

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CHAMBLISS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ABERCROMBIE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE E-RATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, here in this Chamber we just finished bidding farewell to our pages, young men and women from around the country who had an opportunity to expand their horizons serving in our Nation's Capital, really being in touch literally around the world. And it is a marvelous experience that they have. We are all pleased that they were able to accommodate it.

But the fact is that we have it in our power today to extend that same rich experience, being connected around the world, to every young person in America, and through our library systems extend it to every American, and the magic of the Internet will provide that worldwide connection.

Today, I call upon the Federal Communications Commission to reject the calls we are hearing from some to delay funding the E-Rate program, to do the right thing by America's schoolchildren and library patrons by providing full funding for the E-Rate.

The Federal Communications Commission is within days of making a decision that can bring the power of the Internet to all of these constituencies. If some telecommunications companies have their way, unfortunately, the Commission would back down in the face of a last-minute campaign of threats and innuendo in an effort to discredit the E-Rate. As a result of this campaign, the full importance of the E-Rate and its potential impact on consumer phone rates really has failed to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, the E-Rate is not a new tax imposed by Congress on an unsuspecting populace. In fact, the E-Rate program was included in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which was passed by a Republican Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support.

As part of that act, added by again a bipartisan initiative that included Senator ROCKEFELLER and Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, it built upon the Universal Service Fund established in 1934 that was used to help provide access to poor and rural areas for telephone service to

provide an extension of the E-Rate on the same basis.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 extended universal service beyond residential customers to include our schools and libraries, and expanded that service available for universal service beyond simply the plain old telephone service and added access to the Internet. To suggest that this obligation is new seems ludicrous, since the telephone companies have been paying for universal service since 1934.

With these facts in hand, I cannot condone the action on the part of some companies who are adding customer surcharges of up to 5 percent and blaming the E-Rate for increased costs. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 contemplated full payment of the E-Rate by the other cost savings that would be passed on to the telecommunications industry. In fact, the latest research indicates that they have already received far more than the \$2.4 billion that is contemplated.

In my community, Buckman Grade School was the third grade school in the world to have its own web site. It was able to do that by its cadre of dedicated parents with bake sales, spaghetti dinners, but access to the Internet should not be dependent upon bake sales.

We have 30,000 applications now pending from schools and libraries all over the country to give this Internet access. The E-Rate is good for business, it is good for United States global competitiveness, it is important for our central cities and our rural areas. Our schools and libraries are trying to educate tomorrow's leaders with decade-old technological tools far too often.

The E-Rate has a potential of putting all of our young people on the same par with the interns that we just celebrated. It must be supported. Our future depends upon it. I call upon all of my congressional colleagues to raise their voice to the FCC to make sure that the E-Rate is fully funded.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP NECESSARY TO END SIEGE OF KOSOVA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton recently pledged to Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, President of the Republic of Kosova, that the U.S. would not allow another Bosnia to occur in Kosova. Sadly, another Bosnia has already begun.

Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic is now using the same ethnic cleansing tactics in Kosova that he used in Bosnia, which resulted in 200,000 deaths, 2 million homeless, and billions of dollars in damage to the infrastructure and economy of Bosnia.

The grim specter of Bosnia can now be seen in Kosova and along its border with Albania as tens of thousands of

refugees are streaming across the border. Does that not sound all too familiar?

Refugees tell horror stories of villages that have been attacked by the Serbs and emptied of all Albanian residents. Innocent civilians have been massacred. At least 10 villages have been completely razed and thousands have been made homeless in this latest crackdown by the Milosevic regime.

These events of recent days were preceded by a massive series of Serbian offensives that have killed more than 200 people since the new wave of aggression began in late February. With further cruelty, Belgrade has restricted the supply of humanitarian assistance to defenseless men, women and children, much of it provided by the United States through Mercy Corps International and other international NGOs.

The Serbs have cut telephone lines to the region. They have set up roadblocks to seal off the area. They have prevented international journalists and human rights observers access to the villages. Milosevic is enforcing his own brand of Serbian apartheid on the 90 percent Albanian majority in Kosova.

Incredibly, this terrorism by the Serbs has occurred at the very moment President Rugova and strongman Milosevic have been engaged in weekly meetings arranged by Ambassador Holbrooke to negotiate a so-called peaceful settlement to the Kosova crisis.

Mr. Speaker, the killing in Kosova must stop. I have been to the region to see the situation for myself and I have met with President Rugova to hear firsthand a report on the current intolerable circumstances.

President Clinton must bring greater U.S. efforts to bring the massacre to a standstill as a first step toward resolving this bloody conflict that threatens to destabilize the entire region. The U.S., because of their indecisive leadership and weak demands, are seen as ineffective here even by our allies.

The Contact Group of nations has failed to impress Milosevic with the seriousness of its demands, which tragically have been stated without the muscle to back them up and consequently have been totally ignored.

Mr. Speaker, the only strong leadership that is going to come must come from the presidency. We must have U.S. leadership that will force the Milosevic regime to end its siege of Kosova and we must stop the killing now. Humanity cannot allow another Bosnia to occur in Kosova.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HORN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

A BROKEN BALANCED BUDGET DEAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I offer to the family of Bob Hope the sympathy of this House and my personal sympathy in recognition of all that he has done to contribute to this country and as well to contribute to the many veterans who have benefited from his service.

