

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. 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.

□ 1515

JIM RICHARDSON POST OFFICE

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1505) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2127 Beatties Ford Road in Charlotte, North Carolina, as the "Jim Richardson Post Office".

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1505

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

SECTION 1. JIM RICHARDSON POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2127 Beatties Ford Road in Charlotte, North Carolina, shall be known and designated as the "Jim Richardson Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the Jim Richardson Post Office.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATOURETTE. 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 now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1505 has been introduced by our esteemed colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), and it designates the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2127 Beatties Ford Road in Charlotte, North Carolina as the "Jim Richardson Post Office Building."

Mr. Speaker, State Senator Jim Richardson of Charlotte, North Carolina was a venerable public servant who deserves acknowledgment by this House. Mr. Richardson earned one term as a State representative, followed by 4 terms in the Senate of the Tarheel State. His time serving in the North Carolina State legislature followed a

distinguished 33-year career with the United States Postal Service. He reached the rank of postmaster in Mount Holly, North Carolina, and was recognized with a Postal Service Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding career. By all accounts, Jim Richardson was one of the most friendly and most wonderful men one would ever meet.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, I understand that Mr. Richardson was diagnosed with cancer 3 years ago and he is conducting a brave fight. I know I speak for all Members when I say that the thoughts and prayers of this entire House are with Mr. Richardson and his family.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I urge all Members to support the adoption of H.R. 1505. I want to thank our colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), for introducing this meaningful measure.

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

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

As ranking member of the House Committee on Government Reform, I join my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) in the consideration of H.R. 1505, a bill which names a U.S. postal facility located at 2127 Beatties Ford Road in Charlotte, North Carolina after Jim Richardson. This bill was introduced by our friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT), on March 27, 2003.

For the benefit of my colleagues, H.R. 1505 has met the committee cosponsorship requirement and has the support and sponsorship of the entire North Carolina State congressional delegation.

Mr. James Franklin Richardson, Sr., was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1926. After attending elementary and high school in Charlotte, Mr. Richardson went on to join the United States Navy and fought in World War II. After receiving an honorable discharge from the Navy, Mr. Richardson attended and graduated from Johnson C. Smith University with a bachelor of science degree in physical education and general science. Upon graduation, Mr. Richardson began a 33-year career with the United States Postal Service.

During his tenure with the Postal Service, Jim Richardson served as a service clerk and a postal supervisor. He spent his last 8 years with the Postal Service as postmaster in Mount Holly, North Carolina. Before he retired, Jim Richardson had received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Service, in "Recognition of Exceptional Performance in the Interest of Improved Postal Service."

In 1985, Jim was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives where he served one 2-year term before being elected to the North Carolina Senate. He served 4 terms in the Senate before he retired and was elected to the Mecklenburg County Commission where he served for 6 years.

During his years in public service, Jim Richardson was known for operating in a bipartisan manner and working hard to improve and promote his community. He always held true to his convictions and continued to fight the good fight. This fight continues today as Jim battles against cancer.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY DAVIS), the ranking member of the Postal Task Force, for getting this bill to the House Floor. I also commend my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) for seeking to honor the incredible contributions made by Jim Richardson to his community, and I urge the swift passage of this measure.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1505.

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.

NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE AND RECONCILIATION SUPPORT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1208) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 of United States contributions to the International Fund for Ireland, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1208

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 "Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Support Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States has been effectively engaged in the Northern Ireland peace process through both participating in negotiations and contributing to the economic development of the region.

(2) Both the Government of Ireland and the Irish people and the Government of the United Kingdom and the British people are long-standing friends of the United States and the American people.

(3) In 1986, the United States, in support of the Agreement Between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom ("Anglo-Irish Agreement") dated November 15, 1985, initiated annual contributions to the International Fund for Ireland ("International Fund") to help bolster economic development and support programs that would foster peace and reconciliation in

Northern Ireland and the affected border areas of the Republic of Ireland.

