This bill also stipulates that USAID should emphasize the use of global microfinance networks and other non-profit voluntary organizations in the implementation of microenterprise and microfinance programs. In the last two years, I am concerned that USAID has been shifting its focus away from non-profit organizations and networks to contractors in the implementation of the Agency's microenterprise program. While for-profit entities such as consulting firms are making excellent contributions in the areas of technical assistance, research and policy reform, global microfinance networks and non-profit voluntary organizations have the operational experience and track record in microenterprise and microfinance service delivery to poor people. These organizations are able to get resources directly to clients, and are well positioned to reach the very poorest economically active entrepreneurs in the countries where they work. Further, such networks have built self-sustaining microfinance institutions that now cover, on average, almost all of their operating costs. More than $150 million in earned revenue was captured by these institutions in 2002 to cover their operating costs, in addition to private donations that have added significant leverage to USAID's investments. These networks have excelled in rapidly developing microfinance institutions in volatile and risky situations, including during the early stages of a country's transition from war to peace. However, while H.R. 3818 also encourages the use of indigenous governmental organizations as implementing partners for microenterprise and microfinance programs, these governmental organizations should be used only when necessary, efficient and effective, and, in particular, only when they use the best practices in this field. Since the reforms in H.R. 3818 are so comprehensive, we expect USAID will work in close consultation with the appropriate Congressional committees and offices regarding this and other issues.

The term ''foreign aid'' often has a bad connotation—and there are some good reasons why, too. Many times in the past, foreign aid was sent in a ''top-down'' manner to corrupt governments and organizations where it never really reached the intended recipients.

Microenterprise, on the other hand, takes a totally different approach. It's a ''trickle-up'' approach that focuses on helping the poorest people on the planet build themselves up, little by little, into self-sufficiency. The success of microenterprise lending programs to empower entrepreneurs and borrowers in the developing world cannot be overstated.

Over two million clients are currently benefiting from USAID-assisted programs that provide the necessary capital through small loans, usually of a few hundred dollars or less, for entrepreneurs to start and expand their own small businesses. It is estimated that 97 percent of microenterprise loans are successfully repaid and 70 percent to women, who are often very vulnerable, subjected to abuse, and in need of economic opportunities in the developing world. Microenterprise is a key vehicle to assist victims of trafficking and to raise the social and economic status of women around the world.

Microenterprise also complements the principles President Bush has outlined for more effective foreign aid through the Millennium Challenge Account. Business owners assisted by micro-lending are not only able to increase their own incomes, but through their efforts, they create jobs and help economies grow.

Success stories from the beneficiaries of microenterprise are quite numerous. Take for example, Dorothy Eyiah (EYE-ee-ah) from Ghana. Dorothy was resourceful, but she had no idea how she was going to support her AIDS-stricken sister and family when she brought them into her home in Ghana. She used to support herself selling ice, but that wasn't going to pay for the food and medicines she now needed. She started praying. All doors seemed shut until Dorothy met some women within her village who were part of an Opportunity International Trust Bank. The Trust Bank could help her grow a small business—providing her with financing, training, support. Five loans later, Dorothy is the secretary of her Trust Bank and runs 3 businesses, employing 9 people from her village. She is content. Her sister is comfortable, all the children are in school, and their needs are being met. ''God has been so good to me,'' she says.

Success stories such as this are what microfinance and H.R. 3818 are all about. By building the best possible microenterprise program, our goal is to reach the greatest possible number of poor people with services that truly have an impact on their lives. As we compare the effectiveness of various methods of implementation of funds, success will be measured by the ability to reach very poor people and other underserved populations, including women, and by the kind of impact these programs have on poor families. We are concerned not only with the efficient delivery of financial services, but also with the well-being of those who receive those services. We want to see poor people work their way out of poverty, increase their income, build their assets, and grow their businesses, and we also want to see them educate their children, achieve greater self-esteem, strengthen their families, and improve the quality of their lives.

When we provide micro loans for the developing world, we export values upon which our nation is based upon, including the ideal that if you work hard and dream big, you can succeed. Again, I thank my colleagues who have supported this legislation and I urge the rest of my colleagues to do the same.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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 on H.R. 3818.

