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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 28, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JUDY BIGGERT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1658. An act to provide a more just and uniform procedure for Federal civil forfeitures, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1730. An act to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide that certain environmental reports shall continue to be required to be submitted.

S. 1731. An act to amend the Clean Air Act to provide that certain environmental reports shall continue to be required to be submitted.

S. 1744. An act to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide that certain species conservation reports shall continue to be required to be submitted.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by

the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

FAILING U.S. SUGAR PROGRAM

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, today, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the problems with the failing U.S. sugar program. The sugar daddy of corporate welfare is one of the most egregious programs that we have in the Federal Government, and it is now in the process of imploding.

It is a really bad, big government program that is hard to understand in our great government we have here that we continue to have a program that just does not fit in our free enterprise capitalistic economy that we have. It is a program that is bad for the consumer. It is bad for jobs in this country. It is bad for the environment. It is bad trade policy. It just makes zero economic sense.

The way the program works is, the Federal Government kind of acts like OPEC, they want to manage supply to keep the prices high. Now, we are required to allow some sugar to be imported into the United States. The Government has a loan program that they say we will guarantee the price will not drop below this amount or else we will buy the sugar. Well, all of a sudden for the first time in decades, they are on the verge of getting ready to buy a lot of sugar.

As reported in the newspaper this morning, the AP wire service story says "got a sweet tooth? Uncle Sam wants you." The Government is think-

ing about buying 250,000 tons of surplus sugar to pump up the domestic price, but then what will officials do with all the sugar? Enough to fill two-thirds of the Empire State Building. One idea is to donate it overseas; although, no country has indicated they are willing to even take it.

This is just the beginning, as the article goes on to say. We are talking about \$550 million worth of sugar that our agriculture department is going to have to buy this year, and it has no place to even give it away. Wow, do we have an embarrassing situation here in Washington.

The production of sugar has gone up by 25 percent in the past 3 years, because we have this high price. The price of sugar in the United States is three times what it is around the world. You can go across the border into Canada, and it is a third of the price of the United States; or go to Mexico, it is a third of the price of the United States.

What is happening to jobs in the United States? We take companies that use a lot of sugar. Hey, I cannot compete with the Canadian companies that use a lot of sugar. For example, Bobs Candies from Georgia makes candy canes. The candy canes use a lot of sugar, and it is a lot cheaper to produce them in Canada or Mexico or some other place that buys sugar for a third of the price. So we are losing jobs in the country because sugar is used in so many of our different products, whether it is cereal or baked goods.

It is a very costly thing. In fact, the General Accounting Office says it costs over a billion dollars a year extra per year on the consumer, because of the high price we pay for sugar. This is really a regressive program, because the poor pay a lot higher percentage of the total income for the sugar program.

It is bad for the environment. I am from Florida. We are considered to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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have a real national treasure, the Everglades; and one of the real contributing problems to the Everglades environmentally is the runoff from the sugar plantations in Florida.

Now, we have this high price of sugar. They are growing more sugar in Florida and causing more runoff, and now we are having to buy this sugar from the sugar programs. We are going to spend \$8 billion restoring the Everglades. We are encouraging even more production in the sugar. This is one program that is hard to comprehend how you justify it in our country.

Let us talk about trade issues. When we negotiate trade agreements, what we really want to do is encourage our products to be exported around the world, whether it is orange juice from Florida or airplanes from Boeing or computers or computer software. We want to open up markets so we can sell our products. The problem our negotiators have is that we will go around and say, country, you need to open up your markets for us, as we are talking about China, but do not sell us any sugar, we want to protect our sugar plantations, our sugar barrens in Florida and elsewhere around the country, because we have to protect them; but we want you to let us sell anything we want to your country.

Explain to a trade negotiator how you explain that one away. As Mr. MCCAIN has talked about in campaign finance, this is a poster child for campaign finance. Mr. MCCAIN actually led the effort over in the Senate side to get rid of this program. Mr. Gore came out with his plan.

Sugar is one of the biggest contributors, not only in Washington, it is in Tallahassee. They are claiming poverty, but they are the biggest donors of PAC contributions in the campaign. It is on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats.

Now, I used to study economics in graduate school. And I know some economics. There is zero way to explain the economics of this. You have let the marketplace happen. We are not a socialistic country. Socialism does not work where the government manages prices, tries to manage production. It does not work, so we have to get rid of a program like this.