(4) The United States has been a generous and faithful donor to the International Fund, contributing more than \$386,000,000 to help improve relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland through the creation of thousands of jobs and cross community business development.

(5) More than 80 percent of the International Fund's investments have been in disadvantaged areas offering work experience and important job training programs for disadvantaged and unemployed youth through the economic, social, and physical regeneration of deprived areas.

(6) The International Fund has also developed a series of community-building programs promoting greater dialogue and understanding between Catholics and Protestants and leadership programs designed to develop a new generation of leaders in Northern Ireland to bring about a more peaceful and prosperous future in the region.

(7) Through the Anglo-Irish Agreement Support Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-415), the United States also seeks to ensure that its contributions promote "reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the establishment of a society in Northern Ireland in which all may live in peace, free from discrimination, terrorism, and intolerance, and with the opportunity for both communities to participate fully in the structures and processes of government."

(8) The Good Friday Agreement reached by the Government of Ireland, the Government of the United Kingdom, and political party leaders on April 10, 1998, created the Northern Ireland Executive Assembly and Executive Committee and provided for a "democratically elected Assembly in Northern Ireland which is inclusive in its membership, capable of exercising executive and legislative authority, and subject to safeguards to protect the rights and interests of all sides of the community."

(9) The Good Friday Agreement also called for police reform and establishment of a "new beginning" in policing in Northern Ireland with an effective, accountable, and fair police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole, capable of maintaining law and order, and based on principles of protection of human rights.

(10) In 1999, the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland, mandated by the Good Friday Agreement, made 175 recommendations for policing reform in Northern Ireland, some of which have been implemented.

(11) In 2002, the Department of State, as required by section 701(d) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228), issued a "Report on Policing Reform and Human Rights in Northern Ireland" and concluded that among key areas of concern that had not been fully implemented was the establishment of a critically-needed new police training facility and an increase in funding for training programs.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) United States assistance for the International Fund has contributed greatly to the economic development of Northern Ireland and that both objectives of the Anglo-Irish Agreement Support Act of 1986, economic development and reconciliation, remain critical to achieving a just and lasting peace in the region, especially in the economically-depressed areas;

(2) although there has been positive economic development in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, International Fund contributions to support much-needed projects in economically-depressed areas of

Northern Ireland remain very important, and an expansion of efforts in reconciliation projects as a way to promote peace and economic stability is also encouraged; and

(3) since policing reform is a significant part of winning public confidence and acceptance in the new form of government in Northern Ireland, the International Fund is encouraged to support programs that enhance relations between communities, and between the police and the communities they serve, promote human rights training for police, and enhance peaceful mediation in neighborhoods of continued conflict.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT SUPPORT ACT OF 1986.

(a) FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.—Section 2(b) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement Support Act of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following: "Furthermore, the International Fund is encouraged to support programs that enhance relations between communities, and between the police and the communities they serve, promote human rights training for police, enhance peaceful mediation in neighborhoods of continued conflict, promote training programs to enhance the new district partnership police boards recommended by the Patten Commission, and assist in the transition of former British military installations and prisons into sites for peaceful, community-supported activities, such as housing, retail, and commercial development."

(b) UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL FUND.—Section 3 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement Support Act of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(c) FISCAL YEARS 2004 AND 2005.—Of the amounts made available for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 to carry out chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (relating to the economic support fund), there are authorized to be appropriated \$25,000,000 for each such fiscal year for United States contributions to the International Fund. Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under the preceding sentence are authorized to remain available until expended. Of the amount authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 under this subsection, it is the sense of Congress that not less than 20 percent of such amount for each such fiscal year should be used to carry out the last sentence of section 2(b)."

