

That leads us to the third amendment—the Tiahrt amendment—which changes the offsets approved by the Appropriations Committee just last week.

I disagreed with the offsets that were offered by Chairman LIVINGSTON last week, and I voted against the bill as a result. But I believe that once the Appropriations Committee has made such a decision, it shouldn't be changed by a self-executing rule served up by the Rules Committee.

Why can't Mr. TIAHRT bring his amendment to the floor for debate? Or why didn't he bring it to the Appropriations Committee, of which he is a Member? During our debate last week, Mr. TIAHRT didn't breathe a word about his objections to the Airport Grants In Aid rescission. In fact, Mr. TIAHRT didn't even propose the amendment approved by this rule. The amendment offered to the Rules Committee by Mr. TIAHRT would have replaced the Airports rescission with a rescission from the GSA building repair account.

But the Rules Committee, in their wisdom, straightened Mr. TIAHRT out, and made him realize that what he requested wasn't really what he wanted at all. The Rules Committee decided that Mr. TIAHRT really wanted to take additional rescissions out of Section 8 housing—he just didn't know it.

Finally, I have to protest the ill treatment given to Mr. WALSH and Mr. SOLOMON and New England Members in the manager's amendment. Why weren't these Members included in the self-executing rule? What does the leadership have against these champions of assistance to New England? Why are they singled out for 10 minutes of actual debate and a vote on their meritorious amendment? Only the Republican leadership knows for sure.

Unfortunately, the House will never know what it is missing today. Democrats proposed some good amendments to this bill—amendments and policy questions worthy of consideration by this House.

I proposed an amendment to the Rules Committee myself concerning the way USDA's Non-insured Crop Assistance Program—a disaster program of last resort—was working against farmers in California and other parts of the country who had suffered 80- to 100-percent agricultural losses, but happened to live in counties that had not experienced 35-percent losses county-wide.

I'm particularly disappointed that the Rules Committee did not make it in order because the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee had indicated a willingness to have my amendment considered today. I proposed it at the Appropriations Committee but withdrew it at the chairman's request, pending its scoring by the Congressional Budget Office.

As expected, CBO determined my amendment had a spending impact. However, the Rules Committee never set conditions for proposed amendments to this bill. I believe the House should have had the opportunity to decide whether my amendment was worthwhile and to be given the opportunity to determine offsets if offsets were believed to be warranted.

But I'm not the only Democrat left in the lurch.

Mr. MURTHA proposed an amendment to strike the offsets.

Mr. OBEY proposed an amendment to link the Administration's entire supplemental re-

quest in one bill, just as the Senate has done. Mr. OBEY also proposed an amendment to include the Administration's \$1.8 billion request for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Instead, in a somewhat contradictory fashion, the House will act on an emergency bill that contains no funds for the emergency agency.

Ms. CLAYTON proposed an amendment matching a Senate provision clarifying "debt forgiveness" for USDA loans. This is an important issue that has never been debated by this House. And the effect of ruling Ms. CLAYTON's amendment out of order is that it won't be decided by the House, but will be decided instead by a handful of conferees.

In short, this rule is a sham. It turns upside down the notion that Members with legitimate amendments will get a fair hearing from the Rules Committee or that major policy issues on perhaps the most crucial function performed by the House—appropriations—will be debated and decided on the House floor.

I'd ask my Republican colleagues to join us in opposing this exercise in unfairness, but then I remember that members of the Appropriations Committee have been threatened with removal from the Committee if they don't go along with the leadership's strategy on this important bill. I can only imagine what will be done to those Republican Members not on the Appropriations Committee. They are likely to be drawn and quartered, or perhaps even worse—left out of the next self-executing rule.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the rule.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the manager's amendment to supplement the community development block grant (CDBG) Program by \$20 million. While I regret that the offset comes from section 8 housing, the Northeast needs CDBG funding to recover from the aftermath of ice storm 1998.

In January, Maine was hit by the worst natural disaster in its history. Heavy ice accumulation—up to five inches of ice—snapped utility poles in two. Two million feet of cable line, 2,600 utility poles, and 1,500 transformers were replaced. Roughly 649,000 customers—half of the population of Maine—were out of electricity in the dead of winter. For some rural areas, it took three weeks for electricity to be restored.

When Vice-President Gore visited Maine after the first of two ice storms in January, he said that it looked as if a neutron bomb had hit Maine—the people were fine, but the utility infrastructure had been destroyed. The cost of repairing the electrical infrastructure in Maine was \$81 million.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified utility costs as a major unmet need. In the President's action plan for recovery, the CDBG Program is cited as one that can supplement other Federal assistance in repairing and reconstructing infrastructure. 24 CFR §570.201(1) provides that CDBG funds may be used to acquire, construct, reconstruct, rehabilitate, or install the distribution lines and facilities of privately-owned utilities.

Supplemental CDBG funding is critical to address needs stemming from the ice storm that devastated Maine and the other Northeastern States. Without the additional CDBG funding, our residents would bear much of the high cost of this natural disaster. That would be unfair. Mainers have paid their fair share

over the years to defray the costs associated with other natural disasters.

