

our communities. Torture victims face debilitating and unimaginable social, physical, emotional and spiritual scarring.

Many survivors are challenged with daily constant anxiety, depression, and suffer from fear. Torture is a crime against humanity. It is a crime against all of us.

Today I stand here with my colleagues to ensure that the United States works in collaboration with all nations to end government-sponsored torture, to end policies and practices that violate human rights. Although the memories cannot be erased, the wounds can be healed.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

(Ms. WATSON of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 168, the resolution that expresses the sense of Congress in support of victims of torture. But first I wish to commend the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for introducing this important legislation. I also wish to express my gratitude to the honorable gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, for allowing me the opportunity to speak on this very important international issue. As both a former Ambassador and member of the Committee on International Relations, I stand before this esteemed body to speak on the necessity of highlighting the plight of the many victims of torture around the world.

Today, there are over 500,000 survivors of torture who live in the United States as a result of fleeing from those repressive governments that use various tactics to torture to combat democracy.

This bill is very significant, for it pays tribute to all the victims in the United States and the world who are struggling to overcome the physical and mental scars of torture on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Torture is a violation of international law as reflected in the convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment to which the United States is a party. Furthermore, such actions are an attack on the decency of every human being who lives in a world where such horrible practices exist.

In light of these atrocities, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 168, to express support for victims of torture, and I thank Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for bringing this issue to the floor.

Although torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment is prohibited under

international human rights law, state-officials in countries all over the world are responsible for the ill-treatment of individuals. Today, hundreds of thousands of victims of torture live in the United States. They are typically well-educated, well-trained people who were subjected to politically motivated torture by repressive regimes. They were tortured because of what they believe, what they said or did, or for what they represented.

Many torture survivors suffer in silence, enduring incessant physical and emotional anguish. These courageous individuals, who often suffered for speaking out for freedom and justice, deserve our full and uncompromising support.

When Congress passed the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998, we agreed that victims should have access to rehabilitation services, enabling them to become productive members of our communities. I also encourage my colleagues to support the Torture Victim's Relief Re-authorization Act—H.R. 1405, to fund domestic torture treatment centers and the Human Rights Information Act—H.R. 1152, to facilitate the prosecution of torturers.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus on Human Rights, I join Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Congressman SMITH in this recognition of all victims of torture in the United States and around the world who are struggling to overcome their physical and psychological scars. I urge support of H. Con. Res. 168.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to thank the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on International Operation and Human Rights, the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), for reminding us of the role that the United States must take in combating the use of torture and other forms of degrading treatment or punishment throughout the world.

However, it is not enough to merely denounce torture without assisting the victims in their recovery from the physical and psychological effects that they suffer. People suffering from the effects of torture suffer from severe impediments, often requiring lengthy medical and psychological treatments. Torture victims are often ashamed or too traumatized to speak out against the practice, both in their countries of origin and abroad.

Because torture victims sometimes cannot speak for or help themselves, Americans want their government to speak for those victims, to provide assistance to stop human rights abuses, to investigate allegations of torture, and also to provide rehabilitation services for the victims of torture through the Torture Victims Protection Act. They also want us to press for universal protection against torture through the enforcement of the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention Against Torture, and the UN Charter. These are the themes of the worthy resolution now before us, and we should start with expressing our solidarity with the victims of torture in the United States and throughout the world.

Accordingly, I am pleased to join my colleagues in supporting H. Con. Res. 168.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the mo-

tion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 168.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2131) to reauthorize the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 through fiscal year 2004, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2131

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

SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS.

Section 805(a)(2) of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2431c(a)(2)) is amended by striking "major".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS TO SUPPORT REDUCTION OF DEBT UNDER THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1961 AND TITLE I OF THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1954.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 806 of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2431d) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEARS AFTER FISCAL YEAR 2001.—For the cost (as defined in section 502(5) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990) for the reduction of any debt pursuant to this section or section 807, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President the following:

*"(1) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2002.
(2) \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.
(3) \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2004."*

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 808(a)(1)(D) of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2431f(a)(1)(D)) is amended by striking "to appropriated under sections 806(a)(2) and 807(a)(2)" and inserting "to be appropriated under sections 806(a)(2), 807(a)(2), and 806(d)".

