

good bill. I just think we could have used this opportunity to make it even better.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the aforementioned gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE).

Mr. OSBORNE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I am pleased to speak in support of the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students, or HEROS, Act. As has been stated, this was enacted September 12 of 2001, somewhat in response to events of 9/11; and it provides relief from student loan debt for Reservists and National Guardsmen called to active duty while still in college.

This bill expires in about 2 weeks, September 30, 2005; so it is only appropriate that the gentleman from Minnesota has introduced H.R. 2132, which extends the law for another 2 years. We currently have many Guardsmen and Reservists who are still being called up out of college, some to battle Hurricane Katrina; but many more are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many Members of Congress, myself included, have been to Iraq and Afghanistan many times, and I continue to be amazed at their competence and their willingness to sacrifice; and I guess this is the least that we can do to help them understand how much they are appreciated.

This bill also encourages colleges and universities to provide a full tuition refund for students called up during a semester. It does not mandate it, but I think this is an important provision of the bill. As mentioned by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), in addition I have worked with the chairman, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), and the gentleman from Maryland to insert language in the higher education bill, which recently passed out of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which would extend relief from interest on student loan payments for active duty soldiers called to active duty after leaving college; and of course the HEROS Act would not cover those because it refers only to those who are in college.

So I look forward to working with the chairman on implementation of this provision as we further consider the higher ed bill at a future date, and again I wish to thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) for his provision here and the chairman for his work.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I am now very pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bill to extend as-

sistance for the men and women serving in the military by continuing to provide student aid flexibility; and I want to applaud the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) for his leadership in providing flexibility and support for military personnel.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) for his continued support for higher education and his leadership along with the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) to protect the interests of members of the armed services.

The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), on the other side of the aisle, have worked closely with us on this bill. And because it does expire at the end of this month, we do, in fact, need to extend it.

The Higher Education Act, which we will extend after we deal with this bill, deals with the issue of deferring the interest payments on those loans for active duty people, our servicemembers, who have been called up. That higher education bill we will talk about when we deal with the extension of the current Higher Education Act, but we are hopeful that in the coming month or so we will be able to bring the higher education reauthorization bill to the floor which will deal with the issue our friend from Maryland has referred to.

I do want to say that this is an important bill. We need to get it passed and get it to the other body to pass it so that our men and women in uniform will not be penalized because in fact they were called up, those who were in an institution of higher education. So I congratulate the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I urge my colleagues to support this very important piece of legislation that extends the existing authorities and again congratulate the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE).

I do want to underscore the fact that I thought we should use the opportunity right now to improve this legislation in the way I described. We are, of course, hostage to our own congressional calendar, but I do not think we should be holding our troops overseas hostage to that same calendar.

The higher education bill, whenever it comes before the House, still has to go through a long process. It has to get through the House, as we know; it has to get through the Senate; and then it must be signed by the President. That could be months. It could be years, as we know, for this process. I do not think we should be asking the men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan to be waiting years while their interest payments on these Federal student loans are accumulating.

It seems to me we should get it done now. We have an opportunity to get it done now, and I hope we will move quickly to deal with that situation. Especially if the Higher Education Act

gets bogged down, it seems to me we should move quickly to address that discrete issue that we can handle by itself without all the other issues that are tangled up as part of the higher education bill.

So, again, a good bill. I wish we had used the opportunity to make it a little better, but I urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, in closing I wish to thank the gentleman from Maryland and certainly thank the chairman and my colleagues for their support of this bill. It has been an interesting discussion we have had about legislative strategy.

I agree that our troops, their welfare, and the pressure that is put on them sometimes as they are students is extremely important and something, frankly, not for us to trifle with. We have the opportunity here with a bill that has already received overwhelming support in its current form in both the House and Senate and been passed into law, and it seemed to us we should take advantage of this to make sure our troops receive continuous coverage, and then address the larger question the gentleman from Maryland raised earlier.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2132.

