

are with him, as is the mother of the children, Rebecca, and a whole host of the Shuster family and supporters. He is ready to tackle the job. He has talked about nothing except his future service in the House of Representatives. He is eager to take his place among us. We are ready to hear him and to help him and to help him become a great Member of the House of Representatives. BILL SHUSTER.

#### READY TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE OF THE NINTH DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania very much for the introduction.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to stand here today as the newest Representative from the Ninth District from Pennsylvania. I want to thank the voters of central Pennsylvania for this incredible privilege. The faith and trust the people of Pennsylvania have placed in me is indeed an awesome responsibility.

Over the past 4½ months, I have traveled throughout the 11 counties that make up the ninth district, from DuBois to Chambersburg. I have listened closely to the concerns of the people: teachers, factory workers, senior citizens, business owners, young people and farmers. And I come here today ready to represent their values and bring their voices and concerns to Washington.

Job creation, tax relief for our families and businesses, strengthening and securing Social Security and Medicare for this generation and the next are among my top priorities. I am particularly honored to be sworn in today and cast my first vote for H.R. 1, the President's education plan. As the father of two young children in public schools and the husband of a schoolteacher, I can tell my colleagues that reforming and improving our education system is one of the most important areas that Congress can act on.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the days and months ahead working with my colleagues, and especially those in the Pennsylvania delegation, in accomplishing the people's business.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends, many of whom have traveled down here to be with me today. Without their continued love and support, I would not be here. I would especially like to thank my mother, Pat; and my father, Bud; my wife, Becky; and my two children, Ali and Garrett. Again, none of this would be possible without their love and support.

#### HOPE FOR CHILDREN ACT

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 141 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 141

*Resolved*, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 622) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the adoption credit, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The amendment recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill, as amended, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL); pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 141 makes in order the bill H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act, under a closed rule. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

While this is a closed rule, it is important for my colleagues to understand that this bill represents a bipartisan effort that has the support of 289 Members of this body and could be passed under suspension. However, this rule will provide extra time for my colleagues to debate and discuss the importance of the adoption tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, adoption is an issue that holds a special place in my heart. It blesses a loving couple with the joy of parenthood and provides wanting children the chance to find permanency in their lives and love in their hearts. As an adoptive parent, I know firsthand this joy, but I also understand the financial burdens that it places on a family. Tragically, this burden can be so high that it prevents a couple from becoming a family and sadly leaves a needing child without a home.

Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of the legislation that created this tax credit 5 years ago, and an original cosponsor of this, the Hope for Children Act, I am proud to be here today discussing these important changes that serve to update the adoption credit. Since the passage of the original credit 5 years ago, Congress has been working hard to strengthen adoption laws in the United States.

In the 1996 legislation, we included a provision that prohibited discrimina-

tion in adoption or foster care placements, helping to assure that the cultural, ethnic or racial background of a child would not hinder the placement into a loving home. Then, in 1997, Congress passed one of the most important child welfare laws in 20 years, the Adoption and Safe Families Act. This legislation helped to ensure that consideration of a child's safety is paramount in placement decisions.

June of 2000 saw the introduction of the adoption stamp, which many in Congress supported as a way to bring awareness to the 122,000 children waiting to be adopted in this country alone. In October of 2000, with passage of the Inter-country Adoption Act, the United States became the 39th country to ratify the Hague Convention, a cooperative framework between countries which ensures that a child's best interests are safeguarded during inter-country adoption processes.

That same month, Congress passed the Child Citizenship Act, a bill that grants automatic citizenship to foreign-born children adopted by American parents. And then came the Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts, which bolsters the efficiency and effectiveness of courts so that children in our child welfare system are not kept from permanent homes due to delays in the court system.

Now, in 2001, this House will consider the Hope for Children Act, legislation designed to help foster and facilitate adoptions; legislation that will strengthen families across the Nation; and legislation that will help to provide loving homes to children who desperately need them.

Current law provides a \$5,000 tax credit to families for qualifying adoption expenses when adopting a child and \$6,000 for a child with special needs. This is set to expire. Over 289 Members of the House have cosponsored the Hope for Children Act to show their support for extending and updating these sections of the code. H.R. 622 would begin by making the current tax credits a permanent part of the Tax Code. It would also raise the credit limitations to better reflect the costs of adoptions, allowing families to claim up to \$10,000 in qualifying expenses upon adoption.

Statistics from the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse show that the cost of adoptions range from \$4,000 on the low end to sometimes over \$30,000 on the high end, depending on such factors as the cost of birth-parent counseling, adoptive-parent home study and preparation, the child's birth expenses and post-placement supervision until the adoption is finalized. This bill will update the credit to better reflect the costs associated with adoption today. This increase will provide an additional \$4,000 to the tax credit for special needs adoptions.

Mr. Speaker, 63 percent of the children waiting in foster care are between

the ages of 6 and 18. With this increased age comes an increased likelihood that these children will be classified by the State as special-needs children due to histories of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We have children waiting to be adopted that bring with them physical handicaps, and entire sibling groups that need to be placed in a home together. These children, more than any others, need a loving, permanent home; and families that will open their hearts should be given the utmost support. All of these important changes will be available to families beginning with expenses incurred in the 2002 tax year.

Mr. Speaker, we have to reduce the financial burden that adoption can place on families so that couples can become families and more children can sleep peacefully under the roof of loving parents. The Hope for Children Act will continue the hard work and dedication this Congress has devoted to adoption by reducing this huge financial barrier. It will help more children find the love of a family.

I urge all my colleagues to support both the rule and this important legislation.

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 thank my friend, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a closed rule. It will allow for the consideration of the bill called the Hope for Children Act, H.R. 622. As my colleague from Ohio has described, this rule provides for 1 hour of general debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

□ 1045

Under the rule, no amendments are in order.

Mr. Speaker, this bill permanently extends the adoption tax credit. It raises it to \$10,000. The bill also permanently extends the exclusion from income for employer-provided adoption assistance and raises it to \$10,000. Under current law the amount in both provisions is \$6,000 for special-needs children and \$5,000 for other children.

Special-needs children include those who have physical, mental or emotional handicaps that make difficult placing the child with adoptive parents.

Mr. Speaker, permanently placing foster children with loving, adoptive parents is an important goal for our society. In doing so, we are setting a firm foundation in life for these children and strengthening our society as a whole. Therefore, it is appropriate for our government, including the Federal Tax Code, to encourage adoptions.

I am proud to join the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) and close to 200 of my House colleagues as a cosponsor of the bill. Almost two-thirds of the

House has cosponsored this legislation. I regret that this is a closed rule which will not permit any amendments. Even in the case of tax bills, it is often customary to permit one substitute amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us does not offer sufficient incentives to promote the adoption of special-needs children; and although the bill does increase the size of the adoption tax credit, the definition of qualified adoption expenses is inadequate to help the overwhelming majority of families adopting special-needs children. Because this is a closed rule, there will be no opportunity to improve this on the House floor.

It is the understanding of concerned Democratic members of the Committee on Ways and Means that this issue will be addressed later in the legislative process. I am concerned about this closed rule. However, the bill was approved by the Committee on Ways and Means with Democratic support. The bill clearly has the overwhelming support of House Members on both sides of the aisle; therefore, I support the passage of the bill.

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

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), an adoptive father himself.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the rule. I do not like closed rules myself, but I think in this case with the bipartisan support that we have on the bill, I doubt if there will be very many people opposed to it. I support the rule and am a cosponsor of the bill.

I have a son. He happens to be adopted. I would like to tell people that there is no difference between a natural son and an adopted son as far as the love and care, through better and worse. Like all children, you have problems; but it has been a blessing to my wife and myself.

I would also tell you a story. My brother, when he was going to college, was dating a young lady. Unbeknownst to him, the young lady became pregnant. She went away to Kansas City and gave birth to this child without my brother's knowledge.

Later on, my brother married this same young lady. They had two children. Later on, the adopted child wanted to know who her parents were. My niece, Louise, sought to find her mother. It took almost 2 years. She arrived in St. Louis and called my sister-in-law and said, "I think you are my mother." Louise had been adopted. She turned out to be living about a mile away from her natural parents.

When she arrived, she had no idea she had a natural father and a natural brother and sister. Louise is now pregnant with her third child. No, the child will not be aborted; and the child will have a loving family from Josh and Louise. A loving mother who supported her daughter's right to seek her nat-

ural parents is very close to my brother and the entire family.

So the story, Mr. Speaker, is that adopted children, there are success stories. And it is a wonderful thing that I think Members on both sides of the aisle are doing here by making it possible to go forward with this bill. Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors of this bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of the rule and the underlying bill. I was among its original cosponsors, and I want to take a moment to commend the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) for their leadership.

The bill will make it possible for many more families to provide children with loving and permanent homes. But I would be remiss not to acknowledge my disappointment that the bill we are considering today is not the one that I cosponsored originally. It has been stripped of one of its most important provisions which was designed to help those adoptive families most in need of our assistance, those who adopt children with special needs.

Children with special needs are those who, because of their age, race, disability or other characteristics, would be unlikely to find a permanent home without special assistance. Many are older, some have mental or physical or emotional problems. Not only are these children the least likely to find a loving home, but when they do find a home, their adoptive parents typically face financial burdens in caring for them.

There are some 125,000, approximately, children in foster care now who are eligible for adoption and who continue to wait and wait and wait for a permanent placement. The vast majority of these children are so-called children with special needs.

The credit actually does little for these families, unfortunately, because it can be applied to only such adoption-related expenses as adoption fees, court costs and attorneys' fees. Most special-needs children are adopted from foster care and publicly-supported institutions, and the families who do adopt them do not incur these kinds of expenses. That is why the Department of Treasury reported last October that only 15 percent of these families were able to claim any tax benefits under the credit for 1998.

The provision that was removed from the bill would have remedied this situation by providing a \$10,000 tax credit for families who adopt special-needs children irrespective of the nature of the expenses they incur in providing for the child.

Mr. Speaker, this would have ensured that all adoptive parents could partake equally in the benefits of the credit. Most importantly, it would have provided a meaningful incentive to those

who are eager to adopt children with special needs but maybe are unable to absorb all of the extraordinary financial burdens that this can entail.

As an adoptive father myself, I believe we have a strong interest as a society, as a Nation, in encouraging all adoptions, but especially those that provide a permanent home to a child with special needs.

As I indicated, I am going to support the bill, but I hope very much that a way can be found to reinstate the provision before it is sent to the President for his signature.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, regret that the provision that the gentleman spoke of is not included. However, we have assurances from our Committee on Ways and Means that this matter will be subject to hearings. I think there is great support for it in the Senate. I, too, hope it is added before it goes to the President for signature.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and a champion of the issue of adoption in the House of Representatives.