SEC. 3. CHAIRPERSON OF THE ENTERPRISE FOR THE AMERICAS BOARD.

Section 811(b)(2) of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2431i(b)(2)) is amended by striking "from among the representatives appointed under section 610(b)(1)(A) of such Act or paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection" and inserting "and shall be the representative from the Department of State appointed under section 610(b)(1)(A) of such Act".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2131, the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2131, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act reauthorization, and I want to commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for his leadership and hard work on this important legislation. I am proud to be one of the 28 original cosponsors of this piece of legislation.

Tropical forests provide a wide variety of benefits to the entire world. They act as carbon sinks, helping to reduce greenhouse gases as they absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and provide habitat for many plant species that are used to develop lifesaving medicines and pharmaceutical products.

It has been estimated that up to 30 million acres of tropical forests are lost each year, an area roughly the size of Pennsylvania. This alarming rate of destruction emphasizes the need to act, and act quickly, to preserve these valuable assets for future generations.

The Tropical Forest Conservation Act reauthorization is a sound, free-market approach to a very serious global environmental problem. It will encourage the preservation of tropical forests without creating a burden on the American taxpayer. It is a good, sensible piece of legislation. It is worthy of our support, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for proposing this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2131 which reauthorizes the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998, and commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for introducing this reauthorization bill, and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the chairman of the Committee on International Relations, for moving it so expeditiously through the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago Congress overwhelmingly approved the landmark Tropical Forest Conservation Act. This legislation provided funding for the administration to pursue actively debt swaps, buybacks and other devices with developing nations in return for concrete efforts to protect tropical forests. Since Congress enacted this important legislation, the Clinton administration successfully concluded an agreement to reduce debt owed by the Government of Bangladesh

to the United States in exchange for a new plan to protect 4 million acres of mangrove forests in that country. These forests protect the world's only genetically secure population of Bengal tigers.

At the moment, Mr. Speaker, there are 11 nations on 3 continents interested in negotiating new tropical forest conservation debt reduction agreements with the United States. It is critical that the Bush administration continue the active implementation of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act. Tropical forests around the globe are rapidly disappearing. The latest figures indicate that 30 million acres of tropical forests are being lost every single year. This is an area larger than the State of Pennsylvania. Tropical forests harbor much of the world's biodiversity. They act as carbon sinks, absorbing massive quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby reducing greenhouse gases. The United States National Cancer Institute has identified over 3,000 plants that are active against cancer, 70 percent of which can be found in tropical forests.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. must continue to play a leadership role in protecting the world's tropical forests. By reauthorizing this act and providing reasonable funding for the next 3 fiscal years, I am confident that we can help save tens of thousands of acres of tropical forests around the globe. I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2131.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the principal sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for yielding me this time, and I thank the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for his statement and for his strong support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation. It is bipartisan, it is bicameral, and it is reauthorizing a program which can work well to address serious problems.

Mr. Speaker, we introduced this bill with 33 other colleagues in order to continue what is a very innovative conservation program which helps protect the world's most valuable tropical forests through these debt-for-nature mechanisms.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the ranking member (Mr. LANTOS) gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and other members of the Committee on International Relations, including the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), for their expedited consideration of the legislation and unanimous approval of it on June 20.

I also want to thank them for the improvements they made to the legislation. The three amendments that were accepted in committee, I think, perfect the legislation and make it work bet-

ter, given the evolving nature of some of the debt-for-nature relationships we might have.

Four years ago I introduced this original bill with our former colleagues Lee Hamilton and John Kasich. It was approved by the House and passed by the Senate under unanimous consent, and was signed into law by President Clinton. The legislation was developed with the support and input of a lot of people, including some of the major respected international environmental organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund and Conservation International. Their support and ongoing commitment to this program and their involvement in this program as a potential third party has been and will continue to be very valuable to its success.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that our freshman colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), was instrumental in developing the original Tropical Forest Conservation Act when he was a senior member of the Committee on International Relations staff. I am delighted that he is an original cosponsor of this legislation before us today.

The United States has a significant national interest in protecting these forests around the world. As has been said by the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), these forests provide a wide range of benefits. We know they harbor between 50 and 90 percent of the terrestrial biodiversity on Earth. We know that they act as carbon sinks, absorbing massive quantities of carbon dioxide from the environment, and we know that carbon dioxide taken out of the atmosphere helps reduce the effect of greenhouse gases. They also help regulate rainfall on which agriculture and coastal resources depend, and they are important to regional and global climate.

