past years, now find it almost impossible to break even. Most are losing money and fighting to stay in the farming business.

And the crisis line is busy.

We are all aware of the problems tobacco is having, particularly in my State, North Carolina. But, in North Carolina, according to a recent news report, the State top farm commodity, hogs, have experienced a 50 percent drop in prices since 1996. Wheat is down 42 percent. Soybeans are down 36 percent. Corn, 31 percent; peanuts, 28 percent. Turkey and cotton prices are down 23 percent since 1996. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there is no commodity in North Carolina that makes money for farmers.

And the crisis line is busy.

In 1862, the year that the Department of Agriculture was created, 90 percent of the population farmed for a living. Today, American producers represent less than 3 percent of the population. By 1992, there were only 1.1 million farms left in the United States, a 45 percent decline from 1959. North Carolina only had 39,000 farms left in 1992, a 23 percent decline. In 1920, there were over 6 million farms in the United States, and close to a sixth, 926,000, were operated by African Americans. In 1992, the landscape was very, very different. Only 1 percent of the farms in the United States were operated by African Americans, 1 percent, 18,816, a paltry sum when African Americans comprise more than 13 percent of the population.

In my home State of North Carolina, there has been a 64 percent decline in minority farmers just over the last 15 years, from 6,996 farms in 1978 to 2,498 farms in 1992. All farmers are suffering under this severe economic downturn.

Very recently while in my district I spoke with a farmer who was working off the farm, not to earn extra money but to earn enough money to save his family farm. He makes no money from his farm for himself. He loses money from his farm. Taking a job off the