

terrible waste of taxpayer dollars by the Federal bureaucracy.

Yesterday, the Associated Press reported that the Veterans Benefits Administration spent more than \$200 million to upgrade its computers, but now it is slower than ever in processing claims.

This terrible inefficiency comes at a time when our veterans are dying at a rate of more than 500,000 a year, no major war for many years, and fewer soldiers and veterans now than in the past. It now takes 205 days to complete a veteran's claim compared to 164 in 1991, and 164 days was slow.

The problem is that Federal employees are paid the same whether they work hard or whether they work easy. There is already a big bonus system in place for outstanding performance.

What we need now is to cut the pay of Federal employees who are not working hard and efficiently and producing good results. This is what happens in the private sector. Real estate agents are not paid unless they sell the house. The Federal Government will always be a sea of ineptitude and inefficiency, as former Energy Secretary Watkins just described it, unless we make it operate more like the private sector.

□

NRA'S GRIP ON CONGRESS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN DYING

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority and the National Rifle Association keep blaming everyone but themselves for this country's epidemic of gun violence, but the American people know that the tactics of the NRA have misfired again.

Guns kill; it is that simple. Until the Republican leadership takes aim at the real culprit, the proliferation of guns in the United States, 13 children a day will continue to die as a result of gun violence.

According to the Justice Department, Federal gun prosecutions are up 16 percent and State and local gun prosecutions have risen 22 percent. But still, our children are dying.

Our children need effective background checks, they need child safety locks, and they need the NRA to loosen its grip on the Republican leadership, and they need this now.

I urge my Republican colleagues to stop playing politics with children's lives and start working on meaningful gun legislation. Our children's lives depend on it.

□

REPUBLICAN BUDGET RESOLUTION IS FOOLISH AND SPENDTHRIFT

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am not going to talk about guns, but I am going to talk about something we may vote on this week.

My Republican colleagues may bring to the floor a budget resolution that their own colleagues say is foolish and spendthrift. The Republican budget resolution, at least as we see it now, but I understand that it may be changing, does nothing to aid Social Security and Medicare and does not extend the programs' solvency for one single day. It spends the projected tax surplus on tax cuts, and it does not set aside a dime to pay off the \$5.5 trillion in debt.

The Republican leadership, I am concerned, are making promises that they cannot keep. As a Democrat, it is not only us that is rejecting that budget. My colleague, the Senator from Texas said this last week, "If this budget is adopted, we will have found a surefire way to stop Democrats from spending the surplus; the Republicans will spend it first."

□

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION NO. 7—MITCHELL AND KELLY GOLDSTEIN

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the story of Mitchell Goldstein and his daughter, Kelly. Her story is the seventh account in my series of 1 minutes on the more than 10,000 children who have been abducted to foreign countries.

In 1996, Mr. Goldstein's Swiss ex-wife abducted their then 4-year-old daughter, Kelly Goldstein, of whom Mitchell had custody and took her to Switzerland. Since that time, he has been in the Swiss courts seeking the return of Kelly, via the Hague Convention. After numerous failed appeals filed by his ex-wife, the Supreme Court of Switzerland ordered her return to the United States in a final decision rendered in August of 1997.

Mr. Goldstein has been to Switzerland three times to bring his daughter home. On these three occasions, he has been denied the chance to be reunited with his daughter because his ex-wife has fled with Kelly, placed her in foster care, or the court order has not been enforced by local authorities.

Mr. Speaker, Mitchell Goldstein is asking for someone to take action and help him bring his daughter home. I urge Congress, my colleagues, to step up to the plate and be that someone.

□

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the pending business is the question of the Speaker's approval of the Journal of the last day's proceedings.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 352, nays 49, answered "present" 1, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 58]