Furthermore, these tropical forests are the breeding ground for new medicines. We are told that fully a quarter of the prescription drugs currently used in the United States come from tropical forests. We are also told that of the more than 3,000 plants the National Cancer Institute has identified as being active against cancer, 70 percent are found in these tropical forests.

Regrettably, these forests are rapidly disappearing. The gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) talked about that, and stated an area the size of Pennsylvania is being destroyed every year. We believe that half the tropical forests are already gone.

The heavy debt burden of these countries that have these forests is a contributing factor to the disappearance of these forests. Why? Because these countries must resort to exploitation of their natural resources, timber, minerals, and precious metals, to generate revenue to service burdensome external debt.

At the same time, poor governments tend to have very few resources to set aside and protect their tropical forests. This act addresses these economic pressures by authorizing the President to

allow eligible countries to engage in debt swaps, buybacks or restructuring in exchange for protecting threatened tropical forests on a sustained basis over time.

The legislation is based on the previous Bush administration's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative that allowed the President to structure certain debt in exchange for conservation efforts, but only in Latin America.

This legislation and its predecessor expands on the countries eligible, the requirements, and the legislation expands it beyond Latin America to protect tropical forests that are threatened worldwide. The bill provides for very innovative ways to leverage scarce resources available for international conservation.

Under two of the three options made available under this bill, third-party debt swaps where third parties can come in, such as the Nature Conservancy or Conservation International, and also debt buybacks, in those two cases, there is no cost at all to the United States Government.

□ 1515

Under the third option provided for under this legislation, the United States and an eligible country can agree to restructure the debt. Our Government in this case does provide a subsidy to cover the difference between the so-called net present value of the debt and the net present value of whatever the new debt is. Now, net present value is a fancy term, but it refers to what an investment bank, say, on Wall Street might use as they look at the debt to determine what it is really worth, what its actual value is.

Our Government provides this subsidy because we get something in return for it. We get something in return in the sense that the amount of debt forgiven is often lower than the amount that is placed in these tropical forest funds. Therefore, we get leverage. In fact, taxpayers will usually get at least \$2 in conservation funds back into the fund in local currency for every \$1 of Federal funds that would be spent.

Part of this leverage comes from the fact that the host country is required to use local currency in a tropical forest fund. Second, these tropical forest funds have integrity, are broadly supported within the host country; and, therefore, conservation organizations are interested in placing their own private money in these funds. We believe this is producing additional private sector leverage of government conservation dollars, and we believe the potential for that is great.

The final point I would just like to make about the restructuring option is that I believe if we are going to reduce or eliminate debts that are owed by poorer countries to the United States, it only makes sense that we get something in return for it. In this case we do, in fact, get something in return through this initiative. It is a win-win-

win, for us, for the poorer country, and for the environment.

Last year, as mentioned earlier, the United States did conclude a tropical forest debt reduction agreement with Bangladesh, which is a less developed country that is heavily burdened by foreign debt. The gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), who is with us this afternoon, has been quite focused on Bangladesh. In fact, I can remember at the first hearing we had on this subject 3 or 4 years ago, he raised the fact that Bangladesh was a country that ought to be included within the requirements because they could use this initiative in order to reduce some of their debt and save some of their endangered tropical forests. In fact, that has happened. It allows in Bangladesh the protection of over 4 million acres of endangered mangrove forests, and it protects the world's only genetically secure population of Bengal tigers.

At present, we believe there are at least 11 nations on three continents interested in negotiating these kinds of Tropical Forest Act debt reduction agreements. In fact, we have reason to believe that Belize, El Salvador, and Thailand are ready to move on such agreements this year. Furthermore, as many Members know, President Bush has expressed his strong support for this program.

I would also like to briefly address the authorization for funds included in this legislation. First, I want to make the point this authorization is actually less than the authorization over the last 3 years. In fact, looking out over the 3-year period, it is roughly \$100 million less than was provided in the previous and original authorization.