(c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Section 6(1) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement Support Act of 1986 is amended by adding at the end before the semicolon the following: ", specifically through improving local community relations and relations between the police and the people they serve".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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. 1208, the bill that is now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me begin by thanking our leadership, beginning with the leadership on the committee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the chairman of the committee, and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and for the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for scheduling this very, very important piece of legislation for House consideration.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1208, the Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Act of 2003, reauthorizes U.S. contributions to the International Fund for Ireland and reaffirms our government's commitment to fostering peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Historically, the United States has helped advance the peace process in Northern Ireland through several avenues. Since 1997, for example, we have had hearings in the Committee on International Relations, as well as in the Helsinki Commission; as a matter of fact, I chaired seven of those hearings, examining the root causes of the violence in Northern Ireland and the need to secure due process rights and fundamental freedoms for both sides of the divide. The Congress has also adopted several bills promoting human rights, police reform, and the elimination of job discrimination in Northern Ireland.

In addition, we have provided critical economic support through the International Fund for Ireland. Created in 1986 by the British and Irish Governments, the IFI is an independent, international organization with two primary objectives: First, it is designed to promote economic and social advance in Northern Ireland; and secondly, the IFI is charged with fostering contact, dialogue, and reconciliation between Unionists and Nationalists throughout Ireland.

I would point out to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that the United States, the European Union, Australia, and New Zealand are all donor countries to the fund. To date, the United States has provided more than \$380 million to the fund, and the economic results have been impressive.

A recent report conducted by a consortium of independent consultants led by KPMG catalogued the following achievements of the IFI:

One, 4,400 business projects have been supported, helping to create more than 37,500 jobs.

Secondly, more than 10,000 young people from the most disadvantaged parts and areas of North and South have participated in the Wider Horizons Program, which brings people together, ages 18 to 28, to work camps where they receive training and improvement in their employment prospects.

Overall, 91 percent of the fund's commitments have been to projects in designated disadvantaged areas, and more

than 120 strategic alliances have been supported between businesses in Northern Ireland and the border counties and businesses elsewhere in Europe and North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics are impressive, they are tangible, but there is much more to the success of the International Fund for Ireland. It is called the peace dividend.

Each day, in disadvantaged and troubled areas of Northern Ireland, the IFI is at work bringing Catholics and Protestants together at jobs and job training sites. Working side by side, people who traditionally had no contact with each other are now communicating and learning a little bit more about who their neighbors are. They share an interest and investment in their community and new bonds have been developed where they never existed before.

It is also important to note that when people have solid jobs, they are less likely to get caught up in the sectarian strife that has tragically plagued this region. By focusing on the regeneration of impoverished neighborhoods where unemployment is the highest, the fund helps direct young Catholics and Protestants to job training and employment opportunities instead of gangs and paramilitary organizations.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I believe, and Members of this Congress believe that justice and sustainable peace will come about in Northern Ireland not merely through the political discussions of a few leaders, but the efforts to change the hearts and minds of individuals. This is a core part of the mission and underlying purpose of the International Fund for Ireland, bringing about peace by bringing together men and women from disparate backgrounds and disparate religious denominations and a successful economic environment. Indeed, the future is brighter in Northern Ireland in large part because of a new working relationship that has been forged with the economic help of the IFI.

Mr. Speaker, on the political side, progress indeed is being made in Northern Ireland. We all know it and celebrate it. I recently returned from a human rights mission to Belfast and to Northern Ireland and I am pleased to report that much has changed from my last trip in 1997 and much significant change, dramatic change has occurred over the last decade. There are now many signs of hope. Sections of Northern Ireland have experienced substantial economic growth and, as a result of the restored cease-fire of 1997 and the Good Friday Agreement signed in 1998, both communities in the North are working hard to obtain a just and lasting peace and to secure local democratic government.

Regrettably, the process is not without obstacles. Last October, the British Government suspended the Northern Ireland Assembly. Policing reform and

criminal justice review, demilitarization, and the completion of decommissioning are among the issues that still need to be resolved.

However, in recent weeks, let me point out to my colleagues, there has been a renewed and concerted effort by the British and Irish Governments to address these issues, to bring the major political parties together, and to find a way forward before new elections are held in May.

