

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 Ohio (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, my goal in Congress has been the promotion of livable communities, the Federal Government being a better partner with State and local governments than the private sector. In order to make our families safe, healthy, and economically secure transportation is clearly a central element of those deliberations and the bicycle is getting increasing attention as an indicator of livable communities.

At the turn of the century, bicycling was a critical mode of transportation. It was cheaper than a horse. It was faster than walking, and it was more convenient for most than street cars. The demand for new and safe bicycle routes led to a national "good roads" movement; a successful cyclist who led lobbying of Congress won a \$10,000 grant to study the possibility of a paved highway system.

It is with some irony that this quest for quality biking led us down the path that ultimately led to the interstate freeway system; and now 100 years, we have come full circle, because the quest for relief from traffic congestion of automobiles is now having people look more attentively at the possibilities of cycling.

Americans still view biking as a very favorable mode of transportation. A study by the New York Department of Transportation showed that in communities with bike lanes and bike parking over 50 percent of the people living within 5 to 10 miles from work would, in fact, commute by bicycle.

Yet Americans are driving nearly 2½ trillion miles a year; they are spending the equivalent of over 50 workdays per year trapped behind the wheel of their car just going to and from work. Every day the average American adult drives close to 40 miles and spends over an hour in their car.

When considering traffic and parking, 40 percent of our trips would be faster on a bike. I certainly found that to be the case, since in the 4 years that I have been on Capitol Hill being able to routinely beat my colleagues in trips to the White House and back on a bike rather than a car.

Increasingly, communities are working to reintegrate cycling back into their transportation systems. Chicago; Philadelphia; Eugene, Oregon; Davis, California; Rockville, Maryland; Washington, D.C. are all actively promoting a more bicycle-friendly transportation system. My own hometown of Portland, Oregon, has been declared twice

in the last 5 years as America's most bike-friendly community.

These pro-bike efforts in cities around the country, this progress is due, in no small part, to the national leadership provided by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

He was the champion of funding for bike paths in the 1991 ISTEA legislation and the T21 legislation last year for the surface transportation reauthorization. He continues to promote bike-friendly legislation as a ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, I am especially proud of his membership in our bipartisan Bike Caucus, perhaps the most avid cyclist in American public office. These pro-bike efforts across the country are not asking everyone to trade in their car for a bicycle, but instead to encourage small but meaningful changes in our everyday transportation decisions and to expand the choices available to Americans.

Biking, walking, or taking transit just a few short trips a week to school, to work, to the grocery store, other nearby errands can have a profound effect on the quality of life.

It is estimated that a 4-mile round trip that we do not take by car prevents nearly 15 pounds of air pollutant from contaminating the air; and in a time of skyrocketing gasoline prices and questions about availability of oil, it is important to note that biking to work just 2 days a week or telecommuting or transit by American workers just 2 days a week would completely eliminate our dependence on oil imports.

May is National Bike Safety Month, and in honor of this occasion and National Bike to Work Day, the Congressional Bicycle Caucus will be riding from Capitol Hill to Freedom Plaza this Friday, May 5. We are urging Members and staff to join us at 7:45 on the west side of Capitol Hill for this ride.

Madam Speaker, in addition, we urge people now to earn their pin and join the Bicycle Caucus.

CELEBRATING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESSES

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

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, it is estimated that 500 million people around the world participated in Earth Day on April 22 this year. We should consider how the environment has changed since the first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970.

Although a celebration, Earth Day 1970 generated a large amount of dire predictions for the future. I think we should take a moment to look back at those. One Harvard biologist declared "we are in an environmental crisis which threatens the survival of this Nation and of the world as a suitable place for human habitation."

Another common premonition of devestation centered on population growth. Environmental doomsayers in 1970 estimated that the world population would exceed 7 billion people by the year 2000, prompting one Stanford biologist to state, "At least 100 to 200 million people per year will be starving to death during the next 10 years."

This picture of widespread starvation has not materialized, nor has the population projections. Instead of more than 7 billion people on the earth today, we have roughly just 6 billion.