Let me also applaud the pages that will be leaving this House at this time and thank them so very much for all that they have contributed, and wish them very well and will add my request that they come back and visit us again.

Mr. Speaker, today we had an unfortunate experience in this House, and the experience was such that I thought it was appropriate to bring it to the attention of the American people.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman from Texas yielding for a moment so that I may make an important announcement.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I made an announcement that was erroneous regarding a report that Bob Hope had passed away. I want to apologize to Bob Hope, his family, and the entire Nation for the erroneous announcement made on the House floor today.

The floor announcement was based on a story which briefly appeared on an Associated Press Internet news page this afternoon. They have since removed the story.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I regret this announcement and I look forward to many more happy memories from a wonderful entertainer and a distinguished American.

Again, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, with that I will gleefully acknowledge that I do not have to offer sympathy to the family of Bob Hope and I am joyful about that.

I do want to provide this very important assessment of where we are today and where we are going. And I do that because as the final vote was cast on the Kasich Republican budget, I heard applause throughout this Chamber. And tragically, I think, those who are not engaged in this debate were misguided and misdirected.

Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day for America. It is the busting of a deal, the balanced budget deal that we made in 1997, when many of us from both sides of the aisle said that it is a good thing that we bring down the deficit, it is a

good that we pay off the debt, it is a good thing we tighten our belts.

But for those who applauded, the reason why they may not be knowledgeable is because they will not feel the pain until the year 2003. The young people that we just congratulated as pages, senior citizens who will just become 62 or 65, veterans who have come to me in my office and said their whole health care package has been reordered because of the balanced budget, in the year 2003 they will really feel the pain.

For this budget that was passed today we have the words of the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget, these are his quotes, and I refer to Senator DOMENICI who said, "This budget is a mockery." The Senate appropriations subcommittee chairman, Senator STEVENS, dismissed it and said, "I do not know where we are going to get \$45 billion in cuts."

Mr. Speaker, this budget cuts veterans, food stamps, and title 20 another \$10 billion. It cuts the help we give in foster care and child care that many of our States rely upon. This budget cuts Medicaid so that we force people into a system of no health care.

I wonder how many people realize that in the scheme of the number of systems of good health care in the world, that we in America, the United States of America, do not even fall in the top 10. The country that has the greatest ability of invention and research in medical care and health devices, we do not even serve our people as well as European nations and Third World nations, and yet we are going to cut Medicaid \$12 billion.

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What does that do? I am not on Medicaid. It does not bother me, some may say. What it does do, it burdens your local public health systems. And for those of you who have HMOs who are squeezing you every day, you see how it feels when there are throngs of people forced into no health care. That is what happened today.

In addition, might I say that we have not fixed Social Security. We have cut food stamps, crop insurance, agricultural research that was already passed in a bill, just recently passed today, but we will be looking to try and fund those, and yet they have been cut \$25 billion.

Some Members always say that it does not bother me, it does not impact me. But when the least of ours are not able to receive the services that they need, it does impact those of us who care. The balanced budget that we passed in 1997 took into consideration the great effort we have made to move people from welfare to work. But yet this budget we passed today imposes another \$10 billion in temporary assistance to needy families. Might I say, it is families that we are talking about, men and women and children that we are cutting another \$10 billion.

Oh, the economy is doing well, never been probably as active and as produc-

tive as we can see it today in 1998, but there are years to come. There are economic cycles. We have all been through them, the bust in California, the oil bust in Houston, the automobile bust in Michigan, the various cycles of problems that we have had. This is what you are going to face when people come in need to the Federal Government to help the States.

You will have in the year 2003 an enormous cut where services that are needed, Medicare and Medicaid and services dealing with welfare to work and transportation issues, the money will not be there. That is what was voted on today.

Lastly let me say, Mr. Speaker, we all talk about child care. In my community we have 5,000 slots for Head Start. We need 20,000. Yet this House has cut Head Start and it has cut job training.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply say that it would be a good day. It is Friday. But it is a tragic day. Those who applauded, I hope that sound rings in their ears as America cries out as this budget was passed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Members are reminded to refrain from individual references to Members of the other body.

E-RATE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, the FCC is on the verge of halting the collection of money for a new program to help wire schools and libraries to the internet thru the e-rate provisions of the universal service fund.

Let me begin with a few facts:

1. The Universal Service Fund is older than Social Security. Yes Mr. Speaker it is older than our most venerated entitlement program.

2. The 1996 Telecommunications Act extended the generations old Universal Service program to include schools and libraries. This is a matter of law.

3. Long distance phone rates are at their lowest point ever.

4. Access charge reductions to phone companies—part of the "deal" that resulted in the 1996 Telecom Act—have totalled 2.4 billion over the last 11 months—well above the \$2 billion estimated demand for discounts in the Schools and Libraries Corporation.

5. The Schools & Libraries Corporations has 14 employees, smaller than the vast majority of Congressional staffs.

Now: through all the myths, propaganda, and nonsense that is being spread about the E-rate and Schools and Libraries Corporation—myths these facts are meant to dispel, one central fact is being neglected: Connecting schools and libraries to the Internet will benefit our children. It will benefit the children of my district and children across this nation.

That is why we are here: period.