Second, I would say this authorization is consistent with what the Bush administration has said is their commitment to providing adequate funding for this initiative. In other words, it fits within the budget so long as we are making progress toward restructuring agreements around the world, and, again, I think there is adequate evidence that we have lots of countries lined up and interested, and we will be able to move forward aggressively from this point on.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation, also, to some key staff members who got us here today: Adolfo Franco, Frank Record, Peter Yeo, David Abramowitz, Keith O'Neil, and Carol Doherty of the Committee on International Relations majority and minority staffs for their expertise and all their diligent work on this legislation. I would also like to thank Tim Miller and Maile Gradison of my office for their dedication to this initiative, and Jeff Burnam with Senator LUGAR and Jim Green with Senator BIDEN for helping to develop the companion bill on the Senate side, which is identical to the legislation introduced in the House and almost identical to the legislation that we have on the floor this afternoon.

Again, this is a good program, worthy of reauthorization. It holds great promise. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to enthusiastically support the passage today of H.R. 2131.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend for his eloquent statement, and I want to identify myself with it.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA), one of the nationally recognized leaders in this field.

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be a cosponsor of H.R. 2131, which reauthorizes the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998.

I want to commend the author of the legislation, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), and the chairman and ranking Democratic member of the Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), and the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for their leadership in moving consideration of this important measure which facilitates debt reduction in Third World countries by supporting their efforts for conservation of fragile tropical forests.

Mr. Speaker, the provisions of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act basically allow less-developed nations that owe loans to the United States to restructure their debt repayment, funneling savings into a tropical rain forest protection fund which provides for the conservation and maintenance of native forest resources in each participating country.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, Mr. Speaker, in recent years up to 42 million acres of tropical forests have been devastated annually throughout the world. Indeed, approximately one-half of the planet's tropical forests no longer exist. In the Asia-Pacific region alone, it is estimated that 88 percent of original forest lands have now been destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, these careless actions have a dramatic negative impact on the environment that is global in nature. The destruction of tropical forest lands on this scale destroys the Earth's ability to recycle carbon dioxide, significantly contributing to greenhouse gases and climate warming.

Perhaps more importantly, we sacrifice and lose the rich and unique biodiversity of these tropical forest ecosystems which, incidentally, contain over half of the world's plant and animal species.

Mr. Speaker, tropical forest plants have been used for centuries by indigenous native peoples to treat illnesses and disease. Most of the Earth's 265,000 flowering plants are located in tropical regions, and less than 1 percent of these plants have been scientifically tested for effectiveness against disease.

I am appreciative of the fact that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) had alluded earlier about a win-win situation for the reauthorization of this legislation. Mr. Speaker, over the years, as a classic example, it has been my privilege to know one of the world's leading ethnobotanists, Dr. Nafanua Paul Cox, for the tremendous work that he has done in saving rain forests and tropical forests in the South Pacific region.

I say this personally, because of his efforts over the years, he has sent hundreds of herbal plant medicines that were used by my people for centuries and now the latest discovery by the National Institutes of Health, a certain drug that has come out of this research conducted by Dr. Cox is a substance called prostratin that may have very positive effects in curing HIV. I am talking about AIDS. That is all because of the preservation of these plants.

Mr. Speaker, we must preserve these tropical resources that may hold the key to curing cancer, even AIDS and other deadly diseases afflicting humanity. If rare tropical plants are not protected, their genetic codes and potential benefits will be lost forever to mankind.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation. I thank my good friend from Ohio for his management of this legislation and especially the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for his leadership in bringing this legislation to the floor. Again, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), one of the distinguished members of the Committee on International Relations.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this legislation. It has been very well explained by many of my colleagues, including the distinguished primary sponsor of this legislation and the original act, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN). So I will not have to go over the details, that is for sure; but I do want to mention and reemphasize one thing the gentleman from Ohio said and, that is, that the program builds upon former President George Bush's innovative Enterprise for the Americas Initiative and is another creative example of how our country can address developing-country debt while helping to protect the environment.

The act gives the President the authority to reduce certain forms of development assistance and food aid debt owed to the United States in exchange for the deposit by eligible developing countries of local currencies in a tropical forest fund to preserve, restore and maintain tropical forests. These funds are used by qualified nongovernmental organizations working to preserve the

world's most endangered tropical forests.

A board of directors in the United States comprised of U.S. public and private officials oversees this program and annually reports to Congress on progress made to implement the program.