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

There was no objection.

EXTENDING AUTHORITY OF U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA TO HOLD COURT IN ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate bill (S. 2873) to extend the authority of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa to hold court in Rock Island, Illinois, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 2873

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

SECTION 1. HOLDING OF COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA.

Section 11029 of the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act (28 U.S.C. 95 note; Public Law 107–273; 116 Stat. 1836) is amended by striking ''July 1, 2005'' and inserting ''July 1, 2006''.

SEC. 2. HOLDING OF COURT AT CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI.

Section 104(a)(3) of title 28, United States Code, is amended in the second sentence by inserting ''and Cleveland'' after ''Clarksdale''.

SEC. 3. PLACE OF HOLDING COURT IN TEXARKANA, TEXAS, AND TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS.

Sections 83(b)(1) and 124(c)(5) of title 28, United States Code, are each amended by inserting after ''held at Texarkana'' the following: '', and may be held anywhere within the Federal courthouse in Texarkana that is located astride the State line between Texas and Arkansas''.

SEC. 4. PLACE OF HOLDING COURT IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.

Section 112(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and Watertown'' and inserting ''Watertown, and Plattsburgh''.

SEC. 5. PLACE OF HOLDING COURT IN THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO.

Section 85 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''Colorado Springs,'' after ''Boulder,''.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. The other body has passed S. 2873, which contains five noncontroversial items that affect the operations of certain Federal courts. These provisions have been thoroughly scrubbed and will assist the affected judicial districts in their work. I urge the House to pass the measure.

Mr. Speaker, the contents of S. 2873 are as follows:

First, the bill designates Cleveland, Mississippi, as a place of holding federal court. This is necessary because Cleveland is the site for a local prison that houses Federal inmates who cannot be incarcerated elsewhere based on a shortage of Federal facilities in the area.

The provision will allow a federal judge who resides in Cleveland to process the Federal cases there rather than commute to Greenville along with the prisoners. There is no need for building construction or leased space.

Second, the bill designates Texarkana, Texas, and Texarkana Arkansas, as places of holding Federal court. The provision allows the Western District of Arkansas and the Eastern District of Texas to hold court anywhere within the Texarkana courthouse that straddles the border between the two States. This will allow the judges to coordinate their workloads and move their dockets more efficiently.

Third, the bill designates Plattsburgh, New York, as a place of holding court. This provision was part of H.R. 3632, an anticounterfeiting bill, that the House passed earlier this year by voice vote. The Plattsburgh designation will assist the U.S. Customs Service and the Department of Justice in prosecuting criminal activity on the Canadian border and Lake Champlain region.

Fourth, the bill designates Colorado Springs, Colorado, as a place of holding court. This was also part of H.R. 3632. Colorado Springs is home to a number of Federal prison facilities, including one which houses terrorists. The nearest Federal court is 70 miles away. The Marshals Service is especially concerned about transporting terrorists over this expanse.

And fifth, the bill extends an existing authorization to permit the Southern Judicial District of Iowa to hold court in Rock Island, Illinois. The courthouse in Iowa is undergoing renovations which are not yet completed, thereby necessitating the extension.

To conclude, I emphasize that the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts endorses this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the other body and our committee in a bipartisan fashion have reviewed these items and we find them meritorious. I urge my colleagues to support S. 2873.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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 S. 2873.

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

There was no objection.

AMENDING AND EXTENDING IRISH PEACE PROCESS CULTURAL AND TRAINING PROGRAM ACT OF 1998

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2655) to amend and extend the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998, with a Senate amendment thereto, and concur in the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Clerk read the Senate amendment, as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT AND EXTENSION OF IRISH PEACE PROCESS CULTURAL AND TRAINING PROGRAM.

(a) IRISH PEACE PROCESS CULTURAL AND TRAINING PROGRAM ACT.—

(1) PROGRAM PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS.—Section 2(a) of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(5) PROGRAM PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS.—An alien entering the United States as a participant in the program shall satisfy the following requirements:

''(A) The alien shall be a citizen of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland.