I commend Chairman LIVINGSTON's recognition of the need for additional funding for the CDBG Program. FEMA recognizes that there are unmet needs related to the ice storm and that the CDBG Program can address these needs. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3579, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, a bill to further fund, at the expense of airports and Section 8 Housing Assistance, the unconstitutional effort to "police the world." Having submitted amendments to the Rules Committee to defund the "police the world" aspects of this bill only to be denied in the Rules process, I must oppose final passage of this supplemental Appropriations bill.

One of the truly positive aspects of H.R. 3579 is Sec. 3002 stating that "none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be made available for the conduct of offensive operations by United States Armed Forces against Iraq for the purpose of obtaining compliance by Iraq with United Nations Security Council Resolutions relating to inspection and destruction of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq unless such operations are specifically authorized by a law enacted after the date of the enactment of this Act." This language is virtually identical to H.R. 3208, a bill I introduced in February of this year to require Congressional consent prior to any offensive attack by the United States on the Republic of Iraq.

Unfortunately, Congress has refused to acknowledge anytime recently that the proper and constitutional role of the U.S. military is to provide for the national defense and not the security of all foreign entities against attacks by all other foreign entities. It was for this reason that I submitted amendments to defund the military appropriations in H.R. 3579. The proper amount of appropriations for unjustifiable United States peacekeeping missions around the world is zero. Instead, this bill rescinds funding from domestic programs such as airport funding to be spent on our "police-the-world" program.

It has become the accepted political notion in this century that war is a Presidential matter in which Congress may not meddle, and certainly never offer dissenting views. Yet, no place in the Constitution do we find a presidential fiat power to conduct war. To the contrary, we find strict prohibitions placed on the President when it comes to dealing with foreign nations. The Constitution is clear: No war may be fought without a specific declaration by the Congress.

I, in fact, introduced H.R. 3208, in an effort to protect US troops from unnecessary exposure to harm and to stop President Clinton from initiating the use of force in the Persian Gulf. As a former Air Force flight surgeon, I am committed to supporting troops and believe the only way to completely support soldiers is to not put them in harms way except to defend our nation. Of course, those drumming for war say they want everyone to support the troops by sending them into battle: a contradiction, at best.

There is absolutely no moral or constitutional reason to go to war with Iraq or further intervene in Bosnia at this time. To go to war to enforce the dictates of the United Nations, or to play the part of 'policemen of the world,'

offends the sensibilities of all who seek to follow the Constitution. I refuse to participate in (or fund) an action which would possibly expose even one soldier to risk when there is absolutely no immediate threat to the territory of the United States.

For these reasons I must oppose this bill which provides additional funding for exactly these purposes.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this emergency supplemental appropriations bill. The Nation has two compelling needs that warrant immediate attention by this Congress. First, the Clinton Administration's foreign policy has launched our military to the four corners of the world without the appropriate funding to conduct these missions. Whether or not you support the Administration's policy in Bosnia or Southwest Asia, we must give the men and women in uniform our full support. The defense budget has been in great decline for 13 consecutive years, and cannot sustain the continual drain of these types of forward deployed operations without sufficient funding. In the past, the costs associated with these operations were taken "out of hide" by raiding the readiness accounts. Unless we provide DOD with an additional \$2 billion for these operations, our military leaders have testified that all training will be halted during the fourth quarter to pay for the Administration's foreign policy forays. That is unacceptable, so we must move expeditiously with this appropriations bill.

Secondly, and most important to many of my constituents in southeast Alabama, is the \$175 million in disaster assistance funding included in this legislation. Just three weeks ago, a large portion of my district, encompassing 12 of the 15 counties, have been declared a disaster area due to extreme flooding from the El Nino rains. One city in particular, Elba, was especially hard hit when a levee breached, resulting in two tragic deaths. The entire town was submerged in six feet of water, and displaced 2,000 residents.

The State is still in the preliminary stages of making final damage assessments, but it's clear that, in addition to the loss of personal property, serious road, bridge and railroad damage has resulted from this flooding. I'm pleased that the committee has made additional funding available for the emergency relief program to repair damaged highways and rail lines. The Administration has sent up an additional request for 1.66 billion for future and unmet FEMA requirements, which I understand will be dealt with during the House-Senate conference. This FEMA funding will go along way in helping with their much-needed individual and family grant programs, relocation assistance and disaster mitigation plans.

Prior to the flood, area farmers were also experiencing problems with the heavy rains that prevented necessary field preparations for this crop year. To add insult to injury, these heavy rains follow on last summer's drought that greatly reduced our farmer's crop yields. The bill provides additional funding for USDA's Emergency Conservation Program, Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund Program, Livestock Disaster Assistance, and Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations. Our farmers do a great job in providing the United States with the cheapest and most plentiful food supply in the world. The least we should do as a Nation is make these assistance programs more readily available to our farmers to help mitigate damages from natural disasters.

Mr. Chairman, I applaud the Committee's work on this bill and urge its immediate adoption.

Mr. DAN SCHAEFER of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak about a subject that is very much on people's minds these days. That is, the upcoming sale of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for budgetary purposes. This past week there have been articles and editorials in newspapers across the country from places as different as Chicago, New Orleans, Syracuse, and Dallas noting the foolishness of the sale this Congress authorized last fall.

For the past three years, Chairman BLILEY and I have stood on this House floor and opposed sales of oil from the Reserve as a means of raising revenues. I opposed these sales first and foremost because of their impact on our energy security. Diminishing the Reserve which we paid such a dear price to create, over \$21 million, will increase our vulnerability to those who would hold this nation hostage by withholding critical oil supplies.

Second, it has never made any fiscal sense to buy high and sell low. We have spent over \$35 in purchasing and maintaining every barrel of oil in the Reserve. When the upcoming oil sale was approved last year I criticized it because it looked like the government was going to lose \$10 per barrel sold. Now that oil prices have dropped that oil will be sold at a loss of nearly \$20 a barrel and people are starting to wake up to the folly of their actions. As Charles Osgood is his Osgood File noted last week "This is what you call being penny-wise and pound foolish. It's what you call being short-sighted. It's what you call being dumb."

Finally, I would like to point out that an oil sale of nearly 20 million barrels will be devastating to a domestic oil industry that is already almost decimated by low oil prices. Instead of hurting our industry by adding to an already glutted market, we should be taking advantage of today's low prices to help ourselves by purchasing oil.

Mr. Chairman, I don't have an amendment to offer today, but I know that language striking the sale is in the companion bill considered by the other body. I would urge the House to accept such language when we go to conference on these bills.

I also hope that we learn from the consequences of our actions and hope that this year we finally end the practice of selling our energy security at bargain basement prices so that we never find ourselves in this situation again. As was stated in the Chicago Tribune editorial this past Sunday, "Selling the oil into a flooded market at what amounts to a half-off price is just plain nutty."

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I am rising today to speak in opposition to this poorly crafted emergency supplemental appropriations bill being presented before us today. The fact of the matter is that this bill as it stands, would callously harm the most vulnerable members of our society, and do so, for what? Why must this Congress make a mutually exclusive choice between on one side, our troops overseas who need our support and those who are suffering as a result of natural disasters, and on the other side, several essential programs that were funded in last year's balanced budget agreement.

This bill, as proposed, would cut nearly 2 billion dollars from section 8 funding for elderly and low-income housing, 75 million dollars

from bilingual education programs and effectively terminate the AmeriCorps program. Frankly, this is an unacceptable assault on several currently funded Federal programs both without any demonstrated cause or fair warning.

Although I think everyone knows how I feel about this, I will state on the record anyway that I fully support and appreciate the difficult duty that our Armed Forces have been asked to perform overseas. I do not take that duty for granted, and cherish their bravery in the face of danger above all else.

Nevertheless, we can not harm a delicate balance of important domestic interests just because we are either in a rush to fund our troops' activities abroad or because we have ancillary political and partisan interests at stake in the cuts made by this bill. Honestly, either reason is an unacceptable motive for robbing hundreds of thousands of Americans of the opportunity to have adequate shelter over their heads.

I have made a good faith effort to relieve the unnecessary pressures of this difficult "either-or" choice by offering two wide-sweeping amendments to this supplemental appropriations bill. These two amendments would do the following, one would restore the 1.9 billion dollars for elderly and low-income section 8 housing stricken by the bill, and the second amendment would reauthorize the AmeriCorps program. Both of these amendments would at least minimize the unjustifiable harshness of this hurried piece of legislation.

If we are going to make drastic changes in the current appropriations for a host of Federal programs, let's do it aboveboard. Let's address each of these programs specifically, and not destroy these programs under the guise of essential military and disaster relief spending. For these reasons, I oppose this emergency supplemental appropriations bill unless significant changes are made.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3579. This House has a responsibility to help those affected by the terrible El Nino-driven rains and mudslides in the West, ice storms in the Northeast, tornadoes, floods and other natural disasters. We have a very real responsibility to our troops in Bosnia and the Persian Gulf. However, we cannot abandon our responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of our society. I am appalled that Republican leaders plan to offset disaster and emergency assistance with cuts in programs that will hurt the elderly, children and low-income Americans.

I am disappointed I am being forced to vote against funding for disaster assistance. However, we cannot kowtow to another Republican maneuver to rob from the poor to protect the interests of the rich. The spending cuts that Republicans have demanded are targeted on the most vulnerable in our society. These cuts will force more than 800,000 low-income Americans from their homes, including more than 100,000 older Americans. I cannot support such drastic cuts to our Section 8 low-income housing program. I will not be a party to evicting almost a million Americans from their homes.

These offsets—which drastically cut or eliminate important safety-net programs—are being offered up by the same Republican leaders who want more tax cuts for the rich. We should be closing corporate loopholes rather than closing off opportunities and programs