(Mr. CAMP asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time, and for her leadership on the issue of adoption.

Mr. Speaker, since 1995, we have made tremendous progress from the creation of the credit, to ending discrimination in adoption, to the Adoption in Safe Families Act, a stamp commemorating adoption, the Inter-country Adoption Act to help people who are adopting children from abroad, and the Child Citizenship Act to make sure that children who are foreign born who are adopted by American parents receive automatic citizenship. That had been a real hang-up for families who are adopting. And also for the Abuse and Neglect Act; and now, of course, today increasing the credit.

Mr. Speaker, I support this rule. This bill represents a unanimous bipartisan effort from the Committee on Ways and Means and from the House. There are well over 289 cosponsors, a significant amount of support.

This rule will provide extra time for my colleagues to debate and discuss the importance of this act. The credit, as I said, was originally enacted in the mid-1990s. A portion of that original law is set to expire. So if we do not act, we will lose the adoption credit, and we need to update the language of this bill to better reflect the realities and cost of adoption today.

The Hope for Children Act will make permanent an update of the adoption tax credit, increasing the credit to \$10,000 per eligible child and raising the income caps and exempting the credit from the Alternative Minimum Tax, so

there are no adverse tax consequences for people who use this credit.

It will also extend the gross income exclusion for employer-provided adoption assistance programs and raise that maximum exclusion to \$10,000 as well.

As has been stated, this is about children and families and about finding a loving home for children who do not have homes. That is the most important thing in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, again I wanted to commend the leadership on the bipartisan effort of this bill, and especially the leadership of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) who has brought the issue of adoption to the floor.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill and also the rule, and for the very strong pro-family, pro-adoption tax relief policy, Hope for Children Act. Children's issues, and specifically promoting adoption and improving foster care, have been important legislative goals in my career. I am proud to have worked with President Clinton and his staff in a bipartisan way in this Congress back in 1996 when we passed the original bill that helped break down the financial and bureaucratic barriers to adoption, giving every child what every child needs and deserves: loving parents and a strong, stable home.

This legislation eases the cost of adoption by increasing the adoption tax credit that expired this year from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for all adoptions, and increases the employer adoption assistance exclusion to \$10,000.

Every child deserves a loving family. This legislation helps provide assistance to those families who wish to add a child to their lives. All parents today face the stark reality that raising children, although wonderful and a true joy, is also increasingly expensive. The simple cost of going through the adoption process can be very expensive.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that this Congress will also be able to address the item that my colleague from Massachusetts raised, the needs of parents who wish to adopt special-needs children. And I am pleased that my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. Pryce), states a commitment from the Committee on Ways and Means to address this later in the session has been forthcoming.

These children are often older and have handicaps and medical conditions, and I urge my colleagues to work with the gentlewoman and others in the future to make sure that this is also included.

Again, I applaud the bipartisan leadership on this bill. With so many children in need of homes, it is morally right for Congress to relieve some of the financial burdens for these families.

All Members of Congress know that our doors are continually beaten down

by those seeking various tax benefits for specific special interests. Children's voices often fail to be heard today in Washington, and I am pleased to stand in support with my colleagues of our Nation's children. This will help thousands of children waiting for a family that wants them, and it will help thousands of middle-class parents adopt them. It is an important bill. I urge a "yes" vote on the rule and the underlying bill.

□ 1100

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

Mr. PENCE. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and of the Hope for Children Act. I thank my colleagues on the Hope Coalition for their bipartisan leadership on this issue, especially the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, there are very few things that can touch a life more than providing a home for a child without a family. The presence of parents in a child's life is undoubtedly the single most important aspect of their development. However, many would-be parents of children without homes are prevented from opening their doors due to the high cost of adoption.

Mr. Speaker, the Hope for Children Act will tear down the financial barriers to adoption by doubling the adoption tax credit from \$5,000 to \$10,000. While this credit may cause a relatively small loss in revenue for the Federal Government, it is a significant step to placing loving families and children together.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the Hope for Children Act. It is said that He puts the lonely in families. It is the Hope for Children Act that puts the Congress in the business of putting lonely children into the families of America.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding me this time.

I support the rule. This bipartisan legislation addresses the needs of this country's most vulnerable citizens, the children. Many families who would like to open their homes to children in need are prevented from doing so because of the \$8,000 to \$30,000 cost that is associated with this. The increase in the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 for all adoptions would greatly facilitate the placement of children into permanent homes.

In Congress, we are limited as to what we can do to promote healthy families. We cannot legislate kindness from parents towards their children nor can we legislate responsible parental behavior. Therefore, it is our duty to do what is in our power to encourage

strong families. One such thing we can do is to enable these families who would like to open their households as permanent and loving homes for children in need. This legislation relieves the heavy financial burden placed on these families.

Any family who wishes to care for these children in a permanent way should have the support of this body. I support the rule and urge passage of the bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This is a good piece of legislation. I think many of us are very proud to be on it. We hope as the bill makes its way through the legislative process that this amendment addressing special-needs children is added. We support the bill and the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This issue is very close to my heart and a personal priority. By reducing the financial burden that adoption can place on families, more couples can share their love with lonely, wanting children. That is what it is all about, fulfilling the dreams of those who long for a family.

I would like to give my personal thanks to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the Committee on Ways and Means for their extraordinary efforts on behalf of this bill; the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY); and the Adoption Caucus. I urge all my colleagues to support both the rule and this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The question is on the resolution.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. 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 415, nays 1, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 123]

YEAS—415

Abercrombie	Baldacci	Bereuter
Ackerman	Baldwin	Berkley
Aderholt	Ballenger	Berman
Akin	Barcia	Berry
Allen	Barr	Biggart
Andrews	Barrett	Bishop
Army	Bartlett	Blagojevich
Baca	Barton	Blumenauer
Bachus	Bass	Gillmor
Baird	Becerra	Boehlert
Baker	Bentsen	Boehner

Bonilla	Goodlatte	Markey
Bonior	Gordon	Mascara
Bono	Goss	Matheson
Boswell	Graham	Matsui
Boucher	Granger	McCarthy (MO)
Boyd	Graves	McCarthy (NY)
Brady (TX)	Green (TX)	McCollum
Brown (FL)	Green (WI)	McCrery
Brown (OH)	Greenwood	McDermott
Brown (SC)	Grucci	McGovern
Bryant	Gutierrez	McHugh
Burr	Gutknecht	McInnis
Burton	Hall (OH)	McIntyre
Buyer	Hall (TX)	McKeon
Callahan	Hansen	McKinney
Calvert	Harman	McNulty
Camp	Hart	Meehan
Cannon	Hastings (FL)	Meek (FL)
Cantor	Hastings (WA)	Meeks (NY)
Capito	Hayes	Menendez
Capps	Hayworth	Mica
Capuano	Hefley	Millender-
Cardin	Herger	McDonald
Carson (IN)	Hill	Miller (FL)
Carson (OK)	Hilleary	Miller, Gary
Castle	Hilliard	Miller, George
Chabot	Hinchev	Mink
Chambliss	Hinojosa	Moakley
Clay	Hobson	Mollohan
Clayton	Hoeffel	Moore
Clement	Hoekstra	Moran (KS)
Clyburn	Holden	Moran (VA)
Coble	Holt	Morella
Collins	Honda	Murtha
Combest	Hooley	Myrick
Conyers	Horn	Nadler
Costello	Hostettler	Napolitano
Cox	Houghton	Neal
Coyne	Hoyer	Nethercutt
Cramer	Hulshof	Ney
Crane	Hutchinson	Northup
Crenshaw	Hyde	Norwood
Crowley	Inslee	Nussle
Culberson	Isakson	Oberstar
Cummings	Israel	Obey
Cunningham	Issa	Olver
Davis (CA)	Istook	Ortiz
Davis (FL)	Jackson (IL)	Osborne
Davis (IL)	Jackson-Lee	Ose
Davis, Jo Ann	(TX)	Otter
Davis, Tom	Jefferson	Owens
Deal	Jenkins	Oxley
DeFazio	John	Pallone
DeGette	Johnson (CT)	Pascarell
Delahunt	Johnson (IL)	Pastor
DeLauro	Johnson, E. B.	Paul
DeLay	Johnson, Sam	Payne
DeMint	Jones (NC)	Pelosi
Deutsch	Jones (OH)	Peterson (MN)
Diaz-Balart	Kanjorski	Peterson (PA)
Dicks	Kaptur	Petri
Dingell	Keller	Phelps
Doggett	Kelly	Pickering
Dooley	Kennedy (MN)	Pitts
Doolittle	Kennedy (RI)	Platts
Doyle	Kerns	Pombo
Dreier	Kildee	Pomeroy
Duncan	Kind (WI)	Portman
Dunn	King (NY)	Price (NC)
Edwards	Kingston	Pryce (OH)
Ehlers	Kirk	Putnam
Ehrlich	Kleczka	Quinn
Emerson	Knollenberg	Rahall
Engel	Kolbe	Ramstad
English	Kucinich	Rangel
Eshoo	LaFalce	Regula
Etheridge	LaHood	Rehberg
Evans	Lampson	Reyes
Everett	Langevin	Reynolds
Farr	Lantos	Riley
Fattah	Larsen (WA)	Rivers
Ferguson	Larson (CT)	Rodriguez
Filner	Latham	Roemer
Flake	LaTourette	Rogers (KY)
Fletcher	Leach	Rogers (MI)
Foley	Lee	Rohrabacher
Ford	Levin	Ros-Lehtinen
Fossella	Lewis (CA)	Ross
Frank	Lewis (KY)	Rothman
Frelinghuysen	Linder	Roukema
Frost	Lipinski	Roybal-Allard
Gallegly	LoBiondo	Royce
Gekas	Lofgren	Rush
Gephardt	Lowe	Ryan (WI)
Gibbons	Lucas (KY)	Ryun (KS)
Gilchrest	Luther	Sabo
Gillmor	Maloney (CT)	Sanchez
Gonzalez	Maloney (NY)	Sanders
Goode	Manzullo	Sandlin

Sawyer	Souder	Udall (NM)
Saxton	Spence	Upton
Scarborough	Spratt	Velazquez
Schaffer	Stearns	Visclosky
Schakowsky	Stenholm	Vitter
Schiff	Strickland	Walden
Schrock	Stump	Walsh
Scott	Stupak	Wamp
Sensenbrenner	Sununu	Waters
Serrano	Sweeney	Watkins
Sessions	Tancredo	Watt (NC)
Shadegg	Tanner	Watts (OK)
Shaw	Tauscher	Waxman
Shays	Tauzin	Weiner
Sherman	Taylor (MS)	Weldon (FL)
Sherwood	Taylor (NC)	Weldon (PA)
Shimkus	Terry	Weller
Shows	Thomas	Wexler
Shuster	Thompson (CA)	Whitfield
Simmons	Thompson (MS)	Wicker
Simpson	Thornberry	Wilson
Skeen	Thune	Wolf
Skelton	Thurman	Woolsey
Slaughter	Tiahrt	Wu
Smith (MI)	Tiberi	Wynn
Smith (NJ)	Toomey	Young (AK)
Smith (TX)	Toombs	Young (FL)
Smith (WA)	Trafficant	
Snyder	Turner	
Solis	Udall (CO)	

NAYS—1

Stark  
NOT VOTING—16

Bilirakis	Ganske	Lucas (OK)
Borski	Gilman	Pence
Brady (PA)	Hunter	Radanovich
Condit	Kilpatrick	Tierney
Cooksey	Largent	
Cubin	Lewis (GA)	

□ 1126

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.” So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 141, I call up the bill (H.R. 622) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the adoption credit, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to House Resolution 141, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 622 is as follows:  
H.R. 622

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Hope for Children Act”.

**SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ADOPTION CREDIT AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) ADOPTION CREDIT.—Section 23(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to allowance of credit) is amended to read as follows:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this chapter—

“(A) in the case of an adoption of a child other than a child with special needs, the amount of the qualified adoption expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer, and

“(B) in the case of an adoption of a child with special needs, \$10,000.”.

(2) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—Section 137(a) of such Code (relating to adoption assistance programs) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Gross income of an employee does not include amounts paid or expenses incurred by the employer for adoption expenses in connection with the adoption of a child by an employee if such amounts are furnished pursuant to an adoption assistance program. The amount of the exclusion shall be—

“(1) in the case of an adoption of a child other than a child with special needs, the amount of the qualified adoption expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer, and

“(2) in the case of an adoption of a child with special needs, \$10,000.”

(b) DOLLAR LIMITATIONS.—

(1) DOLLAR AMOUNT OF ALLOWED EXPENSES.—

(A) ADOPTION EXPENSES.—Section 23(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to allowance of credit) is amended—

(i) by striking “\$5,000” and inserting “\$10,000”,

(ii) by striking “(\$6,000, in the case of a child with special needs)”, and

(iii) by striking “subsection (a)” and inserting “subsection (a)(1)(A)”.

(B) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—Section 137(b)(1) of such Code (relating to dollar limitations for adoption assistance programs) is amended—

(i) by striking “\$5,000” and inserting “\$10,000”, and

(ii) by striking “(\$6,000, in the case of a child with special needs)”, and

(iii) by striking “subsection (a)” and inserting “subsection (a)(1)”.

(2) PHASE-OUT LIMITATION.—

(A) ADOPTION EXPENSES.—Clause (i) of section 23(b)(2)(A) of such Code (relating to income limitation) is amended by striking “\$75,000” and inserting “\$150,000”.

(B) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—Section 137(b)(2)(A) of such Code (relating to income limitation) is amended by striking “\$75,000” and inserting “\$150,000”.

(c) YEAR CREDIT ALLOWED.—Section 23(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to year credit allowed) is amended by adding at the end the following new flush sentence:

“In the case of the adoption of a child with special needs, the credit allowed under paragraph (1) shall be allowed for the taxable year in which the adoption becomes final.”

(d) REPEAL OF SUNSET PROVISIONS.—

(1) CHILDREN WITHOUT SPECIAL NEEDS.—Paragraph (2) of section 23(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to definition of eligible child) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) ELIGIBLE CHILD.—The term ‘eligible child’ means any individual who—

“(A) has not attained age 18, or

“(B) is physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself.”

(2) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—Section 137 of such Code (relating to adoption assistance programs) is amended by striking subsection (f).

(e) ADJUSTMENT OF DOLLAR AND INCOME LIMITATIONS FOR INFLATION.—

(1) ADOPTION CREDIT.—Section 23 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to adoption expenses) is amended by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (i) and by inserting after subsection (g) the following new subsection:

“(h) ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION.—In the case of a taxable year beginning after December 31, 2002, each of the dollar amounts in subsection (a)(1)(B) and paragraphs (1) and (2)(A)(i) of subsection (b) shall be increased by an amount equal to—

“(1) such dollar amount, multiplied by

“(2) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year in which the taxable year begins, deter-

mined by substituting ‘calendar year 2001’ for ‘calendar year 1992’ in subparagraph (B) thereof.”

(2) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—Section 137 of such Code (relating to adoption assistance programs), as amended by subsection (d), is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION.—In the case of a taxable year beginning after December 31, 2002, each of the dollar amounts in subsection (a)(2) and paragraphs (1) and (2)(A) of subsection (b) shall be increased by an amount equal to—

“(1) such dollar amount, multiplied by

“(2) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year in which the taxable year begins, determined by substituting ‘calendar year 2001’ for ‘calendar year 1992’ in subparagraph (B) thereof.”

(f) LIMITATION BASED ON AMOUNT OF TAX.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 23(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to carryforwards of unused credit) is amended by striking “the limitation imposed” and all that follows through “1400C)” and inserting “the applicable tax limitation”.

(2) APPLICABLE TAX LIMITATION.—Section 23(d) of such Code (relating to definitions) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) APPLICABLE TAX LIMITATION.—The term ‘applicable tax limitation’ means the sum of—

“(A) the taxpayer’s regular tax liability for the taxable year, reduced (but not below zero) by the sum of the credits allowed by sections 21, 22, 24 (other than the amount of the increase under subsection (d) thereof), 25, and 25A, and

“(B) the tax imposed by section 55 for such taxable year.”

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 26(a) of such Code (relating to limitation based on amount of tax) is amended by inserting “(other than section 23)” after “allowed by this subpart”.

(B) Section 53(b)(1) of such Code (relating to minimum tax credit) is amended by inserting “reduced by the aggregate amount taken into account under section 23(d)(3)(B) for all such prior taxable years,” after “1986.”

(g) CREDIT RENAMED THE TOM BLILEY ADOPTION CREDIT.—

(1) The heading of section 23 of such Code is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 23. TOM BLILEY ADOPTION CREDIT.”

(2) The item relating to section 23 in the table of sections for subpart A of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of such Code is amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 23. Tom Bliley adoption credit.”

(h) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2001.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment printed in the bill is adopted.

The text of H.R. 622, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 622

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

*This Act may be cited as the “Hope for Children Act”.*

**SEC. 2. INCREASED TAX INCENTIVES FOR ADOPTIONS.**

*(a) INCREASE IN MAXIMUM BENEFIT.—Section 23(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to dollar limitation) is amended by striking “\$5,000” and all that follows and inserting “\$10,000.”*

*(b) BENEFITS MADE PERMANENT FOR ALL CHILDREN.—Paragraph (2) of section 23(d) of such Code is amended to read as follows:*

*“(2) ELIGIBLE CHILD.—The term ‘eligible child’ means any individual who—*

*“(A) has not attained age 18, or*

*“(B) is physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself.”*

*(c) INCREASE IN PHASEOUT.—Clause (i) of section 23(b)(2)(A) of such Code (relating to income limitation) is amended by striking “\$75,000” and inserting “\$150,000.”*

*(d) CREDIT ALLOWED AGAINST ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX.—*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b) of section 23 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:*

*“(4) LIMITATION BASED ON AMOUNT OF TAX.—The credit allowed under subsection (a) for any taxable year shall not exceed the excess of—*

*“(A) the sum of the regular tax liability (as defined in section 26(b)) plus the tax imposed by section 55, over*

*“(B) the sum of the credits allowable under this subpart (other than this section) and section 27 for the taxable year.”*

*(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—*

*(A) Subsection (c) of section 23 of such Code is amended—*

*(i) by striking “section 26(a)” and inserting “subsection (b)(4)”, and*

*(ii) by striking “reduced by the sum of the credits allowable under this subpart (other than this section and section 1400C)”.*

*(B) Paragraph (1) of section 26(a) of such Code is amended by inserting “(other than section 23)” after “this subpart”.*

*(C) Section 904(h) of such Code is amended by inserting “(other than section 23)” after “chapter”.*

*(D) Subsection (d) of section 1400C of such Code is amended by inserting “and section 23” after “this section”.*

*(e) AMENDMENTS RELATED TO EMPLOYER-PROVIDED ADOPTION ASSISTANCE.—*

*(1) Paragraph (1) of section 137(b) of such Code is amended by striking “\$5,000” and all that follows and inserting “\$10,000.”*

*(2) Subparagraph (A) of section 137(b)(2) of such Code is amended by striking “\$75,000” and inserting “\$150,000”.*

*(3) Section 137 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (f) (relating to termination).*

*(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2001.*

*(2) EXPENSES PAID OR INCURRED IN PRIOR YEARS.—Expenses paid or incurred during any taxable year beginning before January 1, 2002, may be taken into account in determining the credit under section 23 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for a taxable year beginning on or after such date only to the extent the aggregate of such expenses does not exceed the applicable limitation under section 23(b)(1) of such Code as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) each will control 30 minutes of debate on the bill.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS).

□ 1130

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before us today is H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act. Most importantly, I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) for their leadership in moving this

piece of legislation forward. But as chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, I also want to congratulate Members on both sides of the aisle on the Committee on Ways and Means.

The bill before us today is not as the bill was introduced. It was amended in committee to bring together both the idea of the Tax Code assisting in adoption and the President's proposals as outlined during the campaign. This bill may, in fact, be changed as it moves through the legislative process with the Senate; but the heart of the bill, the fundamental purpose of the bill, will not change; that is, that the dollar amounts currently in law, some of them subject to termination, will be made permanent and increased in the hope that adoption will be utilized more frequently in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have a Statement of Administration Policy that I would like inserted in the RECORD. The heart of the Statement of Administration Policy is "H.R. 622 is consistent with the President's priorities, which include permanently extending and increasing the adoption tax credit."

That is the focus that we should place on this bill, and this is one of those opportunities to engage in a discussion and debate on the floor of the House in a way that we do not do it as often as we would like; but joining together on this particular bill, it will be a very rewarding morning.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,  
Washington, DC, May 17, 2001.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY  
(THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN COORDINATED BY  
OMB WITH THE CONCERNED AGENCIES)

The Administration supports House passage of H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act, as an important pro-family and pro-adoption tax relief initiative. H.R. 622 is consistent with the President's priorities, which include permanently extending and increasing the adoption tax credit. The Administration looks forward to working with Congress through the legislative process to achieve a result that best embodies the objectives of the President's plan.