''(B) The alien shall be between 21 and 35 years of age on the date of departure for the United States.

''(C) The alien shall have resided continuously in a designated county for not less than 18 months before such date.

''(D) The alien shall have been continuously unemployed for not less than 12 months before such date.

''(E) The alien may not have a degree from an institution of higher education.''.

(2) EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.—Section 2 of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(3), by striking ''the third program year and for the 4 subsequent years,'' and inserting ''each program year,''; and

(B) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) SUNSET.—

''(1) Effective October 1, 2008, the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 is repealed.

''(2) Effective October 1, 2008, section 101(a)(15)(Q) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(Q)) is amended—

''(A) by striking 'or' at the end of clause (i);

''(B) by striking '(i)' after '(Q)'; and

''(C) by striking clause (ii).''.

(3) COST-SHARING.—Section 2 of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note), as amended by paragraph (2), is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b), the following new subsection:

''(c) COST-SHARING.—The Secretary of State shall verify that the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland continue to pay a reasonable share of the costs of the administration of the cultural and training programs carried out pursuant to this Act.''.

(4) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—The Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (8 U.S.C. 1101 note) is amended—

(A) by striking ''Attorney General'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Secretary of Homeland Security''; and

(B) by striking ''Immigration and Naturalization Service'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Department of Homeland Security''.

(b) IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.—

(1) REQUIREMENTS FOR NONIMMIGRANT STATUS.—Section 101(a)(15)(Q) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(Q)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''Attorney General'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Secretary of Homeland Security''; and

(B) in clause (ii)(I)—

(i) by striking ''35 years of age or younger having a residence'' and inserting ''citizen of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, 21 to 35 years of age, unemployed for not less than 12 months, and having a residence for not less than 18 months''; and

(ii) by striking ''36 months)'' and inserting ''24 months)''.

(2) FOREIGN RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT.—Section 212 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182) is amended—

(A) by redesignating the subsection (p) as added by section 1505(f) of Public Law 106–386 (114 Stat. 1526) as subsection (s); and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(t)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), no person admitted under section 101(a)(15)(Q)(ii)(I), or acquiring such status after admission, shall be eligible to apply for nonimmigrant status, an immigrant visa, or permanent residence under this Act until it is established that such person has resided and been physically present in the person's country of nationality or last residence for an aggregate of at least 2 years following departure from the United States.

''(2) The Secretary of Homeland Security may waive the requirement of such 2-year foreign residence abroad if the Secretary determines that—

''(A) departure from the United States would impose exceptional hardship upon the alien's spouse or child (if such spouse or child is a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence); or

''(B) the admission of the alien is in the public interest or the national interest of the United States.''.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2655 would extend the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program for 2 years, from 2006 to 2008. It would also modify the provisions of the program to ensure that those aliens receiving visas are those the program was designed to benefit.

In 1998, Representative WALSH guided the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act to enactment. The purpose of the program is to allow young adults who live in disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland and designated border counties of Ireland that are suffering from sectarian violence and high unemployment to enter the United States to develop job skills and conflict resolution abilities in a diverse, cooperative, peaceful, and prosperous environment. They can then return to their homes better able to contribute toward economic regeneration and the Irish peace process. Up to 4,000 qualifying aliens (and their spouses and minor children) can be admitted each year and they can stay in the U.S. for up to 3 years.

Mr. WALSH's bill, H.R. 2655, would extend the program for another 2 years, until October 1, 2008. It would also make a number of changes to the program to ensure that the aliens granted admission are those truly economically disadvantaged young adults the program was designed to help. These changes include requirements that program participants not have degrees from institutions of higher education, that they be at least 21 years of age, that they be nationals of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, that they have been unemployed for at least one year and resident in Northern Ireland or the designated border counties for at least 18 months.

The bill would also make changes to the program to help ensure that the aliens return to Ireland to foster economic development and peace. For instance, it would also require that aliens admitted under the program return home for 2 years before they could apply for an immigrant visa, permanent residence, or another nonimmigrant visa.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2655.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.