

The second issue that I would ask support for deals with the Diaz-Balart-Meek amendment, and this is to extend the social services that will be denied to legal immigrants.

What is happening today, Mr. Speaker, is that legal immigrants, people who have lived in this country for many years, have raised their children, have paid their taxes, and because of the new welfare reform legislation, will be denied social services.

Many legal immigrants today are receiving notices that they will no longer receive social services due to their status of not being citizens. That is causing a lot of problems, especially to the elderly; people who are in nursing homes, people who need the assistance of food stamps because they are not making enough on their pensions, and also young people will be affected.

So I would ask the Members to support the Meek amendment. All it does is extend the services until the end of the fiscal year so that the people will continue to receive services and, once we pass the budget, hopefully all those services will be restored to the legal immigrants.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I would just take a minute to say that this is an important bill. The President initially requested about \$2 billion for disaster relief for people devastated in California and various other States, and then the incredible flooding of the Dakotas and Minnesota occurred in the interim. All of these people, not only in those States I have mentioned, but all told in some 35 States, have suffered the ill effects of terrible weather and the tremendous adversity of nature.

Unfortunately, in recent years, the American taxpayer has become the insurer of last resort. So it seems that year after year we have to come up with these supplemental appropriations bills to deal with this devastation. We are happy to do that. We want to make sure that we try to repair some of the damage. There is no way on God's green Earth we will be able to repair all of the damage but, at the same time, we owe the taxpayer the responsibility to make sure that the money is spent wisely; that it is not wasted; that it is simply not just thrown at the problem.

In addition to the disaster relief, President Clinton, of course, has detailed troops to Bosnia and to Haiti and other places throughout the world and those expeditions have exceeded their budget and have exceeded the money previously appropriated to the Defense Department, and so we have to pay for those ventures. Unless we, at some point, pull our troops out of those places, that expense goes on from day to day. We cannot simply tell our troops to go out and do the job, but we will not pay for it.

So it is important, I think, that we pass this bill, that we pay for the

troops, that we pay for the devastation, but that we offset it within the existing budget. We have done that in this bill.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LIVINGSTON. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's yielding.

I wanted to mention for the RECORD that there are a number of colleagues who will have colloquies with myself regarding some items on the emergency side of this bill. There are some complicated difficulties we are having on housing programs. I want my colleagues to know that we are very aware of those circumstances and plan to work with our colleagues.

In view of the fact that many were not able to be here at this moment, I would suggest that the gentleman has done fabulous work on this bill, I congratulate him for his efforts, and certainly those people facing disasters across the country owe him a good deal of gratitude.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Well, Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman. I want to say this is a bipartisan bill. We have gotten this far in joint agreement because Members across this House of Representatives, working in tandem with the other body, have decided that these items must be paid for, and yet we have also joined forces to make sure that we find the budget authority within our previously appropriated items to offset the increased costs.

So right now there are no additional costs to the U.S. taxpayer for what is spent in this bill. I think that makes it a reasonable bill, a bill that meets the demands of the American people and a bill that should be passed with as few amendments as absolutely possible.

I do hope that we can get this bill passed without undue political wrangling, that we can put it on the President's desk and that we can get his signature within the next few days, certainly before we leave on the Memorial Day recess. In fact, I would encourage all of our Members on both sides of the aisle and the leadership to make sure they do everything possible to assure that this bill becomes law before the Memorial Day recess.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to announce my support for H.R. 1469, the supplemental appropriations bill for fiscal year 1997. Included in this bill are several components, which, if enacted, would greatly assist the residents of southeastern North Carolina in their further recovery from last year's hurricane. The night of September 6, 1996, the district that I represent, North Carolina's Seventh, was battered by hurricane Fran. Less than 2 days later, my entire district was declared a disaster area by the President. Yet, we were ready to rebuild our lives and repair our environment.

That is why the \$150,700,000 appropriated in this bill for the Emergency Watershed Program [EWP] is so important to the fine people who live, work, and vacation in North Carolina.

This money will be available nationwide to all qualified applicants. The EWP provides for the restoration of creeks and rivers that were clogged by downed trees and other storm debris. I have had many constituents contact me by phone, letter, and in person about the need to clear our rivers now in order to prevent flooding later. The greater the potential for flooding, the more likely the Federal Government will be called upon to assist those whose homes, businesses, and crops are damaged or destroyed by flood waters.