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.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2005

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3784) to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3784

*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 "Higher Education Extension Act of 2005".

#### SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS.

(a) EXTENSION OF DURATION.—The authorization of appropriations for, and the duration of, each program authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) shall be extended through December 31, 2005.

(b) PERFORMANCE OF REQUIRED AND AUTHORIZED FUNCTIONS.—If the Secretary of Education, a State, an institution of higher education, a guaranty agency, a lender, or another person or entity—

(1) is required, in or for fiscal year 2004, to carry out certain acts or make certain determinations or payments under a program

under the Higher Education Act of 1965, such acts, determinations, or payments shall be required to be carried out, made, or continued during the period of the extension under this section; or

(2) is permitted or authorized, in or for fiscal year 2004, to carry out certain acts or make certain determinations or payments under a program under the Higher Education Act of 1965, such acts, determinations, or payments are permitted or authorized to be carried out, made, or continued during the period of the extension under this section.

(c) EXTENSION AT CURRENT LEVELS.—The amount authorized to be appropriated for a program described in subsection (a) during the period of extension under this section shall be the amount authorized to be appropriated for such program for fiscal year 2004, or the amount appropriated for such program for such fiscal year, whichever is greater. Except as provided in any amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965 enacted during fiscal year 2005 or 2006, the amount of any payment required or authorized under subsection (b) in or for the period of the extension under this section shall be determined in the same manner as the amount of the corresponding payment required or authorized in or for fiscal year 2004.

(d) ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND OTHER ENTITIES CONTINUED.—Any advisory committee, interagency organization, or other entity that was, during fiscal year 2004, authorized or required to perform any function under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.), or in relation to programs under that Act, shall continue to exist and is authorized or required, respectively, to perform such function for the period of the extension under this section.

(e) ADDITIONAL EXTENSION NOT PERMITTED.—Section 422 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1226a) shall not apply to further extend the authorization of appropriations for any program described in subsection (a) on the basis of the extension of such program under this section.

(f) EXCEPTION.—The programs described in subsection (a) for which the authorization of appropriations, or the duration of which, is extended by this section include provisions applicable to institutions in, and students in or from, the Freely Associated States, except that those provisions shall be applicable with respect to institutions in, and students in or from, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands only to the extent specified in Public Law 108-188.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

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

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam 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. 3784, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, each year millions of Americans, young and old, partici-

pate in higher education programs at this Nation's colleges and universities. Higher education has become more important than ever with a changing marketplace and increasing international competition; and that is why the Federal investment in higher education is so important.

For more than 2 years, my colleagues and I have been working to strengthen and renew the Higher Education Act so that we can better serve the millions of low- and middle-income students aspiring for a college education. And while we have made great progress this year, the reauthorization process is still not complete.

Today, I stand in support of the Higher Education Extension Act so that we ensure these vital programs continue to serve American students. The measure extends critical programs for a brief time frame, 3 months, to give Congress the additional time it needs to complete this process in the best interests of students and taxpayers.

In February, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) and I introduced the College Access and Opportunity Act to complete the Higher Education Act reauthorization. That bill, similar to legislation of the same name we offered last year, was the culmination of a comprehensive effort to expand college access by focusing on fairness, accountability, affordability, and quality.

That bill contained a number of reforms that I had hoped would be enacted by today. The College Access and Opportunity Act would have realigned our student aid programs to place first priority back where it belongs, on the millions of low- and middle-income students who have not yet received a higher education.

The bill would have strengthened Pell grants, college access programs, and campus-based student aid. It would have broken down barriers and eliminated outdated regulations that are preventing nontraditional students from achieving their higher education goals.

It would have significantly realigned the multibillion-dollar student loan programs to expand access for current and future students and restore fairness so that all student borrowers would be treated equally. Consumer protection for borrowers would have been strengthened, red tape would have been reduced, and because accountability is the cornerstone of American education reform, colleges and universities would have been held more accountable to students, parents, and taxpayers, the people they serve, through increased sunshine and transparency.