H.R. 1208 ensures that the IFI will continue to benefit from U.S. contributions and continue to do its good work for peace and for reconciliation. The bill provides a \$50 million amount over the next 2 years.

It also encourages the IFI to develop new ways to promote reconciliation in the North. In particular, we are hoping that the IFI will look even more closely at programs aimed at enhancing intercommunity relations, community relations with the new police service, and programs that promote and ensure fundamental human rights.

For example, the legislation specifically urges the IFI to do more work to enhance relations between the police and the communities they serve through promoting human rights training and enhancing the new district police partnership police boards recommended by the Patten Commission. It also encourages a fund to assist in the transition of former British military sites into venues for housing, retail, and other community-supported uses.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues who helped work for and support the final passage of this legislation, especially the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) from the Committee on International Relations who have all lent their strong support to this legislation, as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL). All are longtime supporters of the Northern Ireland peace process and are true friends of the people of Northern Ireland and of Ireland itself.

I would like to note that the text we are considering today contains a technical amendment to reflect progress the IFI is making towards using funds for specific reconciliation projects and, again, I hope that Members will support this bill.

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

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend our colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for bringing this bill to the floor today and for his effort in drafting this legislation.

□ 1530

He has been a champion of human rights issues, and this bill today is just the most recent example of his leadership.

In 1986, the Congress adopted the Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Support Act, legislation establishing the International Fund for Ireland. This legislation today seeks to revitalize this critically important program, and it is most appropriate that we do so.

When the original International Fund for Ireland was established, Northern Ireland suffered from serious unemployment and economic stagnation. The purpose of the fund was to encourage economic development and cooperation between the Catholic and the Protestant communities in economically deprived areas of Northern Ireland. I am delighted that it has contributed to the economic success and growth in that area.

The economic stimulus that the fund sought is less necessary today than it was when this program was created. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998, in which then-U.S. President Bill Clinton played a key role, marked an important step forward in reconciliation in Northern Ireland. We have seen progress in reducing violence, although we have not achieved the full peace that all of us seek.

The changes to this legislation we are considering today will permit this program to continue to expend resources for projects and conflict resolution for the critical support of human rights training for police and for programs to foster peaceful mediation in neighborhoods where conflict still exists.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH).

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey for yielding time to me on this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, our contributions to the International Fund for Ireland since 1986 have been a vital contributor to the progress towards peace in that troubled region. This bill authorizes last year's level of \$25 million, and is a U.S. vote of confidence in the peace process and the peaceful future of Northern Ireland, which we want and we see unfolding at long last.

It is also a vote of thanks to the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, who has supported our efforts in Iraq with keeping Shannon Airport open for American military troop refueling flights.

Peace in Northern Ireland, which these International Fund for Ireland monies also support, helps end the British Army massive presence there and makes it easier for them to help support our activities in Iraq. I believe

hundreds of troops from Northern Ireland are there now playing a very crucial role.

I compliment the chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), and the original cosponsors, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), for all their years of firm dedication to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and for leading the way on H.R. 1208, now before us.

Now more than ever, as we reach the possibility of the end game in the north of Ireland of lasting peace and justice, the U.S. contribution to the IFI must be maintained, yet somewhat refocused. We need IFI to address new needs as we set about cementing the peace. Besides just economic development through cross-community job projects, which is still very important, we also need the IFI to play an increasing role in more direct reconciliation efforts.

The bill sets out a reasonable and workable spending formula, 20 percent direct reconciliation versus 80 percent economic development, for the use of U.S. contributions to the IFI. This expenditure formula will help refocus the U.S. monies to meet new requirements and challenges.

The Good Friday agreement was not around when the IFI was founded in 1986; and no one envisioned then, for example, a new acceptable, as well as accountable, police service in the north and many other changes that are now a reality.

Another good example of the IFI's new role, as Mark Durkin, the leader of SDLP pointed out to me just a few weeks ago, is helping in the transitional use of former British military bases and prisons being closed, changing those into housing projects, shopping centers, and industrial parks. IFI needs to be helpful in brokering deals on the peaceful use of these old military sites, once the very symbols of the "troubles." This is truly turning swords into plowshares, and the IFI can and should help.