#### *Pay-As-You-Go Scoring*

Any law that would reduce receipts is subject to the pay-as-you-go requirements of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act. Accordingly, H.R. 622 or any substitute amendment in lieu thereof, that will also reduce revenues, will be subject to the pay-as-you-go requirement. The Administration will work with Congress to ensure that any unintended sequester of spending does not occur under current law or the enactment of any other proposals that meet the President's objectives to reduce the debt, fund priority initiatives, and grant tax relief to all income tax paying Americans.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. CARDIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, there is broad support for the underlying goals of H.R. 622, to assist families in meeting their needs on adoption. The bill, as the chairman has indicated, would

increase the adoption credit to \$10,000. That is broadly supported in this body.

Secondly, it would make permanent the adoption credit. In current law, the adoption credit for special-needs children is already permanent, and this bill would make it permanent for all adoptions to use the credit; and there is broad support for that provision.

Mr. Speaker, let me point out two concerns that we have with this bill. As I indicated, we supported the bill, but we have two concerns. First, this is the eighth tax bill that has been considered by this body. This bill is not part of the \$1.25 trillion budget that has passed both this body and the other body. So we are already starting to see additional tax bills that are going to be considered that are going to go beyond the \$1.25 trillion.

One of the concerns that has been expressed by the Democrats is that we, in fact, are going to be having tax relief far in excess of what is provided in the budget resolution. I regret this will probably not be the last time that we will be making this point, that there will be other tax bills that are going to be brought forward that exceed the budget resolution that was passed by this body.

The second concern, and we have already heard this by other speakers speaking on the rule, is that there is not enough help in this legislation for parents who want to adopt special-needs children. The children that fall into this category are our most difficult children to place with adoptive parents. These are usually older children, children that come out of foster care, children that have one or more disabilities. We want to help these children find permanent homes.

Unfortunately, today, only one out of seven parents who adopt a child with special needs can take advantage of the credit that is in the law for adoption expenses; and the main reason for this is that the expenses that qualify for the adoption credit are normally paid for by the social agencies that are involved in adoption of children with special needs. Those parents who can take advantage of the adoption credit find that they do not have as much expenses and they do not reach the limit. The percentage of parents who are using the adoption credit with special-needs children are much lower in reaching the credit than those that are adopting other children. So, therefore, this bill that costs \$2.5 billion over the 10-year window will have little benefit for helping children with special needs find permanent placements.

Mr. Speaker, there are 122,000 children waiting for adoption with special needs. I think we can do more to help families. The original bill had a provision in it that allowed the \$10,000 credit without the documentation of costs. That amendment would cost about \$125 million, a small fraction of the money that the underlying bill that has been reported to this body would cost.

Mr. Speaker, we support this bill; but I would hope that we could do better. I

would like just, if I might, to quote from the Committee Report, and I thank the chairman for including this language in our committee report: "The committee, however, is aware that families adopting special-needs children may incur continuing expenses after the adoption is finalized that are not eligible for these benefits. The committee will continue to search for ways to help alleviate these post-adoption expenses."

I want the chairman to know that we want to work with him in finding a way in which we can provide additional assistance to families who are adopting special-needs children. We think we can do better, and we hope as the bill works its way through the legislative process we will find a way to take care of that need.

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, in part to respond to my colleague from Maryland.

In terms of his concerns about finding money to pay for this particular program or, indeed, any other program, because notwithstanding the budget reconciliation numbers, there is included in that budget reconciliation an estimated revenue stream outside of reconciliation of more than \$18 billion over 10 years, more than enough to pay for this particular program, and for a number of others that I would say the Committee on Ways and Means will probably be looking at. These are not large amounts of money, and they can be accommodated.

The question is ordering our priorities; and it seems to me that based upon the support of this bill that this ought to be very high on our priority list to claim its fair share of that revenue outside of reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) be permitted to control the remaining time, someone who has been instrumental in helping us shape this legislation and move it forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, for his leadership on this very important issue. This bill would not have come to the floor without his support and effort. Also, I am grateful for the bipartisan effort that this bill has enjoyed.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to also mention that the former chairman of the Committee on Commerce, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BILLEY), originally introduced this bill in the last Congress, and along with the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE)

and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) helped bring this bill to the floor.

Obviously, I support the Hope for Children Act, H.R. 622, which would raise the tax credit for adoption to \$10,000. Currently the maximum credit is \$6,000 for families who adopt a special-needs child and \$5,000 for all other adoptions. The credit is set to expire this year, and H.R. 622 would make the credit permanent. The special-needs credit, as the gentleman from Maryland mentioned, is permanent now. But furthermore, the Hope for Children Act applies to all adoptions, both domestic and intercountry. As the lead sponsor of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which was signed into law in November of 1997, I am pleased that we are continuing our efforts to make adoptions easier.

I supported the legislation which was signed into law that provided adoptive parents a \$5,000 per child adoption credit, but now it is time to expand this tax credit and make it permanent. Families can spend anywhere from \$8,000 to \$30,000 to adopt a child; and we need to ease the financial burden that really gets in the way of children finding permanent and loving homes.

I have heard from many families like William and Susan Logan of Midland, Michigan, who would like to open their home to a child, but are prevented or delayed from doing so because of the high cost of adoption. The good news is that the Logans will be traveling abroad in the next couple of weeks to bring home the newest addition to their family.

Regrettably, there are thousands more children who are without permanent families, and it is time we work together to ensure they find a loving home. I believe that now is the time to help those children find the families they are waiting for so that they may enjoy a wonderful, loving relationship. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 622.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time and for being so generous with his time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very nostalgic moment for me. My late wife, Jo, and I started our family with adoption. We brought Ted into our family in April of 1968; and there followed Noelle and Annie and Monica, and now grandchildren, granddaughters. It would not have been possible without adoption.

I started thinking about what we were able to do, how we were able to afford the cost of adoption. But there are many others who could not. And in 1977, I introduced what then was recognized as the very first bill to provide financial assistance for adoption, a modest \$1,500 tax deduction. Well, it was re-

jected by Treasury as costing too much; Treasury could not afford it. There was not really much of a movement across this country for adoption in those days. So I began to work to build a consensus. With the help of Members on both sides of the aisle, it is remarkable how I found support, for example, from our former colleague, Mr. Lightfoot of Iowa, who himself was an adopted child; from Mr. BLILEY, the gentleman from Virginia, who was an adoptive parent. Over time, we built a consensus and a bipartisan momentum until in 1996, 20 years later, legislation was enacted to provide, not a tax deduction, but a much more valuable \$5,000 tax credit. Never in my wildest dreams did I think we could achieve that goal.

I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT); the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE); the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS); the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING); and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP), who is currently the floor manager; and the chairman of the committee; and my very, very dear friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), for championing this cause within the Committee on Ways and Means, and there are many others.

Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the committee did not follow my suggestion that we name this the Bliley Adoption Tax Credit, but I understand that the Chair has reservations about naming provisions of tax bills for sponsors. However, we do have the Keogh bill; we do have many other provisions of law that are named after former or, at the time, Members of Congress who were their sponsors. Nonetheless, the time will come, when this provision will be known as the Bliley Tax Credit and perhaps just because of his activism. But the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Bliley) and I did join forces in crafting this legislation, securing 289 cosponsors; and I know that he is very pleased. It would be nice if his name were attached to it, but the recognition is there.

Now, I do feel, as the gentleman from Maryland said so well, that this was an opportunity to go farther, to do more.

□ 1145

I feel somewhat ill at ease saying that we should have done more when we already are doing something. But let us never stop. We should never rest in finding homes for children.

A modest number, I think, 122,000 already identified special-needs children will benefit, hopefully, from this legislation with loving parents who will take these children into their homes.

If we want to look at the cost side of it, think of the enormous cost savings to society. The best insurance policy we have against violence in our society, against crime, is a loving family, a home for these children who are not condemned to a life adrift.

But there are further considerations; we do have to think about these: home

and vehicle modifications, out-of-pocket medical expenses, lost income, no reimbursement for such lost income for parents who need to take time to deal with their special needs adoptive child. They are not reimbursed by the State; they are not eligible for the current adoption tax credit.

There is much to be commended in this legislation. It is a big step forward. I am delighted with it. I urge all those parents, all those would-be parents to take a look when this becomes law and move quickly on it, and show that we have acted in good faith and that there is a response, and that children will be taken out of institutions and into loving families.

I will say in closing, that it is not the tax credit by itself that is going to make the difference in whether these children are adopted. Parents will find homes for them. But we should use the Tax Code to make it easier; to show that our government, our tax system, has a heart, and we are opening that heart today a little wider, opening the doors wider to a generous society, a loving society, one that respects life from conception all the way through every stage of human existence.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, it does give me great joy to stand here today to celebrate the thousands of moms, dads, and children who become bigger and stronger families through adoption.

The Hope for Children Act that we will pass in the House today will help build more loving, stable families in America, and send a strong signal across our land that every child is a wanted child.

Like many Americans, I grew up in a family without my father in the home. While my mother and eventually my stepfather did all they could to compensate for this missing piece in my life, nothing could dispel the haunting in my heart that regularly whispered that I was not wanted.

Too many Americans grow up with this sense of not being wanted. But every year in America, thousands of children have an infinitely more positive experience. When a married couple decides to adopt a child, they not only fill a void in their own lives, they send a clear signal to their child that he or she is loved and wanted.

The Hope for Children Act sends a strong signal that America wants her children, all of her children. By helping new parents with the high financial cost of adoption, we as a nation encourage the building of strong, happy families.

I introduced H.R. 622 earlier this year, along with my colleagues in the Hope Coalition, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), and the gentleman from New York (Mr.

KING), to work to ensure enactment of the Hope for Children Act this year.

However, as has been mentioned, the original Hope for Children Act to permanently extend and double the tax credit for adoption was introduced in the last Congress by the gentleman from Virginia, our former, our former colleague, Tom Bliley. Chairman Bliley worked tirelessly on adoption issues during his tenure in Congress and paved the way for this legislation.

While he is retired from the House, it is our privilege to carry on his work to pass Hope for Children today. The provisions in this bill are an excellent step in making adoption a reality to more families. As we work with the Senate to help the Hope for Children Act become law, we look forward to exploring the best policy methods to address the unique circumstances of special-needs adoptions in relation to the adoption tax credit.