□ 1500

Now I remain committed to a comprehensive reauthorization and hope to complete that process this year. In the meantime, the bill before us is critically important. We cannot allow programs under the Higher Education Act

to expire. Too many students depend on this assistance as they strive for a higher education. Yet it is equally important that we remain committed to comprehensive reforms that will build upon these programs in strengthening them in order to expand college access.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support the extension of the Higher Education Act. Millions of American students depend on these programs, and we must not let our commitment to higher education lapse. But it is equally important that we remain focused on the ultimate goal of enacting comprehensive reforms that will strengthen and renew the Higher Education Act so it can meet the needs of current and future students.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill and work with us in the coming weeks and months to complete this comprehensive reform package so we can better serve American students who are pursuing a college education.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 3784, a temporary 3-month extension of the Higher Education Act. This, in essence, extends temporarily the 1998 reauthorization which was fashioned in a very bipartisan manner by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) and myself.

I am pleased that in the face of a national tragedy a simple extension has been offered. I hope the Republican leadership can use this time, however, to reevaluate H.R. 609, their plan to balance the massive deficit on the backs of students already struggling to pay for college. H.R. 609 is part of the reconciliation package.

Madam Speaker, from my days in the seminary, I always believed that reconciliation was a loving thing. H.R. 609, however, is certainly not an act of love. While I am cosponsor of this extension bill, I cannot ignore the impending cuts the Higher Education Act bill will ultimately suffer if the Republican reauthorization bill, H.R. 609, becomes law.

H.R. 609 represents the largest cut in the history of Federal student financial aid. The largest cut in history. That is something that should give all of us pause and concern, and I am sure it does.

The Committee on Education and the Workforce reported H.R. 609 in July by a straight party-line vote. H.R. 609 generates nearly \$9 billion by eliminating some of the excessive lender subsidies, raising interest rate caps and rates on consolidation loans, charging student borrowers higher fees, and cutting critical student aid delivery funds; yet the \$2 million in savings gained by eliminating the excessive lender subsidies alone will not be directed to helping students in any way.

When the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and I pushed to do away with this outrageous subsidy to

lenders, it was our hope that the money would be used to aid students and not to finance tax cuts for the wealthiest.

Instead, the Republican-passed budget and higher education reauthorization intends to balance the massive deficit on the backs of students already struggling to pay for college. This raid on student aid misses a golden opportunity to redirect millions to student borrowers and additional grant aid for students.

The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and I offered an amendment in committee to recycle millions of dollars in savings to guarantee a \$500 increase in the maximum Pell grant, lower the interest rate caps on student loans, and give students a choice between a low fixed or variable rate on consolidation loans without raising costs to students or taxpayers. The Republicans rejected our amendment.

Under H.R. 609, the typical student borrower with \$17,500 in debt will be forced to pay an additional \$5,800 for his or her current student loans compared to current law. However, I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman BOEHNER) for offering H.R. 3784, the temporary 3-month extension of the Higher Education Act. While I am pleased to offer my support, I hope this extension will allow the Republican leadership time to reconsider their plan to raid student aid. I offer my services to work with them to achieve just that.

In the context of both reconciliation and the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, we must move forward in a way that helps, not harms, our students. I look forward to working with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) to achieve that.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's support of the bill today to extend the Higher Education Act; but I find myself in a position of having to rise and respond to some of the criticisms of H.R. 609, the reauthorization bill for the Higher Education Act that is in process.

The gentleman is right, we do over the next 5 years save \$9 billion in taxpayer funds while at the same time we reduce origination fees for students, we expand loan limits for students, and better equalize the campus-based aid programs around the country.

Now, my colleague and his friends on the other side of the aisle came up with proposals to save money as well. The only difference here is that we decided that net of \$9 billion ought to be saved for the taxpayers because, after all, it is their money. My friends on the other side of the aisle decided to spend it. Well meaning, well intentioned, but at some point we in Congress have a re-

sponsibility to enact public policy that is fair for all.