YEAS—352

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Abercrombie | DeMint | Johnson (CT) |
| Allen | Deutsch | Johnson, E. B. |
| Andrews | Diaz-Balart | Johnson, Sam |
| Archer | Dickey | Jones (NC) |
| Armey | Dicks | Kanjorski |
| Baca | Dingell | Kaptur |
| Bachus | Dixon | Kasich |
| Baker | Doggett | Kelly |
| Baldacci | Dooley | Kennedy |
| Baldwin | Doolittle | Kildee |
| Ballenger | Doyle | Kilpatrick |
| Barcia | Dreier | Kind (WI) |
| Barr | Duncan | King (NY) |
| Barrett (NE) | Dunn | Kingston |
| Barrett (WI) | Edwards | Klecza |
| Bartlett | Ehlers | Knollenberg |
| Barton | Ehrlich | Kolbe |
| Bass | Emerson | Kucinich |
| Bateman | Engel | Kuykendall |
| Becerra | English | LaFalce |
| Bentsen | Eshoo | Lampson |
| Bereuter | Etheridge | Lantos |
| Berkley | Evans | Larson |
| Berman | Everett | Latham |
| Berry | Farr | LaTourette |
| Biggert | Fattah | Lazio |
| Billirakis | Fletcher | Leach |
| Bishop | Foley | Lee |
| Blagojevich | Forbes | Levin |
| Bliley | Ford | Lewis (CA) |
| Blumenauer | Fowler | Lewis (KY) |
| Blunt | Franks (NJ) | Linder |
| Boehlert | Frelinghuysen | Lipinski |
| Boehner | Frost | Lofgren |
| Bonilla | Gallegly | Lucas (KY) |
| Bono | Ganske | Luther |
| Boswell | Gejdenson | Maloney (CT) |
| Boucher | Gekas | Maloney (NY) |
| Brady (TX) | Gephardt | Manzullo |
| Brown (FL) | Gilchrest | Markey |
| Bryant | Gillmor | Mascara |
| Burr | Gilman | Matsui |
| Buyer | Gonzalez | McCarthy (MO) |
| Callahan | Goode | McCarthy (NY) |
| Calvert | Goodlatte | McCrery |
| Camp | Gordon | McHugh |
| Campbell | Goss | McInnis |
| Canady | Graham | McIntosh |
| Cannon | Granger | McIntyre |
| Capps | Green (TX) | McKeon |
| Capuano | Hall (OH) | McKinney |
| Cardin | Hall (TX) | McNulty |
| Carson | Hansen | Meehan |
| Castle | Hastings (WA) | Meek (FL) |
| Chabot | Hayes | Meeks (NY) |
| Chambliss | Hayworth | Menendez |
| Clayton | Herger | Metcalf |
| Clement | Hill (IN) | Mica |
| Coble | Hilleary | Millender- |
| Coburn | Hinojosa | McDonald |
| Collins | Hobson | Miller (FL) |
| Combest | Hoefel | Miller, Gary |
| Condit | Hoekstra | Minge |
| Conyers | Holden | Mink |
| Cook | Holt | Moakley |
| Cooksey | Hooley | Mollohan |
| Cox | Horn | Moran (KS) |
| Cramer | Hostettler | Moran (VA) |
| Cubin | Houghton | Morella |
| Cummings | Hoyer | Murtha |
| Cunningham | Hunter | Myrick |
| Danner | Hyde | Nadler |
| Davis (FL) | Inslee | Napolitano |
| Davis (VA) | Isakson | Neal |
| Deal | Istook | Nethercutt |
| DeGette | Jackson (IL) | Ney |
| Delahunt | Jefferson | Northup |
| DeLauro | Jenkins | Norwood |
| DeLay | John | Nussle |

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Obey | Roybal-Allard | Talent |
| Olver | Ryan (WI) | Tanner |
| Ortiz | Ryun (KS) | Tauscher |
| Ose | Salmon | Tauzin |
| Owens | Sanchez | Taylor (NC) |
| Oxley | Sanders | Terry |
| Packard | Sandlin | Thomas |
| Pascrell | Sanford | Thornberry |
| Pastor | Sawyer | Thune |
| Paul | Saxton | Thurman |
| Payne | Scott | Tiahrt |
| Pease | Sensenbrenner | Toomey |
| Pelosi | Serrano | Towns |
| Peterson (PA) | Sessions | Traficant |
| Petri | Shadegg | Turner |
| Phelps | Shaw | Upton |
| Pickering | Shays | Vento |
| Pitts | Sherman | Vitter |
| Pombo | Sherwood | Walden |
| Pomeroy | Shimkus | Walsh |
| Portman | Shows | Wamp |
| Price (NC) | Shuster | Watkins |
| Pryce (OH) | Simpson | Watt (NC) |
| Quinn | Sisisky | Watts (OK) |
| Radanovich | Skeen | Waxman |
| Rahall | Skelton | Weiner |
| Rangel | Smith (MI) | Weldon (FL) |
| Regula | Smith (NJ) | Weldon (PA) |
| Reyes | Smith (TX) | Wexler |
| Reynolds | Smith (WA) | Weygand |
| Riley | Snyder | Whitfield |
| Rivers | Souder | Wicker |
| Rodriguez | Spence | Wilson |
| Roemer | Spratt | Wise |
| Rogers | Stabenow | Wolf |
| Rohrabacher | Stearns | Woolsey |
| Ros-Lehtinen | Stenholm | Wynn |
| Rothman | Stump | Young (FL) |
| Roukema | Sununu | |