I want to take a moment to thank my colleagues in the House for showing their overwhelming support for this bill. With 289 cosponsors, this bill is truly bipartisan.

As we celebrate this pro-child, pro-family legislation today, I want to thank the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), and the members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

I also want to thank the distinguished majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), for taking a special interest in moving this important legislation.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of the Hope Coalition and their staffs for working as a team to make the passage of this legislation a reality.

I especially need to thank a member of my staff, Courtney Weise, who has made this her passion for the last 6 months. It is only because of her that we pulled this off today.

Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday we celebrated Mother's Day; next month, Father's Day. Being a mom or dad is the greatest privilege in life, and this bill will help make moms and dads all across the country, and make America a better place to live.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Maryland, for yielding time to me.

I also want to commend and congratulate the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) for introducing this meaningful legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join with my colleagues in expressing the importance of the Hope for Children Act. In our country, there are thousands of children without a family to care for them. At the same time, there are thousands of families who would like to bring these children into their homes but cannot because of the rising cost of adoption.

Families today often spend between \$8,000 and \$30,000 just to adopt a child. Yet, the adoption credit to them is only \$5,000. For many families, this makes adoption impossible simply because of the huge financial burden.

Last year, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services consummated 6,281 adoptions. However, this year, DCF reports that 1,600 children are still waiting to be adopted immediately; and there are 29,000 children in Illinois living in non-permanent substitute homes. By increasing the adoption tax credit to \$10,000, the Hope for Children Act will allow more families to adopt, give them the opportunity to adopt. It will help more children bypass the foster care system and become part of a permanent family. It will also help to encourage the development of more stable families.

Children are indeed the future of our country, and it is necessary that we give them the opportunity to grow up in stable and permanent environments.

So I commend all of those families who would adopt and bring children into their homes. They are indeed what I would call the salt of the Earth, the pillars of the universe: those who are willing to share and give of themselves so that others might have a more meaningful life.

I also want to thank my intern who just joined us, Kate Perdzik, who actually wrote these comments, and the importance of the issue was captured by her, not much more than a child herself, but one who really understands the value of families taking into consideration the needs of others.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN).

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I enthusiastically support H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act. One of the caseworkers in my district office has adopted five children. The costs of adoptions are exorbitant, often running \$40,000 to \$50,000 per child. Doubling the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 is a positive first step in helping families meet these costs.

Easing the financial burden of adoption makes it possible for more families to give children a loving family and a stable home, something every child deserves.

I thank the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), for this beginning. I am proud to support this important bill, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well. Vote aye for H.R. 622.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, it is fundamental that the family is the central institution of American society. Mr. Speaker, many families open their hearts and open their homes to children through adop-

tion. They know that they can provide a child with a loving home, and they know that they can grow as individuals and as a couple by experiencing the love of a child.

Our enlightened social policy and tax policy should encourage this. Unfortunately, the average adoption in 1998 cost roughly \$5,900, with 25 percent of adoptive parents reporting expenses of more than \$10,000. That price tag prohibits many families from growing, leaving more than 118,000 foster care children waiting to be adopted.

Given the financial commitment being made by families who adopt a child, the current credit does not go far enough. The Hope for Children Act opens the doors for many families who wish to adopt children but find the cost absolutely prohibitive.

H.R. 622 increases the maximum adoption tax credit to \$10,000 from \$6,000 for special-needs children and \$5,000 for all other adoptions, while increasing the income cap for those who claim the credit from \$75,000 to \$150,000. It also makes the credit permanent for all adoptions, not just special-needs children.

The bill allows the credit to apply against the AMT, so families are not unfairly pushed into the AMT by claiming this credit. This plan also increases the exclusion for employer-provided adoption assistance to \$10,000 for all adoptions and makes this provision permanent.

Mr. Speaker, many families in my district and around the United States know firsthand the joy of adopting a child. We should not allow cost to stand as a barrier to all families that wish this experience, to experience it. Passing this legislation will advance the goal of providing every child with a loving home.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Hope for Children Act. As a member of the Hope Coalition, I would like to thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) for their energy on this bill this year, for guiding it through the Committee on Ways and Means.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee on Ways and Means. I would also like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), the other member of the Hope for Children Coalition, and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

Mr. Bliley, as others have said, first introduced this legislation in the 106th Congress. I was the lead sponsor the next year. The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) has always been a real driver and a real enthusiastic supporter of this legislation.

All of us, no matter what party we belong to or what political philosophy we subscribe to, we want children to have a loving and a permanent home.

No children should ever be denied the chance to live with a family that will love and cherish them. This tax credit will make it possible for more families to open their homes and their hearts to a child through adoption.

The high cost of adoption is an insurmountable obstruction to many families who want to adopt a child. With this tax credit, we can help ease that financial burden, sometimes enormous, and ensure more children find a permanent, loving home.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, many people do not realize just how expensive adoptions are: medical bills, legal fees, travel costs. We owe it to those wanting children to ease these burdens. Passage of this bill will unquestionably make a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of children.

One of those children is the son of my chief of staff, who Members can imagine has been very enthusiastic since he adopted Wyatt Emerson about a year and a half ago. I can tell the Members that Wyatt has made a difference in the Emerson family, and the Emerson family has made a difference in him.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS).

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Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act.

In the past quarter century, the number of children in foster care has grown much faster than the number of children adopted. Yet, despite the large number of children of adoptable age, the adoption rate is still significantly low. A primary reason for this is the costs of adoption which can require a family to spend, as my colleagues have heard, up to \$30,000 to provide a child with a home.

The average American family just does not have this kind of money. The Hope for Children Act seeks to remedy this problem by increasing the adoption tax credit to \$10,000. There are more people who want to adopt than there are children who are eligible for adoption.

This essential legislation will allow more children to be adopted by loving families who so desperately want them. These children deserve to be loved and deserve to be wanted. We need to help these families be joined together.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for the Hope for Children Act.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Hope for Children Act. This is an important measure that encourages adoption and provides tax relief at the same time.

One of the biggest blessings is to have someone to call mom and dad. I am in full support of this measure that

would help provide loving families and parents to children who are without a permanent place to call home.

The Hope for Children Act will enable more American families to adopt, and as a Congress we should do all we can to promote adoption.

As others have said before me, my predecessor Tom Bliley was the original cosponsor of the Hope for Children Act, he worked tirelessly to garner 280 cosponsors for this legislation last year.

The Hope for Children Act was included in major tax legislation passed by the House, but unfortunately did not become law. I applaud the efforts of those who have brought this legislation to the floor, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, as well as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

As a cofounder of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, Tom Bliley sponsored over one dozen different adoption bills. As chairman of the House Committee on Commerce, Mr. Bliley played a major role in the Foster Care Independence Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act, and the Adoption Awareness Act.

In addition to promoting adoption domestically, he secured aid for displaced orphans overseas while working to enact the Hague Intercountry Adoption Act.

Tom Bliley truly stood up for children without a voice, and his leadership on adoption issues is much appreciated by a grateful Nation. His efforts have helped children in need of loving homes and families find happiness.

Mr. Speaker, today I join with my colleagues in helping more of those children in need by supporting the Hope for Children Act.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, few Americans realize that it can cost between \$8,000 and \$30,000 to adopt a child nowadays. That is a problem we should also be addressing. But until we do, American couples need help.

Too many loving families say no to adoption because they cannot afford it. Others have to take out a second mortgage. They should not have to do that.

The Hope for Children Act will extend and increase the adoption tax credit for families who adopt. This is more than a good idea, it is a necessary measure. I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), my friend, for taking the lead on this measure.

I think we should also thank our former colleague, Tom Bliley, who worked so hard to advance this legislation for so many years.

Mr. Speaker, every child deserves a loving home, but we need to help adopting families overcome the financial impediments to taking a child into their home.

This is a good bill. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP), my friend, for yielding the time to me.

Mr. Speaker, all of the arguments in favor of this extraordinarily good legislation have been stated. I just want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) for his sponsorship of the legislation, for working overtime to garner the number of cosponsors that he did from both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, when I look around at the speakers today, who really have been the movers and shakers, it reminds me of that famous statement out of Casablanca: Round up the usual suspects. And you have got the same key players, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and so many others, who are always there trying to advance the ball and advance the cause of adoption and to provide a loving option to a mother who may find herself in a very difficult situation.

I want to commend all of those who have made this legislation possible. The \$5,000 credit certainly has had a laudable impact on adoption and I am pleased to be an original sponsor of that. This legislation now doubles the tax credit, which I think is very generous, and hopefully not the end of our efforts to help those who would like to make an adoption plan and bring a child or children into their home.

This is a great bill. I urge everyone's support for it.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the reminder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say I would urge our colleagues to support this legislation. I think it is a very important bill that moves forward the cause for adopting parents and bringing families together.

I would like to just repeat the concern that I expressed earlier in regards to special-needs children and their adoption. A report issued by the Treasury Department in October of last year pointed out that this bill might have an unintended consequence of making it actually more difficult for special-needs children to find homes.

The reason, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, is that this bill will make it a little bit less difficult for parents to participate in international adoptions where the majority of children are now available.

We do not have many children available in this country for adoption other than special-needs children; other than family relations. And this might, in

fact, make it a little bit easier for a family to go for an international adoption rather than a special-needs adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I know that is not the intent of the legislation. I know that the committee will continue to work on this, but I would just urge my colleagues, as this bill works its way through the process, we need to go back at least to the original provisions in the bill, to make it easier for families that wish to adopt special-needs children.

We have a tremendous need there. This bill presents an opportunity, and I would encourage us, as the bill works its way through Congress, to address that need.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) for his effort on this legislation, and also for his comments. As the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, mentioned, he would like to work with the gentleman in terms of finding a way to assist special-needs adoption, adoptive parents with the costs, and do it in a way that really had some connection to the adoption expenses that might actually be incurred by a family. Because, obviously, we are all here, and we heard from a number of speakers from both parties who are very much wanting to strengthen the ability of people to adopt, to strengthen families, to try to find a way to make adoption easier and more frequent, and I am hopeful that we can resolve that.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good day in the Congress. This is excellent legislation that has been worked on for more than this Congress, and really was the effort of former member and chairman Mr. Bilely to bring this increase in the adoption tax credit to the floor, obviously make it permanent, so that the planning of families and agencies can go forward in trying to find and place children into loving homes.

This is an excellent bill, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, every year thousands of Americans open their homes to children without permanent families in order to provide these youngsters with stable and caring upbringings. Because of this, adopted children, who once had no one to turn to, find themselves surrounded with unconditional love and devotion. Adoptive parents not only unselfishly decide to share their homes with a child but also choose to share their hearts and lives so that their children can grow in happy, nurturing surroundings.