Just as in 2000, environmentalists in 1970 saw a growing environmental catastrophe in the form of climate change. Unlike today, 30 years ago the alarm was sounded over global cooling. They talked about another ice age was in the works.

One ecologist, Kenneth Watt, proclaimed that, "The world will be about 4 degrees colder . . . in 1990, but 11 degrees colder in the year 2000. This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age."

Now, frankly, there are no ice sheets spreading across this continent; the threat of global cooling dissolved into the sea of misinformation. However, how can we rage against climatic change if the world is not getting colder? It, therefore, must be becoming warmer.

Evidence indicates that the world's average temperature has increased by 1 degree over the past 100 years. However, data from global satellites indicate that the earth actually has cooled by less than one-tenth of one degree Celsius over the past 18 years. The warnings of serious global warming today have as little basis in fact as those for global cooling 30 years ago.

Now, doomsayers in 1970 also warned of poisonous air ravaging the populations in our major cities. In that year, Life Magazine said, "In a decade, urban dwellers will have to wear gas masks to survive air pollution." The same scientist that predicted that starvation would kill "at least 100 to 200 million people per year" also opined 3 decades ago that air pollution would take "hundreds of thousands of lives in the next few years."

How is our air quality now? The Environmental Protection Agency reports that between 1970 and 1997, emission of every major pollutant except nitrogen dioxide has decreased. From 1988 to 1997, the number of unhealthy air quality days decreased by an average of two-thirds for every major city in the United States of America.

The first Earth Day in 1970 was observed against a backdrop of dire environmental predictions. Unfortunately, Earth Day 2000 was accompanied with similar predictions of environmental calamities. Instead of providing a platform for the harbingers of ecological destruction, we should use Earth Day, I think, to acknowledge the progress we have made.

The environment is better today than it was 10 years ago and better

than it was 30 years ago. If we continue our present course, it will be even better 10 years from today. Thanks to the Heritage Foundation, I can share my reasons for this optimism.

Even though 16 billion cubic feet of timber are harvested each year in the United States, net tree growth exceeds tree cuttings by 37 percent. Today we have more forest area in America than we did in the 1920's and it is growing.

The loss of wetlands has been slowing over the past 45 years. From 1992 through 1996, 160,000 acres of wetlands were restored privately through voluntary arrangements each year. The United States is within 47,000 acres of achieving a "no net loss" of wetlands acreage.

Since 1945, the amount of land committed for parks wilderness and wildlife has expanded twice as fast as the growth in urban areas.

Unfortunately, our major media prefer to focus on the negative; they still rely on dire predictions based upon questionable scientific data and misinformation. The American people of today and of future generations deserve their rich natural heritage of clean air, pure water, and unspoiled land. Across the board over the last 3 decades, our water, land and air have gotten cleaner. They will be cleaner in years to come. That is a message we should be sharing on Earth Day 2001.

PERMANENT MOST FAVORED NATION STATUS FOR CHINA IS BAD IDEA

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, 3 weeks from this week, the Republican leadership will ask this House to pass legislation granting Permanent Most Favored Nation status trading privileges to China. This is a very bad idea. Let me count the ways.

First of all, China is a nation that practices slave labor and practices child labor. Why should we give trade advantages to a nation that engages in that kind of behavior with no oversight from us, with no check on Chinese behavior?

China is a nation that allows forced abortions, a government that sometimes encourages forced abortions, again, a violation of any kind of behavior that we and most of the nations around the world find unacceptable.

The Chinese government, the Chinese Communist Party, is also a nation and a government that persecutes Christians and Muslims and Buddhists and also local religious sects such as the Falun Gong in a China that, again, has no respect for human rights.

The government of China also has repeatedly sold nuclear technology to countries that have no business having that kind of nuclear technology that can very easily turn into weapons of mass destruction.