The Seventh District faces another threat H.R. 1469 seeks to address: economic disaster. North Carolina's economy continues to suffer after Hurricanes Fran and Bertha. Fran damaged 891 nonagricultural businesses with \$50 million in repairs still needed. Our agricultural and timber industries were nearly overwhelmed by \$2 billion in damages. It makes good sense that one of the highest priorities of North Carolina's economic recovery plan is support for the Economic Development Administration's efforts to assist our communities.

Finally, I thank the entire North Carolina congressional delegation for working together to make sure that this bill addresses many of the unmet high-priority needs in my State. In the House, Congressmen, HEFNER, PRICE, and TAYLOR along with my other colleagues worked to ensure that North Carolina's unmet needs were addressed in this legislation. I also want to thank our State's Senators, who have been instrumental in coordinating our efforts to support these important components. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1469.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the automatic continuing resolution amendment to H.R. 1469, the so-called Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1997.

Nestled within all the rhetoric and debate surrounding H.R. 1469, the Supplemental Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1997, is an amendment offered to fund national government operations throughout Fiscal Year 1998. Funding that is, at 100 percent of the current level of overspending. This amendment abdicates the responsibility of Congress to legislate and appropriate; that for which Congress was elected by citizens of this country. Rather than accepting the responsibility and corresponding accountability to constituents for voting in favor of or against particular appropriations, this amendment allows Congress, in the name of strategizing against the President and averting blame for a government shutdown, to approve in an autopilot-type approach, Federal spending through the end of fiscal year 1998.

This strategy sets a dangerous precedent of bypassing the constitutional checks on governmental powers by minimizing the separate roles of the executive and legislative branches. Rather than a Presidential veto on congressional appropriations—thus demanding a new consensus between the Congress and the Executive—the veto power of the President becomes merely the power to continue funding at a level already burgeoning with spending on constitutionally suspect programs. Once again, Congress grants to the executive branch, powers never intended by the Constitution.

The amendment also introduces a dangerous ratchet-up feature in Federal Government spending. For should this precedent be later followed and should Congress ever decide to make amends for its habit of spending

beyond its means, the Presidential veto power then becomes a tool by which the President can ignore the will of Congress absent a two-thirds majority to override the veto. Recent history suggests that Congress is rather unlikely to decrease its spending and this certainly would be much more unlikely in the event a two-thirds majority is required.

For these reasons and others, I oppose abdication of congressional responsibility, putting the Federal Government appropriation process on autopilot, and, therefore, approval of the automatic continuing resolution amendment to H.R. 1469.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Chairman, included in the fiscal year 1997 supplemental appropriation bill which we are considering is language that makes available to the State of California, emergency relief funding for the repair or reconstruction of highway 1 at Devil's Slide in San Mateo County.

For decades the residents of San Mateo County have dealt with the ongoing problem of Devil's Slide. The current highway runs along the coast and is prone to damage from mudslides and vulnerable to long closures. An original proposal to construct a bypass road further inland ran into several problems, with opposition from local residents concerned about its impact. However, last year the people of San Mateo County voted overwhelmingly to endorse the building of a tunnel bypass.

The tunnel alternative has the strong support of local officials, business owners, the environmental community, and residents. After a long and difficult process, we are ready to move forward to solve this problem and provide reliable access to those who visit, live, and drive in San Mateo County.

I congratulate Representatives LANTOS and PELOSI for their hard, effective work that will allow us to finally move forward.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the legislation that provides supplemental funding for emergency flood assistance. Much of the massive flooding from winter storms occurred in four counties in Ohio that I represent. I personally visited these areas many times and have seen the devastation firsthand. The damage is simply staggering.

Farmland in our area was affected severely by the floods. The legislation we are considering today provides needed funds to restore damaged agriculture. Especially important to my district are the Emergency Conservation Program, which provides cost-sharing assistance to farmers whose farmland was damaged as the result of flooding; the Conservation Reserve Program, which provides meaningful benefits for watershed-based approaches that achieve environmental benefits such as water quality, flood control, wetlands conservation and wildlife habitat; and the Natural Resources Conservation Program, for emergency watershed and flood prevention operations to repair damage to waterways and watersheds resulting from flooding.

Funding is also provided in this legislation for the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]; for repair of transportation systems; for hazard mitigation, infrastructure and to rebuild levees; and to rebuild other flood control works and highways that were damaged by floods.

I join with my colleagues today in support of this needed emergency disaster assistance legislation.

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express concern about one of the provisions contained in the bill we are considering today. It is a provision that most Members probably aren't even aware is in this bill. That is the redirecting of \$11 million from the Strategic Petroleum Reserves operations account to help pay for these programs.