However, adopting a child is difficult in part because the cost of adoption continues to increase. A family can spend upwards of \$20,000 just to make it possible to provide children with a loving home. These families should not be financially burdened by the exorbitant costs of adoption.

Thousands of individuals want to give a child a loving home but cannot due to the

huge expense. Adoption costs should not be an insurmountable obstacle for these individuals. We have a responsibility to these men and women to open the doors to adoption, not shut them. And we have an even bigger responsibility to help a child find the family he or she needs.

The Hope for Children Act exemplifies how Congress can help these families and how we can provide more children with the opportunity to live happier, successful lives.

This important legislation would increase the tax credit each adoption to \$10,000 and make the process more affordable for middle-class families. Present law only provides a \$5,000 tax credit per adoption and a \$6,000 tax credit for the adoption of a special-needs child. The current tax credit is far below the actual cost of adopting a child. Furthermore, the Hope for Children Act would index the credit for inflation and increase the earnings limit, expanding eligibility for the tax credit. The Hope for Children Act would also make the adoption tax credit permanent law, repealing the sunset, and exempt the beneficiaries of the credit from the Alternative Minimum Tax. This will ensure that parents receive the full benefit of this credit.

Children who are without permanent families should not be penalized, and families who want to open their homes to these children should not have to struggle financially. Let us provide these families with the opportunity to open their hearts and homes to a child in need. Let us pass the Hope for Children Act.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 662, the Hope for Children Act. Knowing of the importance adoption plays in the lives of American families, Congress should do more to help facilitate and promote its benefits. I am pleased that the House of Representatives passed this bill earlier today with bipartisan and unanimous support. This action speaks to the strength of this legislation, and I hope the United States Senate moves quickly to follow the lead of the House.

Unquestionably, this legislation would tear down the financial burdens imposed on adoptive parents. These expenses can add up to \$20,000 or more in a single year and continue to be the primary disincentive to middle-class families. While families who have children born to them often enjoy the fact that health insurance pays for the birth of their children, adoptive families receive no such support. H.R. 662 offsets this imbalance and makes the process a more financially viable option for middle-income parents to build families through adoption.

Mr. Speaker, few can argue that adoption does not result in moving children out of foster homes and providing the benefit of a solid home and possibilities for a bright future. The benefits of adoption exist not only with the adopted child, but with the biological mother and society as well. Adoption can help break the cycle of abortion that too often takes place with young girls having babies out of wedlock. By choosing adoption, women can feel good about themselves by making the right decision—not to have an abortion.

At the same time, adoption can help break the cycle of single parenting. More than eighty percent of all females born to single mothers under the age of 16 become teenage mothers themselves. By choosing adoption as an alternative to single parenting, these women can continue their education, develop job skills and

a sense of independence, and live the rest of their lives knowing they were not forced to choose abortion over single parenting.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of fairness to adoptive families. H.R. 662 is good public policy and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my fellow 'Hope Coalition' members who joined with me in introducing the 'Hope for Children Act' (H.R. 622). I will be very proud to see H.R. 622 pass the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Every child deserves a permanent, loving home and, with so many families who want to open their hearts and their homes to these children, I firmly believe we should help remove the financial barriers that may hinder this union. By extending a \$10,000 tax credit to families who adopt a child, The Hope for Children Act will help to foster strong, healthy families across the nation.

The promotion of special needs adoptions is essential. Families who adopt special needs children incur significant costs after an adoption has taken place. It must be mentioned that the Hope for Children Act, as introduced, included a \$10,000 flat tax credit for families who adopt children with special needs. Though this measure was eliminated in Committee, I will not stop fighting to ensure that the needs of these children and families are adequately addressed.

Across America, there are an estimated 122,000 children waiting for a family to love and care for them. but with adoption costs ranging from \$8,000 to \$20,000, many families can not afford this huge expense. No child should be forced to grow up without a family because of the tremendous cost of adoption.

It has been a privilege and an honor to work with the members of the 'Hope Coalition' in ensuring that this legislation passed the House of Representatives. Please be assured that I will continue to do all that I can to make sure that the Hope for Children Act becomes law.

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Hope for Children Act. This much needed legislation would help more children be placed in loving homes by easing the financial burden of adopting a child. By increasing the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 for all adoptions and increasing the employer adoption assistance exclusion to \$10,000, more families would be able to adopt. Adoption costs have risen over the years, costing families anywhere between \$8,000 and \$30,000 to adopt a child.

It is important that we pass this Hope for Children Act today because the current \$5,000 tax credit for non-special needs adoptions expires this year, as well as the current \$5,000 exclusion for employer-provided adoption assistance. This tax credit helps make the adoption process more affordable for middle-class families.

Helping to unite children with adoptive parents is an issue that we can all agree on. There is perhaps no greater undertaking than raising a child, nor more rewarding an experience. Thousands of children are waiting to be adopted, waiting for the day they are welcomed into a loving home where they can grow and flourish. Let's help make the dream of so many families become a reality by passing the Hope for Children Act today.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Hope for Children Act. As a member of this chamber and as the father of two

adopted children, I want to thank Reps. DEMINT, OBERSTAR, PRYCE, KING and BACHUS and the entire Congressional Coalition on Adoption for their dedication to the well-being of our Nation's and our world's children.

It is fitting that we consider this bill less than a week after celebrating Mother's Day and so close to Father's Day. These two days have been set aside for us to thank our parents for raising us, for giving us a sense of security and independence, and for offering us their unconditional love. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all parents, who know that there is no more important, more difficult, and ultimately more rewarding undertaking than raising a child.

I was very fortunate to have been raised by loving parents in a stable and caring home. I can't help but be reminded, however, of the over 500,000 children in our Nation's foster care system, many of whom need permanent homes. Although we have made great strides in improving the child welfare system, there is no substitute for a loving parents and a permanent home. For the thousands of children who wait, adoption offers the gift of hope, the gift of love, and the gift of family.

My own family was forever changed and enriched by the adoption of our two children from Korea. It is difficult for me to express how deeply grateful I am to have Kathryn and Scott in my life. As any parent can attest, the love I have for my children knows no bounds.

As many of my colleagues also know, families can spend anywhere from \$8,000 to \$30,000, or even more, to adopt a child. I am proud, therefore, to be a cosponsor the Hope for Children Act, which helps offset the financial impact of adoption. By raising the limit on the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 and making it permanent for all adoptions, I hope that this measure will open thousands of more homes and hearts to the miracle of adoption.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not point out what I believe is one shortcoming of this legislation. All children, regardless of age, medical need, disability, race or creed deserve a family to share their love. We need to do more to encourage the adoption of special needs children, those who are hardest to place in permanent homes.

Since State foster care programs cover most of the tax qualified expenses associated with special needs adoptions, only about 15% of adoptive parents of special needs children can benefit from the credit. These parents, however, incur other substantial adoption-related costs, such as out-of-pocket medical costs, counseling services, and lost income from work. As parents, legislators and advocates, we must give all children the chance to find a family. I thank the leadership for indicating their willingness to work on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the Hope for Children Act and look forward to working with them to strengthen this bill.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of the Hope for Children Act and I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

I have heard from many families back home in western Wisconsin of the need for an increased adoption tax credit. The Hope for Children Act seeks to ease the financial burden on many families who adopt children. It will increase the adoption tax credit from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for families who adopt chil-

dren and make this credit permanent, which is due to expire at the end of this year. Furthermore, it will index the credit for inflation and increase the earnings limit, expanding the eligibility for the tax credit.

As a father of two sons, I understand how important it is for children to grow up in a loving and stable family environment. We must find a way to help the thousands of children who have no permanent family. I believe extending this tax credit is one of the most important ways to help these children and the families who adopt them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend all those families who have adopted and cared for so many children that would otherwise never have known the true meaning of a loving, caring family. I hope with this legislation we will ease the high cost of adoption for many families.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass this commonsense legislation to give our nation's needy children and loving families hope.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of the Hope for Children Act, I rise in strong support of its passage and urge all my colleagues to vote for this important family-building bill.

Just last Sunday, children young and old took time from their daily routine to remember their mothers on Mothers' Day. These are the women who have nurtured their children, giving them life, hope, happiness, and love. In just a few weeks, we will similarly honor our fathers on Fathers' Day, remembering the men in our lives who have taught us so much about life's ups and downs, ins and outs.

But for thousands of children, there is no one to honor on these special days and nothing to celebrate. For one reason or another, they are without parents or families. Thankfully, there are thousands of men and women who want to open up their homes to these children and make them a part of their families. Adoption makes this possible.

In 1992, the last year for which total adoption statistics are available, 127,441 children were adopted in the United States. Nearly 7,000 of those children were adopted in my home state of Florida, which has the fourth largest number of adoptions in the country. Some of these children were adopted by relatives, others by total strangers. Some of them came from overseas, others from across the street. All are loved and wanted. It made no difference to the children or the parents that they don't look the same; it only mattered that they needed one another.

Regrettably, many of these important unions are kept from ever occurring because the costs of adopting can be more than a family can bear. The adoption processes can cost between \$8,000 and \$30,000. The adoption tax credit helps to ease this financial burden and remove this obstacle. But, without our action here today, that tax credit will expire.

Mr. Speaker, the Hope for Children Act permanently extends and raises that tax credit to \$10,000. Furthermore, it raises the employer adoption assistance exclusion to \$10,000. By enacting this legislation into law this year, families can take advantage of this tax credit when filling out their 2002 tax returns.

This bill is just plain good policy, Mr. Speaker. We should do all we can to encourage adoption and to make families stronger. I ask all of my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show my strong support for H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act. I am proud to be joined by so many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle as an original cosponsor of this important legislation that will remove some of the unnecessary financial burdens that have long plagued the adoption process. I believe that it will also pave the way for children to be raised in safe, caring environments by an adoptive family.

It is estimated that the average adoptive family can spend from \$8,000 to \$30,000 to adopt a child. In addition, the lack of adoptive families leaves children in an intermediate state, waiting for an average of four years for an adoptive family. The Hope for Children Act will increase the tax credit a family receives for adopting any child to \$10,000, up from the current amount of only \$5,000 and \$6,000 for special needs children. This credit will make adoption more affordable for middle-class families. Under current law, the tax-credit will expire on December 31, 2001 for non-special needs children; however, under the Hope for Children Act, the tax credit will be permanently extended. Also, the credit would be indexed to inflation, meaning that as inflation rates rise, so would the tax credit the adopting family receives, for all families with incomes below \$150,000.