I am encouraging my colleagues as this program starts costing us hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars in the government, we cannot afford to continue to allow this. I urge my colleagues to join with me and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) in a bipartisan effort to get rid of the sugar program.

MISTREATMENT OF GAY, LESBIAN, AND BISEXUAL PATRIOTIC AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

JOIN BIPARTISAN EFFORT TO ELIMINATE SUGAR PROGRAM

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I want to begin by expressing my agreement with the comments of the gentleman from Florida. One of the things he called attention to is a very curious publishing phenomenon. I have listened to many of my colleagues who are great supporters of free enterprise and who attribute the virtues of the market of free enterprise to all manner of people, mostly poor and working-class people who look for help. But apparently there is in every free market text ever written, Milton Friedman, Ludwig von Mises, et cetera, a secret footnote that can only be read by people who represent certain agricultural interests, which says to them, this free market stuff is great for poor people and for people who try to work in factories, but it does not apply to agriculture, because by some strange literary feat, the strongest supporters of an unrestrained free market system consistently make an exception for some protected and politically favored parts of agriculture.

I will be voting for the amendment that the gentleman mentioned.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk today about the recent report that was issued by the Inspector General documenting a fact that many of us already knew, and that is that the mistreatment of gay, lesbian, and bisexual patriotic Americans who have tried to serve their country has been one of the most discouraging aspects of this administration's record.

Ordinarily, being able to say "I told you so" makes one feel pretty good. People pretend they do not like to say "I told you so," but most people do. But in this case I say it sadly. I and others have been telling the President and the Secretary of Defense and others that for years now that they were allowing patriotic, honorable young men and women who happen to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual and who were motivated by a desire to serve their country to be mistreated.

I do not fault President Clinton for the adoption of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy; I think he tried very hard to get a better policy. But he is culpable for the fact that once the policy was implemented, he did not effectively compel the military to live up even to the slight improvement it represented. Neither he nor Secretaries of Defense under him, particularly Secretary Perry and Secretary Cohen, have taken it seriously. I must say that I am particularly disappointed in Secretary Cohen from whom I expected more.

For years, we have been telling the Secretary the facts that he now has to acknowledge, because a young man was tragically murdered, a young man who made the mistake of wanting to serve his country in the military, who had a flawless record, and who was tragically murdered by anti-gay bigotry, fostered by the policy of the administration.

Only after that murder could we get the Secretary to say, okay, I will look into this, and he now has to acknowledge what we have been telling him along. But he must understand that part of his own actions have been part of a pattern all along.

When the Navy outrageously violated the privacy of a young man named Timothy McVeigh, a patriotic member of the Navy, and a Federal judge ruled that they had violated his rights, the Defense Department resisted that ruling, sought to appeal it, and had to be overruled by the President, one of the few times that the President did get involved. Even now, in the aftermath of the murder of Mr. Winchell, we have the people at that base where absolute harassment was proven to have happened going unpunished. We had an officer at 29 Palms issue a viciously bigoted e-mail about gay people, and he goes unpunished.

The fact is that the administration cannot pretend that it did not know this was happening, and it certainly has to give a more effective response, even now, with the Inspector General documenting what the Secretary should have known because people have told him this for years, his response is well, I am now appointing a commission and in July, at the end of July, I will consider implementing some corrective steps.

There are things he can do right away, from his own personal involvement to some very specific policies. He has made a few steps. They have paled in insignificance to the kind of bigotry that is still there. Secretary Cohen has been there for over 3 years. Does he want to leave office with only the last couple of months of his stewardship of the Defense Department being a time when he paid serious attention to this?

Let us be clear what we are talking about. Young Americans who happen to be gay, lesbian or bisexual who, in accordance with the policy that is now the law, want to serve their country, and they are treated brutally, unfairly; they are ridiculed, they are threatened, they are physically assaulted, and until now, they have not been able to get protection from the military they have sought to serve.

Secretary Cohen has already waited too long. We cannot undo the terrible mistakes that were made by the Secretary that the President allowed to be made, and the President has an excellent record in confronting prejudice based on sexual orientation. He will get history's good judgment for having helped lead the fight against that prejudice. There is this one flaw.

Madam Speaker, it is not too late in these remaining months of the administration to undo it, and I hope that they will.