Some people do not go to college. As my friend knows, I am the only one of my 11 brothers and sisters to go to college. To the extent we are providing loans, they are being paid for by taxpayers, some of whom do not get a higher education. So what is fair?

I think the underlying bill, providing college loans, providing Pell grants for underserved students, is a very good thing for our country. But how much is enough?

We are going to spend about \$75 billion this year in Pell grants and student loans to help low- to middle-income students achieve the dream of a higher education. I think that it is an important part of our responsibility to help improve our society. But at the same time, we also have a responsibility to people who pay taxes, and people who pay taxes watching money flowing out of this institution like water over a dam.

At some point I am not going to stand here and be embarrassed because we help improve access to higher education, we help improve the ability of students to pay for their loan programs, and at the same time save \$9 billion over 5 years for the taxpayers. I think it is a pretty good deal for all.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

We all know there is a direct relationship between revenue and expenses. We try to keep that balance fiscally correct and morally correct.

I happen to have voted against the tax cuts proposed by President George W. Bush. I voted against them because I could see what was going to happen. Most of those tax cuts, as most people will concede, went to the wealthier people in this country, including Members of Congress. Had we just deducted from those \$2 trillion of tax cuts, when you take the whole cost, the cost of the debt, if we just deducted \$9 billion from those \$2 trillion, we would have money here and we would not have to balance this on the backs of the students. We could have saved it for any other program also, obviously. I am consistent that I voted against those tax cuts. I got a little criticism back home from some people; not many, but some. I saw this coming. I could see for sure that education was going to suffer. Those programs for the neediest in the country were going to suffer. The tax cuts were entirely too large, and those tax cuts have forced us to where we are in the bill put out by the committee, H.R. 609.

I think all of us have to be very cautious when we vote for revenue or revenue cuts. We have to be very cautious when we vote for expenditures. But there is a direct relationship, so I can stand here with a certain purity and say I did not vote to give away the \$2 trillion, I voted to retain these funds so we could help students.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I would say to my friend from Michigan, and we are friends, I proudly voted for the tax cuts and thank goodness that we passed them. Let us recount what has happened over the past 4½ years: a weak economy in 2001; followed by the devastating effects of 9/11; a war in Afghanistan and a war in Iraq; and now Hurricane Katrina.

If we had not enacted those tax cuts in early 2001, what shape would our economy be in today? I want to correct my friend that voting for reductions in marginal tax rates does not mean reductions in revenue to the Federal Government. We have had this debate here in Congress now for 25 years, but reducing marginal tax rates has in fact increased revenues to the Federal Government. And look at the strength of our economy today that would not have been there had we not had those reductions in taxes.

We can, in fact, reduce taxes, grow our economy, and hold the lid on spending and give the American people the best deal in the world: good government, reasonable level of services, and more money in their pocket, that they can decide how to spend in the best interest of themselves and their families and their communities.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

No one questions, and I can never question either the sincerity nor the fairness of the chairman. I have been here 29 years, and I cannot recall a chairman being more fair during all of our deliberations in committee. And we are friends. We disagree on certain, maybe some fundamental things. But the gentleman asked what would have happened had we not enacted those tax cuts. One thing, we would not be seeing deficits as far out as the eye can see. That is not healthy for the economy, so we can debate that. Maybe we should have had some of those tax cuts, maybe not all. But again, because we are friends, we will continue to work together. Because the chairman is fair, he will always give us a chance in committee to offer our ideas and he will listen to them patiently. We respect the chairman for that on this side of the aisle.

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE). As I said before, we are friends and I appreciate the gentleman's kind remarks. I believe our committee process here in Congress ought to be an open forum and that Members clearly can agree, but in our committee we do not really

allow members to be disagreeable. I think what it does is foster a committee where members cooperate and get to know each other and work together, and even though we may not agree on everything, every member should have a right to offer his or her ideas about the pending legislation.