In my District, I have witnessed the beneficial effects of outside funding for adoption services. In September 2000, the Catholic Family Services of Hartford, Connecticut, was awarded \$250,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help increase the number of Latino children placed in adoption and the number of Latino families that are licensed for adoption and foster care. The program is designed to help facilitate the moving of children out of the child welfare system and into permanent adoptive homes. This project helps those in the community help themselves and provides loving homes to children who deserve them. This has been a wonderful service to provide children with and the best way to safeguard their future.

Mr. Speaker, adoption is a very sensitive and personal matter. Adoption is an option left to couples that, often times, have endured an intense personal trauma. The least we can do is to lift some of the financial burdens brought on by the adoption process to let adoptive families focus on the most important ingredient in the process, the children. I applaud the strong commitment so many of my colleagues have made to the Hope for Children Act. It is my hope that passage of the Hope for Children Act will put children into loving and secure homes. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 622, the Hope For Children Act which will increase the adoption tax credit for families. I am an original cosponsor of this legislation and I commend the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. DEMINT for his leadership on this important issue.

Today's high cost for adoptions causes many couples to dismiss adoption as an option. With thousands of children in foster care needing homes, and thousands more being put up for adoption by parents who cannot care for them, the United States needs to make adoption financially possible for more American families. A typical adoption can cost a family anywhere from \$8,000 to \$30,000

leading some families to take second mortgages on their homes or accumulate other serious debt. This cost leaves many children in the foster care system permanently.

H.R. 622 will help ease this financial burden so that children are quickly placed in permanent and loving homes, which will encourage the development of more stable families and help more children bypass the foster care system. Studies have shown this stability discourages children from becoming involved in crime or depending upon welfare.

This legislation will increase the adoption tax credit for families who adopt special needs children from \$6,000 to \$10,000. The credit for families who adopt non-special needs children is increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and extended permanently. Moreover this legislation increases the income cap at which the credit begins to phase out from \$75,000 to \$150,000.

As a parent of an adoptive child, I personally know that bringing a child into your home is one of the most gratifying and fulfilling things a parent can do. If we can encourage more families to adopt by making it financially possible, thousands of children will benefit. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this important and timely legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 622, the Hope for Children Act. This much needed legislation is an important step toward providing every child a loving, permanent home.

I thank and commend my colleagues for sponsoring and moving this legislation forward. I know that they must share my passion and commitment to our nation's children. H.R. 622 responds to a very real need in the lives of some of our nation's most vulnerable children, those awaiting adoption.

Under current law, a taxpayer may deduct expenses of up to \$5,000 relating to the adoption of a child, and up to \$6,000 for the adoption of a "special needs" child. The credit is phased out for taxpayers with annual income above \$75,000. The adoption credit for special needs children is permanent, but the credit for the adoption of other children is scheduled to expire at the end of this year. Under current law, beginning in 2002, the adoption credit could not be used to reduce tax liability under the alternative minimum tax (AMT).

This bill increases the adoption tax credit to \$10,000, up from \$6,000 for special-needs children and \$5,000 for all other children. It also makes permanent the adoption credit for children without special needs. Under the measure, the adoption credit could be applied against alternative minimum tax liability.

Current law also permits an employee to exclude up to \$5,000 in adoption expenses (\$6,000 for special-needs children) from taxable income for expenses reimbursed to the employee through an employer-sponsored adoption-assistance program. This provision is also set to expire on December 31. The measure increases to \$10,000 the amount that an employee may exclude from taxable income for expenses reimbursed through an employer adoption assistance program. The measure also makes permanent the adoption-assistance exclusion.

The measure increases the beginning point of the income phase-out range for both the adoption credit and the adoption-assistance program exclusion from \$75,000 to \$150,000.

During 1999, the most recent year for which data is available, nationally over 820,000 chil-

dren went through the foster care system, and 568,000 were in the system at year's end. Of the children adopted from foster care in 1999, 48 percent waited more than one year from the time they became legally free for adoption until they were placed in an adoptive home. The mean length of time in foster care is 46 months.

In my home state of Texas, at least 17,000 children were in foster care at the end of 1998, the last year for which that data is available. This is an increase of nearly 255% from the 1990 foster care population and an overwhelming increase of 363% from 1986. During that year, the Texas foster care system served over 20,000 children.

Approximately one half of these foster children are minorities. Studies have shown that minority children wait longer to be adopted than do white children. According to the National Council for Adoption (NCFA), African American children constitute about 43 percent of the children awaiting adoption in the foster care system, Hispanics 15 percent. In Harris County, 78 percent of all foster children are minorities.

Thus, it is crucial that we do all we can to encourage adoption. However, many parents who want to open their hearts and homes to a child through adoption cannot do so because of the great expense. Adoption can cost thousands of dollars, and so the cost is the primary obstacle to bringing together loving families and children who need a home.

Today, we can take an action that will have a direct impact on the lives of children. Please join me in doing so.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Hope for Children Act and thank Chairman THOMAS, former Congressman Bliley, and the bipartisan Hope Coalition for introducing this legislation. I have supported this legislation for several years and am proud to currently be one of 289 cosponsors.

Approximately 50,000 children are adopted nationwide each year. According to the State Department's annual report, the number of international adoptions increased approximately 13 percent from 1998 to 2000. According to Adoptions Forever, an adoption agency in Maryland, the average aggregate cost of adoption for these international orphans ranges up to \$30,000, while a domestic adoption can range up to \$12,000. Passing the Hope for Children Act will ease the burden of what can be an expensive obstacle to sharing your home life with a child in need.

Currently, tax credits provided for adoption of children without special needs will expire at the end of this year. The credit is currently \$5,000 for children without special needs, \$6,000 for children with special needs. H.R. 622 promotes adoption opportunities by preserving and expanding tax credits for those families that choose to adopt.

The Montgomery County division for child welfare provides lawyers and travel compensation for adoptive parents. Despite this coverage of general adoption payments, the division has more children with special needs than they can place. With a \$10,000 tax credit, an organization like the Montgomery County division of child welfare will attract more potential adoptive families, leaving fewer special needs children without homes.

Enacting the Hope for Children Act allows us to build we must build on current suc-

cesses of tax credits for adoptive families and send our support for families who adopt. Adoption allows children who otherwise would be without a nurturing home to experience childhood with a supporting family. Every family that wants to adopt should have the opportunity to adopt. As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Adoption, I encourage my colleagues to join me and the bipartisan Hope Coalition in supporting H.R. 622.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of the bill, this Member wishes to add his strong support of H.R. 622, the Hope for the Children Act, and would like to commend the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, and the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the ranking member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, for bringing this important legislation to the House floor today.

As you know, the high cost for adoptions causes many couples to dismiss adoption as too costly. Other families have taken second mortgages on their home or accumulated other debt. Because families spend anywhere from \$8,000 to \$30,000 to adopt a child, these high costs mean that many children do not get adopted and stay in the foster care system permanently.

The Hope for Children Act will ease the burden of this expense by increasing the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 for all adoptions. While this credit will not completely cover the often exorbitant costs associated with adoptions, it will provide a healthy start toward ensuring more children find a loving home.

This bill will encourage the creation of more families and help more children bypass the foster care system to enter in to a permanent arrangement. This much needed stability will also mean that these children will have better, more stable home environments and that they will be less likely to become future burdens on society either through crime or welfare.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this Member urges his colleagues to support H.R. 622.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the "Hope for Children Act of 2001." This important legislation continues our commitment to providing families assistance when adopting children who might otherwise be in need of a loving home. I've had many constituents tell me that the current costs of adoption can, in many cases, exceed \$25,000 or even \$30,000. Raising the adoption tax credit from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and making it permanent will go a long way toward alleviating the burden of these burdensome costs.

I truly believe that there is no greater gift that a person can give than placing a child in a loving and nurturing environment. There are many young couples today looking to adopt a child, but the costs associated with adoption prevent them from this noble mission. I do not believe that this legislation creates an artificial incentive for people to adopt. They simply want to bring a child into the world and give it all of the love and affection they have to offer. The adoption tax credit just makes it easier for people to fulfill that dream.

I have raised a household full of children. I've watched them grow and mature into fine individuals. I've been there through good times and bad. Nothing has brought me greater joy in my life than my children and I hope this bill will give people across America that same opportunity.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Hope for the Children Act and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important legislation.

This bill will help more families provide loving homes to more children by increasing the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 for all adoptions and increase the employer adoption assistance exclusion to \$10,000. Because families can spend anywhere from \$8,000 to \$30,000 to adopt a child, this assistance is vital to ensure children quickly find a permanent, loving home. Many parents who want to open their hearts and homes to a child through adoption cannot because of the huge expense. This bill removes some of the financial obstacles to finding families for these children.

Adoption is a beautiful expression of family values, for it allows people the opportunity to extend their homes and their hearts to people in need. It is my sincere hope that passage of this legislation will encourage many more people to adopt and encourage individuals to consider adoption as an alternative when they are not ready to be parents. It is essential to raise the awareness of the benefits of adoption in our effort to provide for all children throughout the world.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Hope for Children Act. As a member of this Chamber, and, more importantly, as the father of two adopted children, I thank Representatives DEMINT, OBERSTAR, PRYCE, KING, and BACHUS and the entire Congressional Coalition on Adoption for their dedication to the well-being of our Nation's and our world's children.

It is fitting that we consider this bill less than a week after celebrating Mother's Day and so close to Father's Day, 2 days that have been set aside for us to thank our parents for raising us, for giving us a sense of security and independence, and for offering us their unconditional love. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all parents, who know that there is no more important, more difficult, and ultimately more rewarding undertaking than raising a child.

I was very fortunate to have been raised by a loving mother in a stable and caring home. I can't help but be reminded, however, of the over 500,000 children in our Nation's foster care system who await permanent homes. Although in recent years we have made great strides in improving the child welfare system, there is no substitute for a loving parents and a permanent home. For the thousands of children who wait, adoption offers the gift of hope, the gift of love, and the gift of family.

My own family was forever changed and enriched by the adoption of our two children from Korea. It is difficult for me to express how deeply grateful I am to have Kathryn and Scott in my life. As any parent can attest, the love I have for my children knows no bounds.

As many of my colleagues can attest, families can spend anywhere from \$8,000 to \$20,000, or even higher, to adopt a child. I am proud, therefore, to be a cosponsor of the Hope for Children Act, which helps offset the financial impact of adoption. By raising the limit on the adoption tax credit to \$10,000 for all adoptions, and making it permanent, I hope that this measure will open thousands of more homes and hearts to the miracle of adoption.