NAYS—49

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Aderholt | Hastings (FL) | Schaffer |
| Baird | Hefley | Stark |
| Bilbray | Hill (MT) | Strickland |
| Bonior | Hilliard | Stupak |
| Borski | Hinchee | Sweeney |
| Brady (PA) | Hulshof | Taylor (MS) |
| Brown (OH) | Lewis (GA) | Thompson (CA) |
| Chenoweth-Hage | LoBiondo | Thompson (MS) |
| Clay | McGovern | Udall (CO) |
| Clyburn | Miller, George | Udall (NM) |
| Costello | Moore | Velazquez |
| Coyne | Oberstar | Visclosky |
| Crowley | Peterson (MN) | Waters |
| DeFazio | Pickett | Weller |
| Filner | Ramstad | Wu |
| Gibbons | Rogan | |
| Gutknecht | Sabo | |

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Tancredo

NOT VOTING—32

| | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ackerman | Gutierrez | McCollum |
| Boyd | Hutchinson | McDermott |
| Burton | Jackson-Lee | Pallone |
| Crane | (TX) | Porter |
| Davis (IL) | Jones (OH) | Royce |
| Ewing | Klink | Rush |
| Fossella | LaHood | Scarborough |
| Frank (MA) | Largent | Schakowsky |
| Goodling | Lowe | Slaughter |
| Green (WI) | Lucas (OK) | Tierney |
| Greenwood | Martinez | Young (AK) |

□ 1112

Mr. BILBRAY changed his vote from yea to nay.

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

□

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY
AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2000

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 444, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 444

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in

the House the bill (S. 1287) to provide for the storage of spent nuclear fuel pending completion of the nuclear waste repository, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Commerce; and (2) one motion to commit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL); pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 444 would grant a closed rule for consideration in the House of the Senate bill, S. 1287, providing for the storage of spent nuclear fuel pending completion of the nuclear waste repository and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment.

The rule provides that the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Commerce and one motion to recommit.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 was originally enacted on the premise that the Federal Government hold responsibility for the permanent disposal of the Nation's spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste.

□ 1115

The need for subsequent legislation is based on three fundamental realities: First, the development of a permanent repository, originally scheduled to begin in 1998, but has been, unfortunately, derailed by past mismanagement and by political paralysis. Second, the nuclear waste fund financing mechanism needs some revision. And, third, the Department of Energy has requested authority to construct a Federal interim storage facility so that it can discharge its original responsibility.

S. 1287, which the House will consider today, contains a number of specific provisions which the managers of the bill will outline in considerable detail during their general debate, but the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that by passing this bill, which has already been passed in identical form by the Senate, the House can now move forward on an issue which has been mired in gridlock for far too long.

By passing this bill today, we will move S. 1287 to the President's desk

and with one stroke of the pen we can finally stop stalling and instead begin facing up to our responsibility to the American people. Nuclear energy has long been a safe, clean and reliable means of generating electrical power that has fueled much of America's economic growth, but the nagging question about nuclear power, one that has remained unanswered for too long, is what will we do with the spent fuel that is produced at these plants all across the country?

Today, the long awaited answer to that question is before us. Simply put: This compromise, while it may not be perfect, is a responsible plan that should be implemented without further delay. Accordingly, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support not only the rule, as reported by the Committee on Rules, but the underlying bill, S. 1287, so we can finally put the public's mind to rest on this critically important issue.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I want to thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding me the customary time.

This is a closed rule which will allow for consideration of the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1999. It is known as S. 1287. As my colleague from Washington has explained, this rule will provide for 1 hour of debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Commerce. Under this closed rule, no amendments may be offered.

The bill provides for the completion of a permanent site at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, for storing high-level radioactive waste generated from nuclear power plants. Mr. Speaker, lack of this permanent site is one of the greatest long-term problems involving electricity generation in our country and we need to move forward to find a safe, scientifically-based solution.

Unfortunately, this bill does not adequately solve the problem. Moreover, the closed rule will prevent House Members from offering amendments to improve the bill. The Energy Department opposes this bill for a number of reasons. The most serious objection is that it undermines the ability of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish adequate safety standards at Yucca Mountain.

The bill also raises concerns about the safety of transporting radioactive material to the site. The President has indicated he will veto the bill in its present form, and there is no reason for us to take up the bill under a closed rule with no chance to amend the bill when there is no chance that it will be enacted into law unless it is amended.

The problem of nuclear waste disposal is too serious for this kind of politics. I urge defeat of the rule so that we can bring this bill up under the normal amending process.