The gentleman from Ohio was gracious in mentioning at the time the House International Relations Committee proceeded to mark up the original act. Frankly, I was interested in Bangladesh because when it has come to debt forgiveness or debt reduction in the past, by a strange set of circumstances, Bangladesh has fallen through the cracks and they needed some assistance. I wanted to make sure that they were not neglected. It turns out they are the first beneficiary of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act.

Before I offered my amendment to assure eligibility for Bangladesh I had to look to see if it had a tropical forest to be saved in that country of such huge population density with all of its drought and flooding problems. They do. As mentioned in terms of square miles, I will put it in square kilometers, 14,000 square kilometers of tropical forest areas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and in the Sunderbans. As mentioned by the gentleman from Ohio, this is one of the few remaining refuges for the Bengal tiger. Currently, the Bangladeshi board of directors, which will disburse the trust funds, is reviewing how similar boards operate in establishing its procedures for implementing the agreement.

There are only 11 countries considering it right now on three different continents, but I have no doubt the number will expand dramatically when interested people and their governments understand the benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this Member would like to very specifically commend the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the sponsor of this legislation and the original act; and the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), for their leadership and support for conservation efforts in the developing world and for their work to reauthorize this program. Of course, the expedited treatment of this legislation by our chairman, the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), is also to be commended; and I am pleased to be an original cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, this Member urges all of our colleagues to support the reauthorization of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act, as it provides direct benefits to both developing and developed countries.

□ 1530

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), also a distinguished member of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2131.

Mr. Speaker, let me just note that the argument that we must try to preserve our tropical rain forests because the tropical rain forests have a possible treasure house of biodiversity for this generation and future generations I think is a very valid argument.

I have lived in jungles in my life. I understand the many thousands, if not tens of thousands, of variety of not only animal and insect and plant life but all kinds of life that is surrounding one in the jungle. And, yes, in future generations we may find tremendous assets that are right in front of our face but we do not recognize it now.

The idea of trading debt with some of these countries and getting for that debt a commitment to try to preserve these rain forests, I think, is a very good idea. Let us just remember that in many cases these countries would not be repaying that debt anyway. So this is a win-win proposal.

Let me just say, however, that believing in this bill and believing in the biodiversity of the jungles does not mean that one has to believe that the jungles in some way contribute to helping the global warming situation. I have heard that several times in the arguments here on the floor.

Let me just say that global warming, if one takes it by the people who advocate that, I believe global warming is a bunch of global baloney myself, but even if one does believe in global warming as precisely presented by those people who are trying to convince the rest of us that it is true, one would not want to preserve the rain forests. In fact, consistent with the global warming theory what one would want to do is to clear-cut all of the rain forests and bulldoze them because the rain forests are one of the major contributors on this planet of CO₂ and methane, which are the global-warming gases.

Termites eating in the jungles produce more of what they call greenhouse gases than does the internal combustion engine. By the way, I do not believe in global warming so I would never advocate bulldozing the jungles, but if one believes in it that is what they want to do and they, of course, want to also get rid of old growth trees. The older the growth of the trees, the more one wants to cut it down and replant young trees. The essence of global warming is saying that one wants young, vibrant trees and plants to take in carbon dioxide and give out oxygen.

Let me just say, our jungles and our old growth trees do just the opposite. They give out more CO₂ than they are taking in oxygen. So let us support this effort to try to save the jungles and save those forests and rain forests around the world and let us take advantage of this very commonsensical approach of debt restructuring. Let us not get trapped into using arguments that just do not hold water and are not scientifically viable. There has been enough nonsense on global warming and other areas.

Let us just say that the rain forests are valuable and let us save them.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that the number of facts that are out there dealing with carbon dioxide, methane, and a number of other greenhouse gases show that in the last 50 years the dramatic increase in those gases are evidence that human activity is causing the climate to warm.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, let me say that means one would clear-cut all of the jungles to get rid of the CO₂ buildup if that was true.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2131. I would like to particularly thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for his strong leadership on this issue. He is one of our environmental leaders here in the Congress, and I salute him.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) for bringing this legislation to the floor and thank Tim Miller from the staff of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for his work.

Under President Bush's 1990 Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Act, the United States sponsored many debt-for-nature swap programs. The Tropical Forest Conservation Act, based on this idea, was first introduced by the gentleman from Ohio in 1997 with bipartisan support and was signed into law in 1998.