H.R. 1208 specifically requires the IFI to spend 20 percent of our contribution to help support programs that enhance direct reconciliation between both communities, and between police and all the communities they serve in the north. The IFI under the bill is encouraged to promote human rights training for police, enhance mediation efforts in interface areas of continuing conflict, and to promote training of the new cross-community district police partnership boards in the north.

These new reconciliation efforts will soon ensure the future of the north and the security of these warm and generous people and their elected leaders under the established power-sharing institutions of the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge full support by the House of H.R. 1208.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman WALSH) for his longstanding leadership on behalf of peace and justice and fairness in Northern Ireland. He has been indefatigable over these many years, and he continues to be. I would thank him for his leadership and remind my colleagues of the importance of trying to get the IFI to look further into reconciliation projects and police reform projects.

As I indicated earlier, we have had seven hearings on police reform in Northern Ireland with a focus on what the United States can do to try to foster that, so there is total transparency, and the best type of methods used by police with human rights training being part of that. It has become very clear that this would help to advance that kind of understanding between the two communities. Those barriers need to be broken down. We do it by getting both communities working together.

We are, I think, or many of us, very encouraged that Hugh Orde is the new chief constable. He replaces a man that many of us had very serious disagreements with in the past, and our hope is that he will continue and even accelerate the pace of reform. This helps to build under him additional strong Earth and concrete, and a base for him to go forward.

This bill has worked; this law has worked; and the IFI, the International Fund for Ireland, has worked for many years to foster reconciliation. This bill gives it an additional push and would provide \$25 million authorization for each of the next 2 years.

Again, I want to thank all Members for their support. It is a bipartisan bill.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Support Act.

As we all know, the peace process in Northern Ireland is at a critical juncture and now is not the time to decrease funding for a critical program such as the International Fund for Ireland.

The International Fund for Ireland was established as an independent, international organization by the British and Irish Governments in 1986, and receives contributions from the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The International Fund for Ireland is so important because it promotes economic and social advance and encourages contact, dialogue and reconciliation between Unionists and Nationalists throughout Ireland.

This is a proven program that successfully brings together two groups and teaches them to work together and helps to foster friendships and understanding.

Dialogue is a key tool to lead to the decommissioning of all parties, a fair police force and a feeling of unity and peace in Ireland.

That is why I am concerned about the significant cut to the International Fund for Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Support Act will authorize \$25 million in funding for the International Fund for Ireland, which will match the funding level provided by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2003 not the current request of \$8 million.

Now is not the time to decrease this program and I urge all members to support the Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Support Act.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1208, 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.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER ASSISTANCE TO INDIAN TRIBE MEMBERS, NATIVE ALASKANS, AND NATIVE HAWAIIANS

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1166) to amend the Small Business Act to expand and improve the assistance provided by Small Business Development Centers to Indian tribe members, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1166

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Approximately 60 percent of Indian tribe members and Native Alaskans live on or adjacent to Indian lands, which suffer from an average unemployment rate of 45 percent.

(2) Indian tribe members and Native Alaskans own more than 197,000 businesses and generate more than \$34,000,000,000 in revenues. The service industry accounted for 17 percent of these businesses (of which 40 percent were engaged in business and personal services) and 15.1 percent of their total receipts. The next largest was the construction industry (13.9 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively). The third largest was the retail trade industry (7.5 percent and 13.4 percent, respectively).

(3) The number of businesses owned by Indian tribe members and Native Alaskans grew by 84 percent from 1992 to 1997, and their gross receipts grew by 179 percent in that period. This is compared to all businesses which grew by 7 percent, and their total gross receipts grew by 40 percent, in that period.

(4) The Small Business Development Center program is cost effective. Clients receiving long-term counseling under the program in 1998 generated additional tax revenues of \$468,000,000, roughly 6 times the cost of the program to the Federal Government.