I would be in error, however, not to point out what I believe is one shortcoming of this legislation. All children, regardless of age, medical

need, disability, race or creed deserve a family to share their love. We need to do more to encourage the adoption of special needs children, those who are hardest to place in permanent homes.

Since State foster care programs cover most of the tax qualified expenses associated with special needs adoptions, only about 15 percent of adoptive parents of special needs children can benefit from the credit. These parents, however, incur other substantial adoption-related costs, such as out-of-pocket medical costs, counseling services, and lost income from work. As parents, legislators and advocates, we owe all children, regardless of need, a chance to find a family. I thank the leadership for indicating their willingness to work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Hope for Children Act and look forward to working with them to strengthen this bill.

1. Average cost of adoptions are between \$8,000-\$30,000, depending upon circumstances (i.e. international, special needs, etc.)

2. There are about 550,000 children in our nation's foster care system waiting to be adopted. About 120,000 of these children are special needs children, meaning they are more difficult to place because of their age, medical condition, physical or mental handicap, membership in a minority, or being part of a group of siblings waited to be adopted together.

3. The Hope for Children Act, which you cosponsored, increases and expands the adoption tax credit. In general, it:

Increases the limit on the credit for non-special needs children from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and makes it permanent (it would expire this year).

Increases the limit on the credit for special-needs adoptions from \$6,000 to \$10,000 (it is already permanent).

Increases the limit on the employer adoption assistance exclusion from \$5,000 (\$6,000 for special-needs adoptions) to \$10,000 for all adoptions and makes it permanent.

Increases the income limit for the full credit from \$75,000 to \$150,000. Phases out the credit for incomes between \$150,000-\$190,000.

Indexes the credit for inflation.

4. While the bill as introduced makes the special-needs credit a non-qualified credit, the Chairman's mark does not. A non-qualified credit is very important to the special needs and adoption community. Only about 15% of adoptive parents of special needs children incur enough in qualified expenses to benefit from the credit, these parents incur substantial indirect costs through counseling, medical services, home improvements for disabled children, etc.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 141, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 420, nays 0, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 124]  
YEAS—420

Abercrombie	DeMint	Jackson-Lee
Ackerman	Deutsch	(TX)
Aderholt	Diaz-Balart	Jefferson
Akin	Dicks	Jenkins
Allen	Dingell	John
Andrews	Doggett	Johnson (CT)
Armey	Dooley	Johnson (IL)
Baca	Doolittle	Johnson, E. B.
Bachus	Doyle	Johnson, Sam
Baird	Dreier	Jones (NC)
Baker	Duncan	Jones (OH)
Baldacci	Dunn	Kanjorski
Baldwin	Edwards	Kaptur
Ballenger	Ehlers	Keller
Barcia	Ehrlich	Kelly
Barr	Emerson	Kennedy (MN)
Barrett	Engel	Kerns
Bartlett	English	Kildee
Barton	Eshoo	Kind (WI)
Bass	Etheridge	King (NY)
Becerra	Evans	Kingston
Bentsen	Everett	Kirk
Bereuter	Farr	Klecza
Berkley	Fattah	Knollenberg
Berman	Ferguson	Kolbe
Berry	Filmer	Kucinich
Billrakis	Flake	LaFalce
Bishop	Fletcher	LaHood
Blagojevich	Foley	Lampson
Blumenauer	Ford	Langevin
Blunt	Fossella	Lantos
Boehlert	Frank	Larsen (WA)
Boehner	Frelinghuysen	Larson (CT)
Bonilla	Frost	Latham
Bonior	Gallegly	LaTourette
Bono	Gekas	Leach
Boswell	Gephardt	Lee
Boucher	Gibbons	Levin
Boyd	Gilchrest	Lewis (CA)
Brady (TX)	Gillmor	Lewis (GA)
Brown (FL)	Gonzalez	Lewis (KY)
Brown (OH)	Goode	Linder
Brown (SC)	Goodlatte	Lipinski
Bryant	Gordon	LoBiondo
Burr	Goss	Lofgren
Burton	Graham	Lowe
Buyer	Granger	Lucas (KY)
Callahan	Graves	Luther
Calvert	Green (TX)	Maloney (CT)
Camp	Green (WI)	Maloney (NY)
Cannon	Greenwood	Manzullo
Cantor	Grucci	Markey
Capito	Gutierrez	Mascara
Capps	Gutknecht	Matheson
Capuano	Hall (OH)	Matsui
Cardin	Hall (TX)	McCarthy (MO)
Carson (IN)	Hansen	McCarthy (NY)
Carson (OK)	Harman	McCollum
Castle	Hart	McCrery
Chabot	Hastings (FL)	McDermott
Chambliss	Hastings (WA)	McGovern
Clay	Hayes	McHugh
Clayton	Hayworth	McInnis
Clement	Hefley	McIntyre
Clyburn	Heger	McKeon
Coble	Hill	McKinney
Collins	Hilleary	McNulty
Combest	Hilliard	Meehan
Conyers	Hinche	Meek (FL)
Cooksey	Hinojosa	Meeks (NY)
Costello	Hobson	Menendez
Coyne	Hoefel	Mica
Cramer	Hoekstra	Millender-
Crane	Holden	McDonald
Crenshaw	Holt	Miller (FL)
Crowley	Honda	Miller, Gary
Culberson	Hoolley	Miller, George
Cummings	Horn	Mink
Cunningham	Hostettler	Moakley
Davis (CA)	Houghton	Mollohan
Davis (FL)	Hoyer	Moore
Davis (IL)	Hulshof	Moran (KS)
Davis, Jo Ann	Hutchinson	Moran (VA)
Davis, Tom	Hyde	Morella
Deal	Inslee	Murtha
DeFazio	Isakson	Myrick
DeGette	Israel	Nadler
Delahunt	Issa	Napolitano
DeLauro	Istook	Neal
DeLay	Jackson (IL)	Nethercutt
		Ney

Northup	Rothman	Sununu
Norwood	Roukema	Sweeney
Nussle	Roybal-Allard	Tancredo
Oberstar	Royce	Tanner
Obey	Rush	Tauscher
Olver	Ryan (WI)	Tauzin
Ortiz	Ryun (KS)	Taylor (MS)
Osborne	Sabo	Taylor (NC)
Ose	Sanchez	Terry
Otter	Sanders	Thomas
Owens	Sandinin	Thompson (CA)
Oxley	Sawyer	Thompson (MS)
Pallone	Saxton	Thornberry
Pascrell	Scarborough	Thune
Pastor	Schaffer	Thurman
Paul	Schakowsky	Tiahrt
Payne	Schiff	Tiberi
Pelosi	Schrook	Tierney
Pence	Scott	Toomey
Peterson (MN)	Sensenbrenner	Towns
Peterson (PA)	Serrano	Trafficant
Petri	Sessions	Turner
Phelps	Shadegg	Udall (CO)
Pickering	Shaw	Udall (NM)
Pitts	Shays	Upton
Platts	Sherman	Velazquez
Pombo	Sherwood	Visclosky
Pomeroy	Shimkus	Vitter
Portman	Shows	Walden
Price (NC)	Shuster	Walsh
Pryce (OH)	Simmons	Wamp
Putnam	Simpson	Waters
Quinn	Skeen	Watkins
Radanovich	Skelton	Watt (NC)
Rahall	Slaughter	Watts (OK)
Ramstad	Smith (MI)	Waxman
Rangel	Smith (NJ)	Weiner
Regula	Smith (TX)	Weldon (FL)
Rehberg	Smith (WA)	Weldon (PA)
Reyes	Snyder	Weller
Reynolds	Solis	Wexler
Riley	Souder	Whitfield
Rivers	Spence	Wicker
Rodriguez	Spratt	Wilson
Roemer	Stark	Wolf
Rogers (KY)	Stearns	Woolsey
Rogers (MI)	Stenholm	Wu
Rohrabacher	Strickland	Wynn
Ros-Lehtinen	Stump	Young (AK)
Ross	Stupak	Young (FL)

## NOT VOTING—12

Borski	Cubin	Kennedy (RI)
Brady (PA)	Gansler	Kilpatrick
Condit	Gilman	Largent
Cox	Hunter	Lucas (OK)

□ 1232

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 124, I was speaking at a Liberian rally and could not make it back in time. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I was unavoidably delayed. Accordingly, I was unable to vote on rollcall Nos. 122, 123, and 124. If I had been present I would have voted "yea" on all. I ask unanimous consent to have my statement placed in the RECORD at the appropriate point.

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1, NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 143 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

## H. RES. 143

*Resolved*, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1) a bill to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed two hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my colleague and friend, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 143 makes in order the bill H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, under a structured rule. The rule provides 2 hours of debate to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. It makes in order only those amendments printed in the Committee on Rules report accompanying the resolution, debatable for the time specified, equally controlled by a proponent and opponent. These amendments shall not be subject to amendment or demands for a division of the question.

The Committee on Rules worked very hard to ensure that the amendments made in order reflect the variety of views in this House of Representatives on education policy. I think the result is a balanced rule that gives the House the opportunity to work its will on a variety of issues related to the education of our children. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill as well as the amendments printed in the report. Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, today we take a historic leap forward on behalf of our children, parents, and teachers across this great Nation. Lately, the attention of Americans has been drawn to the problems of high gas prices and sustainability of our resources. America, it is time to focus that attention on our Nation's most precious resource: our children. H.R. 1, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, does just that.

We understand that the future of this great Nation lies in a global economy, and H.R. 1 recognizes that investing in our children today will prepare them and our country for the challenges of tomorrow. The Committee on Education and the Workforce was assigned the arduous task of reforming our Nation's failing Federal education policy. Although there have been many bumps in the road, I am pleased to stand before my colleagues today to present a rule on a bipartisan piece of legislation that will transform the Federal role in education to ensure that no child is left behind.

During testimony in the Committee on Rules, we heard time and time again, from both Republicans and Democrats, that H.R. 1 represents the most sweeping comprehensive education legislation to be brought before the House during our tenure. It has been a long time in coming and this bill is truly historic. The education of our Nation's children is the number one concern of Americans, and H.R. 1 is the number one priority of our President.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate my colleague and good friend from the great State of Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for his hard work and commitment to improving educational opportunities for our children, and I would also like to congratulate and commend the ranking member of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), for his hard work and support of this bipartisan legislation.

Despite a decade of economic growth and a Federal outlay of more than \$130 billion in the last 25 years, the achievement gap dividing our Nation's disadvantaged students and their peers has continued to widen. Mr. Speaker, the message is loud and clear: money alone cannot be the vehicle for change in our public schools. It is time for accountability, it is time for reform, and it is time for a commitment to our children.