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At the same time, in the last few weeks, we have seen the People's Republic of China threaten the Republic of Taiwan. Three or 4 years ago, during the last Taiwanese elections, the Chinese government, the People's Republic of China, the Communist Chinese Government sent missiles shooting into the Straits of Taiwan to threaten that Nation that was holding the first free elections ever in Chinese history.

Giving China Most Favored Nation status, giving China permanent trading privileges with the West simply makes no sense. China is a market that has been closed to us. We, 10 years ago, 11 years ago, when President Reagan and President Bush, now President Clinton, began this policy of engagement with China where we would trade freely back and forth with China, in those days, 11 years ago, we had \$100 million, with an "M," \$100 million trade deficit with the People's Republic of China.

Today, after 11 years of this policy, we have a \$70 billion, with a "B," \$70 billion trade deficit with the People's Republic of China. Why? Because of slave labor, because of child labor, because they have simply closed their markets to us.

Last year, we bought \$85 billion worth of goods from the People's Republic of China. They only let us sell \$15 billion of goods into their market. We sell more to Belgium than we do to China. We sell more to Singapore than we do to China. We sell more to Taiwan than we do to China, countries that have, at most, 1-50th the population of the People's Republic of China.

No issue in my 8 years in Congress has been debated as heavily or lobbied most importantly, lobbied as heavily by as many wealthy special interest groups as the annual MFN review for China and now permanent trade relations with China.

There are more corporate jets at National Airport when the China vote comes up. There are more CEOs individually, the CEOs of the largest corporations in America, walking the halls of Congress, stopping in every Member's office, lobbying them about supporting permanent trade privileges for the People's Republic of China.

Wei Jing-Sheng, a Chinese dissident who spent time in Chinese prison camps, said that the vanguard of the Chinese communist party in the United States is American CEOs. Think about that. CEOs of the largest companies in this country are doing the dirty work, doing the heavy lifting, doing the lobbying for, doing the support of the Communist leaders in the People's Republic of China.

This body would never even consider, would not even come close to supporting permanent trade relations with China, would not even come close to supporting any kind of tariff reductions, Most Favored Nation status, trading privileges for China, if these CEOs of America's largest corporations were not walking the halls and lob-

bying for the Communist leaders in the People's Republic of China.

These same CEOs say, well, the reason we need to knock down all barriers to China and ignore human rights violations, ignore the forced abortions, ignore the persecution of Christians and Muslims, the reason that we in the United States should ignore the nuclear sales to rogue nations, the reason we in the United States should ignore slave labor and child labor in China is because it will help the United States of America, and they say it will mean 1.2 billion consumers for American products. The fact is their excitement is not over 1.2 million consumers, it is over 1.2 million workers. We should defeat China MFN.

SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, this chart is on Social Security. I have been very interested and concerned about Social Security for the last 5 years. I have introduced three Social Security bills that have been scored by the actuaries of the Social Security Administration that would keep Social Security solvent, would keep it going to the next 75 years. So three bills over the last 5 years.

I also chaired the bipartisan task force on Social Security where we were very successful. We have bipartisan agreement on 18 findings that moves us ahead.

Last night, I was listening to television, and I heard AL GORE talk about his proposal to fix Social Security and criticize Governor George W. Bush's suggestion that we allow some of that money to be kept and invested by individuals. I was so concerned that I took an earlier flight so I could speak this noon on Social Security.

I criticize Mr. GORE for suggesting that we do not have to do anything to fix Social Security. Chris Lehane, Mr. GORE's spokesman, says that one of the reasons Social Security has been so successful is that it depends on one generation to take care of another generation. When in fact there is no need to do anything right now, Mr. GORE suggests that we use the extra money coming in from Social Security. Look at this chart a minute. We have got a short-term, where there is more money coming in from Social Security taxes than is needed to pay out benefits. Mr. GORE suggests that we take some of this money, we borrow from this fund, and we use that money to pay down the debt, the so-called Wall Street debt.

It is also so disconcerting that ABC, NBC, CBS pick up those press releases out of the White House that says we are going to pay down \$180 billion of debt this year, and that is good, we are