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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 25, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CASS BALLINGER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

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

WE MUST ELIMINATE WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, one of my goals since first being elected to serve in Congress has been to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government and many of its programs. While we have been successful in iden-

tifying and reducing wasteful spending, there is still too much unnecessary spending that needs to be eliminated.

This came out in a report by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs entitled *Government at the Brink* that outlines the urgent Federal Government management problems facing the Bush administration. They cited four core problems that exist: One, work force management; two, financial management information; three, technology management; and, four, overlap and duplication.

Senator FRED THOMPSON of Tennessee was the chairman of this committee when this report was compiled. I want to share with my colleagues what his committee found.

A chief source of the information was based on reports issued by the General Accounting Office, the GAO, and agency inspectors general, or the IGs. Now, my colleagues might ask, just how much money are we talking about. Well, according to GAO, we are talking about at least \$35 billion a year, and that is just the tip of the iceberg.

The GAO reported that the Medicare program wastes \$12 billion every year on improper payments. According to the GAO, 10 percent of total health care costs are lost to wasteful spending. What came to light about the misappropriation of our tax dollars is downright alarming. In order to cut out waste in Medicare claims, the Health Care Financing Administration decided that new computer software should be developed to create one mammoth computerized method to review bills. Ultimately, what the American taxpayers got after 4 years was a bill for \$80 million. An official at this agency had this explanation: He said that the money was used in effect as a painful learning experience. We learned about this in 1997.

The Medicare program is not the only offender. Let us take a look at the Department of Education. This govern-

ment agency failed its last three financial audits. The government auditors identified accounting discrepancies totaling up to \$6 billion in Federal education aid that was embezzled, lost, used for real estate purchases, luxury car items, rent, and so forth. If we intend to increase the funding to the Department of Education, then we need to put in strong accounting practices.

Unfortunately, it is not difficult to find all sorts of examples of waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government. The Medicare program and the Department of Education have a long history of wasteful spending. However, the Department of Interior does not know what has happened to over \$3 billion it holds in trust for the American Indians. Or what about what is referred to as the "big dig" up in Boston, Massachusetts? Boston's central artery has cost tremendous amounts of dollars. It has increased about 525 percent, from \$2.6 billion to the current estimate of \$14 billion.

We have serious problems that are cited in the Thompson report that need to be addressed if we are to solve mismanagement of valuable resources. The most compelling of these is work force management. Many agencies lack the right employees with the right skills to do the job. The report also stated that the Clinton administration's downsizing of government hardly made a dent in the true size of government. What it did do was create a brain drain that cost the government many of its most experienced and valuable employees. The end result is that the Federal Government wound up doing the same old thing in the same old way, but with less experienced workers.

Financial management. How can the government operate efficiently when agencies do not know how much money they have, how much they spend, or how much their programs cost.

Information technology management. This is a critical item because

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



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we want our government computer systems not to be vulnerable to terrorist attacks, either domestically or internationally. The GAO has designed computer security, a governmentwide program, but it has problems.

The last area of concern is overlap and duplication. For instance, the Federal Government has seven different agencies administering four different programs aimed at job training. Eight different agencies operate 50 different programs to assist the homeless. Nine agencies operate 27 teen pregnancy programs. Seventy different agencies gather and analyze statistical data. Seventeen departments and agencies operate 515 research and development laboratories.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the areas where duplication and overlap waste our tax dollars. We must restrain government spending, but I realize that, just as President Reagan said, government programs once launched never disappear. Actually, a government agency is the nearest thing to eternal life we will ever see here on this Earth.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

S. Con. Res. 54. Concurrent resolution authorizing the Rotunda of the Capitol to be used on July 26, 2001, for a ceremony to present Congressional Gold Medals to the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 38 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Colonel Edward T. Brogan, Senior Chaplain, United States Air Force, Arlington National Cemetery, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, through Your grace You have established these United States. It is our blessing that Your strength can only be made perfect in our weakness. Enable us to kneel before You this day to receive Your good gift of strength. Perfect each of us, Lord, in our dependence upon You, that we might accomplish all that You would have us to do. Keep us from selfish ambition and brash self-reliance.

Today marks the fifth anniversary of the bombing of Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. That bombing reminded us of the cost of being a world power and of combatting evil. This day, Lord, we pray for Your protection upon our military men and women who serve all around the globe. Give them wisdom and energy in their service to our Nation. Watch over their families, ease the pain of the survivors and family members left behind after the terrorist attack at Khobar Towers and at too many other places.

Guide each Member of this House in humility before You and the people of the United States. Please also attend to the needs of the many staffers who accomplish so much of the work of this House. Give clarity and civility in debate, that the decisions reached might well serve our Nation. Bless our land with Your peace and dedication to serving You.

This we pray in Your holy and blessed name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof. Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GILCHREST led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that she will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

RHINOCEROS AND TIGER CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. GILCHREST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 645) to reauthorize the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 645

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 "Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF RHINOCEROS AND TIGER CONSERVATION ACT OF 1994.

Section 9 of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5306) is amended by striking "1996 through 2002" and inserting "2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007".

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

Section 9 of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5306) is further amended—

(1) by striking "There are authorized" and inserting "(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(b) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Of amounts available each fiscal year to carry out this Act, the Secretary may expend not more than 3 percent or \$80,000, whichever is greater, to pay the administrative expenses necessary to carry out this Act.".

SEC. 4. COOPERATION.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 is further amended by redesignating section 9 (16 U.S.C. 5306) as section 10, and by inserting after section 8 the following:

SEC. 9. ADVISORY GROUP.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—To assist in carrying out this Act, the Secretary may convene an advisory group consisting of individuals representing public and private organizations actively involved in the conservation of rhinoceros and tiger species.

"(b) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—

"(1) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Group shall—

"(A) ensure that each meeting of the advisory group is open to the public; and

"(B) provide, at each meeting, an opportunity for interested persons to present oral or written statements concerning items on the agenda.

"(2) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide to the public timely notice of each meeting of the advisory group.

"(3) MINUTES.—Minutes of each meeting of the advisory group shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be made available to the public.

"(c) EXEMPTION FROM FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the advisory group.".

SEC. 5. PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY.

Section 5(e) of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 5304) is amended to read as follows:

"(e) PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY.—To the maximum extent practical, in determining whether to approve project proposals under this section, the Secretary shall give consideration to projects which will enhance sustainable conservation programs to ensure effective long-term conservation of rhinoceros and tigers.".

SEC. 6. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 is amended as follows:

(1) Section 4(3) (16 U.S.C. 5303(3)) is amended by striking "Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund established under section 6(a)" and inserting "the account established by division A, section 101(e), title I of Public Law 105-277 under the heading 'MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND'".

(2) Section 6 (16 U.S.C. 5305) is amended by striking the section heading and all that follows through "(d) ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF DONATIONS—" and inserting the following:

SEC. 6. ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF DONATIONS.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Title I of section 101(e) of division A of Public Law 105-277 (112 Stat. 2681-237) is amended under the heading "MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND" by striking "Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation