

more value? Who has that authority? No one. No human being has that authority.

We can, however, embrace our own cultures and those that are unknown and unfamiliar to us. America is a land of United States and of united peoples of various cultures and backgrounds. That is America's strength and greatest asset, and this resolution recognizes that.

It is hard to think of Ellis Island at any time without thinking of the words of Emma Lazarus when she wrote, Give me your tired, your huddled masses, teeming to be free.

Yes, Ellis Island has been a beacon of the openness of what America is seeking to become. I am proud to join in this resolution and would urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to express my appreciation to my colleagues in the House of Representatives who voted to pass H. Res. 377, a resolution that I introduced recognizing the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and commending the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO).

NECO's annual medal ceremony and reception on Ellis Island in New York Harbor is the Nation's largest celebration of ethnic pride. Established in 1986 by NECO, the Ellis Island Medals of Honor pay tribute to the ancestry groups that comprise America's unique cultural mosaic. To date, approximately 1400 American citizens have received medals.

NECO is the largest organization of its kind in the U.S. serving as an umbrella group for over 250 ethnic organizations and whose mandate is to preserve ethnic diversity, promote ethnic and religious equality, tolerance and harmony, and to combat injustice, hatred and bigotry. NECO has a new goal in its humanitarian mission: saving the lives of children with life-threatening medical conditions. NECO has founded The Forum's Children Foundation, which brings children from developing nations needing life-saving surgery to the United States for treatment.

Ellis Island Medals of Honor recipients are selected each year through a national nomination process. Screening committees from NECO's member organizations select the final nominees, who are then considered by the Board of Directors. Past Ellis Island Medals of Honor recipients have included several U.S. Presidents, entertainers, athletes, entrepreneurs, religious leaders and business executives, such as Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, George Bush, Richard Nixon, George Pataki, Mario Cuomo, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Michael Douglas, Gloria Estefan, Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Elie Wiesel, Muhammad Ali, Mickey Mantle, General Norman Schwarzkopf, Barbara Walters, Terry Anderson, Dr. Michael DeBakey, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, and Attorney General Janet Reno.

I would like to close by expressing my deepest gratitude to my good friends Bill Fugazy and Rosemarie Taglione and everyone associated with NECO and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

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

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 377.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. 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.

#### ACQUISITION STREAMLINING IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3921) to amend the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 to extend until January 1, 2005, a program applying simplified procedures to the acquisition of certain commercial items, and to require the Comptroller General to submit to Congress a report regarding the effectiveness of such program.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3921

*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 "Acquisition Streamlining Improvement Act".

#### SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM APPLYING SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURES TO CERTAIN COMMERCIAL ITEMS; REPORT ON PROGRAM.

Section 4202 of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (divisions D and E of Public Law 104-106; 110 Stat. 652; 10 U.S.C. 2304 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e), by striking "January 1, 2003" and inserting "January 1, 2005"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(f) REPORT.—Not later than March 1, 2004, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on—

"(1) the effectiveness of the implementation of the provisions enacted by this section;

"(2) the extent to which the amount of time required to award contracts and the administrative costs associated with such contracts were reduced as a result of such implementation;

"(3) the extent to which prices under such contracts reflected the best value; and

"(4) any recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the implementation of the provisions enacted by this section."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leadership of the Chairman of the Committee on Government Reform on this important legislation, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 3921, the Acquisition and Streamlining Improvement Act of 2002. This bill extends for 2 years the Clinger-Cohen Act's successful pilot program for streamlined acquisitions of commercially available items.

The landmark Clinger-Cohen Act recognized the value of these streamlined procedures in its pilot program. They provide the foundation for establishing commercial-like responsiveness in this government when it buys commercial items.

The streamlined procedures apply for purchases of \$5 million or less when a contracting officer reasonably expects that offers in response to a solicitation will only include commercial items. They permit the use of shorter deadlines, fewer burdensome government-unique requirements, and minimized administrative costs. In sum, they give contracting officers greater discretion to select the most advantageous offer for the government and to do so in a business-like manner.

This program has been very useful in a number of different areas. For example, the Pentagon recently used this authority to expedite repairs after the tragic terrorism attack on September 11. DOD set a goal of having the Pentagon restored by this fall, the 1-year anniversary of the attack. That is a very aggressive goal for such a complicated job. If one step in the process falls through, the entire project can fail.

One significant step at the Pentagon has been the effort to quickly restore what DOD calls the critical pathway to the damaged wing. DOD used the Clinger-Cohen pilot program authority to buy routers and switches to reestablish the communications grid. Using conventional procurement procedures to buy this equipment would have added extra months and would have jeopardized the whole project's timely completion by the 1-year anniversary.