As a congressional staffer, I had the honor to work on that legislation and help him achieve that goal. I am pleased to support this bill which continues in that tradition.

Bangladesh is the first country which benefited from this program. Because Bangladesh has been able to restructure its debt, it was able to create a national forest fund of almost \$9 million, which went to protecting the Mangrove Swap area, home to over 500 wild tigers. Currently, there are 11 nations on three continents interested in considering debt forgiveness under this program, including places like Belize and El Salvador.

I think the United States has an important national interest in supporting the protection of the world's natural resources, including tropical forests. Tropical forests are home to half of all known plants and animals. We are losing an area equal to a football field a minute, and this must stop.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) is our leader on this issue

and built on the work of the previous Bush and Clinton administrations. Later this year, the Congress will consider legislation building on this model to protect coral reefs. Coral reefs are home to most aquatic plants and animals. Many reefs are disappearing, and most of them are in developing countries.

I salute the leaders on this issue, commend the gentleman for this legislation, and urge the House adoption of this bill.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act Reauthorization. This bill extends the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998, which passed in this body and was signed into law by President Clinton. Today's legislation allows the U.S. Agency for International Development to relieve some of the foreign debt owed to the United States. In return, participating nations agree to establish trust funds to protect local tropical rainforests and other environmentally sensitive areas. This bill authorizes \$225 million to be spent over the next three fiscal years to pay for this important conservation program and for the cost of debt forgiveness.

This innovative tool, the so-called "debt for nature swap", helps countries with undeveloped natural resources reduce their foreign debts by buying it back and agreeing to spend a portion of the proceeds on conservation projects. This is especially vital because tropical forests contain half of the world's known species of plants and animals. They contain a diversity of organic materials that could lead to the development of life-saving new medicines and tropical forests help slow global climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide. Increasingly, however, these fragile forests are succumbing to logging, roadbuilding and development. Since 1950, half of the world's tropical forests have disappeared and they are disappearing at a rate of 30 million acres each year. The countries that carry the heaviest debt contribute significantly to this loss because they extract valuable natural resources in order to generate needed revenue.

A recent report in the Journal of Science highlights the problems affecting Brazil's tropical forests. The report states that the rapid growth of Brazil's population is leading to the equally rapid expansion of railroads, pipelines and highways into the delicate Amazon forest areas. The devastation of the Brazilian rainforest will take place in only 20 years because of a \$40 billion project to encourage development.

In tropical countries throughout the world, the deterioration of the rainforest will have dramatic and devastating effects on wildlife habitat, genetic diversity, the quality of watersheds and the global climate. The United States, because of our role as an economic leader, should promote creative solutions such as the one contained in this bill.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for reminding us of tragedy of the rapidly disappearing tropical forests, and the importance of protecting the world's most diverse ecosystems.

Tropical forests contain approximately half of the world's species of plants and animals. Unfortunately, over half of the tropical forests on Earth have disappeared, and, with more

than 30 million acres which are lost each year, the destruction of these volatile ecosystems continues.

The majority of those forests are located in developing nations that are plagued by poverty and extensive debt burdens. The Tropical Forests Conservation Act offers up to \$325 million in debt relief to developing nations in exchange for the sustained protection of threatened tropical forests. These conditions also include the creation of a favorable climate for private sector investment, cooperation on narcotics measures, on state-sponsored terrorism, and a democratically elected government.

This bill enjoys wide bipartisan support, support from the administration, and from various environmental groups. I urge support for this bill, and, once again, commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for introducing legislation to extend this important environmental program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2131, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read:

"A bill to reauthorize the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998 through fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2360, CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION ACT OF 2001, AND H.R. 2356, BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT OF 2001

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules is planning to meet this week to grant a rule which may limit the amendment process on campaign finance reform legislation. Let me say that I and Members of the Committee on Rules and our staff have been working very closely with the key authors of this very important legislation, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN). And we have the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on House Administration, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), here, and we have been working with him on that.

I would like to say that the Committee on House Administration, as we all know, reported H.R. 2360, the Campaign Finance Reform Citizen Participation Act of 2001, as well as H.R. 2356, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2001 on June 28; and the reports are expected to be filed later this afternoon.

While we have made no final decision on which version will actually end up