Now back to the bill at hand, and I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for supporting the extension of the Higher Education Act for 3 months, and it is my fervent desire in the next 3 months Congress will reenact this authorization to the benefit of millions of American students.

□ 1515

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3784, 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.

#### EXTENDING THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY TO ACCEPT AND EXPEND FUNDS

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3765) to extend through December 31, 2007, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3765

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

#### SECTION 1. FUNDING TO PROCESS PERMITS.

Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (33 U.S.C. 2201 note; 114 Stat. 2594; 117 Stat. 1836) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a) by striking “In fiscal years 2001 through 2005, the” and inserting “The”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: “(c) DURATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority provided under this section shall be in effect from October 1, 2000, through December 31, 2007.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3765, to authorize an extension of the Army Corps of Engineers' section 214 program. Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 allows the Army Corps of Engineers to accept and expend funds provided by non-Federal public entities to hire additional personnel to process regulatory permits.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3765 is urgently needed since the authority for this program expires on September 30 of this calendar year. If this program expires, the corps will have to fire some regulatory personnel, reducing its ability to process permits in a timely manner.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has heard from Members on both sides of the aisle supporting the section 214 program. H.R. 3765 is identical to the language in section 2003 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2005, which passed the House on July 14, 2005, by a vote of 406 to 14.

While the other body has not yet acted upon the Water Resources Development Act this year, I am hopeful that in the wake of Hurricane Katrina they move quickly to pass the bill providing for the water resources needs of our Nation. But because the authority for the section 214 program is expiring, it is necessary to move this piece separately.

I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) and our colleagues from Washington State for introducing this bill. I urge all Members to vote in favor of H.R. 3765.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I support House passage of H.R. 3765. This bill extends through December 31, 2007, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899.

This program is popular and well received, particularly in the northwest part of the country. And I congratulate the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD), my committee colleague, for his attention to this issue and for securing today's consideration of this bill.

The language in H.R. 3765 is identical to that which is contained in H.R. 2864, the Water Resources Development Act of 2005, which passed the House on July 14 by an overwhelming vote of 406 to 14. This bill should likewise receive strong support.

Today's consideration of one section of this larger Water Resources Development Act should not be viewed as an indication that the larger bill will not be enacted this year. I remain opti-

mistic that the other House of Congress will soon consider this vital legislation, particularly in light of the vital role of flood damage reduction, navigation, and storm damage reduction projects in protecting lives and property and enhancing economic well-being.

The tragic events associated with Hurricane Katrina indicate how important our water infrastructure really is. However, the Senate is not likely to act on the broader legislation before the Secretary's authority to accept funds expires on September 30, just 10 days from now. By providing this extension, the program can continue uninterrupted; and I urge support of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for yielding me this time, and my colleagues on the committee and the gentleman.

I also want to express my gratitude to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), as well as the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN), subcommittee Chair, for their support and recognition of the urgency of this matter.

The sense of what we are about today is trying to extend a bill that is already law that is included in the WRDA bill, which we have already passed in this body but that has not passed the other body. The reason we need to do this is common sense, and it is about preserving jobs.

The listing under the Endangered Species Act of salmon in the Pacific Northwest overwhelm the Corps of Engineers and other regulatory agencies in their ability to process permits in a timely manner. Section 214(d) of the Water Resources Development Act allows local entities to provide financial assistance to the corps to provide for the resources needed to process permits more efficaciously. It does not in any way prejudice the outcome of that permitting application. It merely expedites it and provides valuable needed resources. This has been used successfully in partnership throughout the Northwest and the west coast and has saved literally millions of dollars and thousands of jobs in our region.

I reiterate that the bill has passed the House already in its portion of the WRDA, that it is existing law. So we are not really trying to change anything. What we are trying to do is extend this vital provision for several more years so that permits in the process right now are not immediately stopped, which they otherwise would be without passage of this.

Again, I thank my colleagues for their leadership and recognition of the