The Clinger-Cohen pilot program helped DOD cut through the red tape of this critical pathway and on many other projects in the reconstruction. It also provides strategic management tools that the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies need to establish key acquisition projects in the

wake of terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, unless we act now, this important pilot program will expire at the end of this year.

Governmentwide, we see Federal agencies continuing to grapple with barriers to buying the best value in the goods and services they need. Agencies need better management approaches and improved purchasing tools, including the Clinger-Cohen pilot program authority, to help acquisition managers meet their agency goals.

Indeed, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy's survey of procurement executives showed that the streamlined acquisition authority in the Clinger-Cohen pilot has had a positive impact on the Federal procurement process. These procurement executives recommend continuing the program.

The Subcommittee on Technology and Procurement Policy, which I chair, and the Committee on Government Reform, under the leadership of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), have encouraged the development of commonsense approaches to acquisition policy.

I have also been working in the subcommittee with the minority and with the administration for broader acquisition reform. I recently introduced H.R. 3832, the Services Acquisition Reform Act, SARA, which directs the Federal Government to adopt management reform techniques modeled after those of the private sector.

I have also introduced H.R. 3426, the Federal Emergency Procurement Flexibility Act, with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), my good friend, Senator JOHN WARNER and Senator FRED THOMPSON. This legislation came about after we were contacted last year by Governor Ridge and the Homeland Security Office about many of the ongoing barriers Federal agencies are experiencing in accessing the tools necessary to fight the war on terrorism. This legislation will provide agencies with the tools necessary to immediately access the latest commercial technologies, products and services to combat terrorism.

The bill before us today, H.R. 3921, the Acquisitions Streamlining Improvement Act of 2002, allows agencies to continue to use the Clinger-Cohen pilot program streamlined procedures for the purchase of commercial items.

□ 1430

Mr. Speaker, if an item is available commercially and at a competitive price, the government should not have to go through a long, drawn-out procurement process. Where there are several competitors in a marketplace, and this competition is keeping prices in line, then streamlined acquisition procedures make sense, and save time and money. They make the government run smoother.

In closing, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) who introduced this legislation. I thank the ranking member of the committee, the

gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), and the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), for working with us to make good suggestions in moving this legislation forward. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) for his leadership on this legislation. It is a continuing effort that we are making on our subcommittee that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) chairs to try to improve the process by which the Federal Government contracts for goods and services. It is, of course, a very challenging effort because it is important to not only improve and streamline the process, but at the same time ensure that the public's interest is protected, that the integrity of the contracting process is preserved, and that the taxpayers get the best deal for their dollars.

Under this bill, pilot authority that was previously granted under law is extended for an additional 2-year period of time, allowing acquisition procedures to be simplified for the purchase of commercial items up to \$5 million in value. This authority began in 1996, and it was granted a 1-year extension in last year's defense authorization bill. The bill also requires the General Accounting Office to report to us on the effectiveness of this provision and to determine whether or not it has in fact reduced administrative time and costs in awarding contracts, while at the same time protecting the public's interest.

I thank the gentleman for including several suggestions that came from our side on this issue. I believe we have a strong bill as a result, and I am hopeful that this will once again prove to be a step forward in the acquisition process followed by our Federal agencies. It is part of an effort that also involves strengthening the training, the ability of the contracting officers who, under this legislation and similar legislation, have greater responsibility and less review by their acquisition superiors. The contracting officers are the key to making this effort successful, and I am confident that the efforts that are being made to strengthen contracting throughout the Federal Government will prove beneficial to all.

The decision to allow the use of simplified acquisition procedures to purchase commercial items up to \$5 million in value is a well-intended effort to give our contracting officers more flexibility to do their job, thereby saving the taxpayers money and saving additional and unintended wastes of time and effort. This bill, by extending it for another period and sunseting it, will give us the opportunity to be sure the bill is working as we intended it.

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

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) and the ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform (Mr. WAXMAN) for helping bring this bill to the floor. I think this bill is going to continue to improve acquisition responsiveness on the part of the Federal Government so that we can meet our goals, save the taxpayers money, and get the best value. I urge the adoption of this measure.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3921.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH RECREATIONAL AND VISITOR FACILITIES

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3848) to provide funds for the construction of recreational and visitor facilities in Washington County, Utah, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3848

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

#### SECTION 1. FUNDS FOR RECREATIONAL AND VISITOR FACILITIES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH.

The Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, is authorized to grant to the State of Utah \$2,500,000 for the development and construction of recreational and visitor facilities in the Sand Hollow Recreation Area located in Washington County, Utah, to fulfill the Federal commitment for the establishment and management thereof.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3848 provides funding for the development and construction of recreational facilities for the Sand Hollow Recreational Area in Washington County, Utah.

For several years, Washington County has been the fastest growing area in the State of Utah and a premier tourist destination. Several years ago, the Bureau of Land Management, Washington