I am extremely troubled by the irresponsible way the administration and our appropriators continue to use our national energy emergency stockpile.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve was created in the 1970's in response to the severe energy shortage that plagued this Nation, harming our productivity and our economy. Since 1975, the Federal Government has spent over \$200 billion building and filling a national oil reserve so Americans would never again be held hostage by foreign governments because of our reliance on imported petroleum.

In the 104th Congress, the first of three budget raids were made on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the first initiated by the Clinton administration and the second and third by Congress. When the first ever oil sale for non-emergency purposes was made we were told it would be a one-time sale that was only occurring because the Reserve itself needed repairs. Unfortunately, two more sales were made for other, we were assured, equally worthwhile purposes. My Commerce Committee colleagues and I objected to each one of these sales.

The United States is now more than 50 percent dependent on foreign oil to meet its daily energy needs. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is our first line of defense in an energy emergency. During the Persian Gulf crisis, President Bush announced oil from the Reserve would be sold, immediately calming oil markets and protecting Americans from shortages and the economic effects of oil price spikes.

Unfortunately, if we continue to sell oil from the reserve and use the proceeds from those sales as we are today, the next time there is an energy crisis, there will be no Reserve to protect us. And all Americans, including those who will benefit from this bill today will look to Congress to ask what happened to the \$200 billion Reserve they paid for to protect them from an energy emergency.

I feel it is important to note this obscure provision in the bill we are considering today, because I know in a few short months the Interior Appropriations Committee will begin to work on a bill to pay for operating and maintaining the Reserve another year. And I know that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve will again be lower on their list of priorities than it should be. I hope that no more oil sales are proposed, but if they are I plan on again opposing such a sale. There is not enough oil in the Reserve to pay for every worthwhile program that comes along and if we don't stop these oil sales soon, there won't be enough oil in the Reserve to protect Americans from another energy crisis.

Mr. MCDADE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1469, the emergency supplemental appropriations bill for fiscal year 1997. This legislation is necessary to deliver much needed relief to victims of natural disasters and to ensure our military preparedness through the replenishment of critical defense accounts.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud of the contribution made to this bill by the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. The Energy and Water Development chapter is narrowly targeted to address the urgent needs created by devastating flooding nationwide. Earlier in the year, California and the Pacific Northwest were ravaged by the fury of uncontrollable flood waters. Then nature trained her sights on the Ohio River Valley and the States of America's South. And the devastation has continued in the Great Plains, particularly North Dakota, where dramatic images of abandoned cities have reminded us all of the tremendous power of natural forces.

Mr. Chairman, the Energy and Water Development chapter includes \$585 million for the Corps of Engineers and \$7.4 million for the Bureau of Reclamation to begin the arduous process of rebuilding flood control works for the protection of communities nationwide. Funds are provided to repair Federal projects, rebuild levees and perform emergency dredging across the country. Time and again, Americans have demonstrated their great resilience in the aftermath of natural disasters. This assistance will help them rise to their feet once more.

To partially offset these emergency supplemental appropriations, the bill includes a rescission of \$22.5 million from the energy supply research and development account of the Department of Energy. This rescission, amounting to less than 1 percent of the \$2.7 billion account, represents unanticipated carry-over balances brought forward into fiscal year 1997.

Mr. Chairman, as one who has witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of rising floodwaters, I appreciate the importance of delivering Federal assistance on a timely basis to communities in need. Accordingly, the Subcommittee on Energy and Water has kept this chapter largely free of riders unrelated to emergency flooding. I hope that the House will follow the example of the subcommittee and pass this bill quickly and without the added weight of extraneous material. We must make every effort to accelerate the delivery of this critical assistance.

One of the great strengths of this sprawling and diverse Nation is its capacity to unify in times of disaster. This legislation provides relief to those who find themselves in dire need due to circumstances beyond their control. Accordingly, I urge all of my colleagues to support this vital measure.

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Chairman, the House was wise to prohibit yesterday's recommendation of the Rules Committee which was to consider the Gilman amendment setting a date—certain for withdrawing United States ground troops from Bosnia. I sympathize with those who demand closer and more comprehensive consultation with Congress before major commitments of U.S. military power are made. We are elected by the people to represent their interests. We control the purse strings. We have a constitutional role in participating in such important decisions.

The issue of prior congressional consultation and approval of military action has been of long-standing controversy between Congress and the President. Democratic Congresses have had issues with Republican Presidents, Democratic Congresses have had disagreements with Democratic Presidents,