

ethnic Chinese minority as the scapegoats for these societal ills.

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As a result, massive human rights violations have occurred. Mobs have shut down Christian church services and burned down places of worship. Between February 14 and 17 alone, rioters destroyed the property of 29 churches. Churches gathered to find their musical instruments, benches, bibles, church documents and entire buildings destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, the extremists are not the only perpetrators of human rights abuses. Government authorities allegedly participate in the violence and abuses by failing to protect the churches and communities from attackers. By doing nothing in response to these violations, the government implicitly collaborates with extremist groups and builds anti-Christian sentiment. This is outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, we should not look the other way while such blatant human rights violations occur in Indonesia. I urge Mr. Mondale to raise these issues during his meetings with Mr. Suharto and the Government of Indonesia to take steps immediately to protect these minorities from abuse.

OPPOSITION TO H.R. 856, UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

(Mr. WICKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to know there is bipartisan opposition to H.R. 856, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, which we will be asked to vote on tomorrow.

Over the past few weeks, I have received a lot of conflicting information regarding Puerto Rican statehood. Some say statehood will cost the taxpayers \$3.5 billion. Others say it will result in a \$2.5 billion benefit. Which is true? I cannot be sure, and the American people do not know the truth yet either.

When I was home this weekend, I asked several folks what they thought of Puerto Rico becoming the 51st State. Most of my constituents did not even realize Congress was considering such a vote. We should not vote on such an important bill when our voters are not fully informed.

During my time in Congress, I have generally been supportive of my leadership. But I say to the Republican leadership today that they are making a grave mistake. I believe they have misjudged the will and understanding of the American people. They do not know enough about this legislation, they do not know it is coming. Americans are going to wake up Thursday morning with Puerto Rico well on its way to becoming the 51st star in the flag and they are going to say, why were we not consulted?

I urge my leadership to pull this measure and give the American people an opportunity to make an informed decision.

CITIZENS PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. HUTCHINSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, in 1995 a bounty hunter was chasing a bond jumper in Texas. In Houston, he found a woman he thought to be the bond jumper and beat her severely. The woman, who was pregnant, miscarried the next day. The key fact was the bounty hunter had the wrong woman. An innocent woman lost her child at the hands of a rogue bounty hunter.

The majority of bounty hunters are professionals who do excellent work. Unfortunately, there are a few Dirty Harry wannabes out there as well, and the results can be tragic.

I urge my colleagues to support the Citizens Protection Act, a bill which provides an incentive to weed out the rogue bounty hunters and prevent this kind of reckless abuse that resulted in the death of that mother's child.

The Citizens Protection Act holds two things: It says that bounty hunters and their employers, bail bondsmen, are accountable for their actions, making them liable for civil rights actions. The second thing it does, it requires bounty hunters who cross State lines in pursuit of a bond jumper to report their intentions to State law enforcement authorities.

A bounty hunter's license, Mr. Speaker, should not be a license to terrorize and abuse innocent citizens, and I urge my colleagues to support the Citizens Protection Act.

DON'T SPEND THE SURPLUS

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, today the Congressional Budget Office announced that the Federal budget is in surplus for the first time in 30 years. This is remarkable, especially when we look at where we were in 1994.

In 1994, President Clinton's budget projected \$200 billion in deficits for as far as the eye could see. Now, back then, the pundits laughed at the Republican leadership when we said we were going to balance the budget as we cut taxes. Well, who is laughing now?

Now that we have a surplus, we need to return the money back to the American taxpayer. Unfortunately, the President has different ideas. He has proposed over \$100 billion in new Washington spending.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my constituents do not want any more wasteful Washington spending. Their message to the President is very clear: Don't spend our surplus.

HISTORIC CROSSROADS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

(Mr. THUNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, we are at a historic crossroads in American history. For the first time since 1969 we have a budget surplus.

As we stand at this crossroads, we see the path fork in front of us and divide in two ways. We can follow Bill Clinton to the left. Bill Clinton wants to lead us down the run down and rutted road that takes us backwards to the era of big government.

Or we can walk the road that leads to the right. This path leads us away from big government spending and leads us closer to familiar benchmarks, like personal responsibility and personal freedom.

The road to the right gives the American people the power to spend their own money, however they see fit, rather than spending it on some far-off Washington bureaucracy in the form of new government spending.

We face an enormous choice today, Mr. Speaker. We can take the road to the left and continue to make the Federal Government bigger and more bloated, or we can go to the right and give the American people more prosperity and more freedom.

We have seen where the path leads to the left, Mr. Speaker. We do not want to travel down that road again.

IS THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE WILLING TO LOOK INTO THE FACES OF AMERICAN FARM FAMILIES?

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I have a question today for the Department of Agriculture. Are you willing to look into the faces of American farm families?

Yesterday morning in Sweetgrass, Montana, on the border between Canada and the United States, dozens of farmers and ranchers from both sides of the border gathered in protest by barricading the border to gain the attention of the administration.

It is not just a protest about grain prices, even though those prices are below the cost of production. And it was not just a protest about unfair trade, even though Canada and the Canadian Grain Board is dumping grain into the United States. It was a protest about administrations in Washington and a Federal Government in Ottawa that have turned their back on producers.

My question to the Secretary of Agriculture and to our trade representative: Will you come to Shelby, Montana and will you look into the faces of these farm families, and will you sit at

their kitchen tables and look at their budgets with me? Will you listen to them and their ideas and their solutions so that these families can enjoy a piece of America's prosperity too? Mr. Secretary, will you do that? Will you not turn your back on them?

PRESIDENT SHOULD SUPPORT COALITION SUPPORTING FAIRER, SIMPLER TAX SYSTEM

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage the President to join the coalition supporting a fairer, simpler tax system. The President seems to think that the status quo is okay. He obviously has not been speaking to people in eastern North Carolina because they remind me daily that the status quo is out of control.

When the American taxpayer spends 5 billion hours and \$225 billion annually just to prepare their tax returns, something is clearly wrong. Mr. Speaker, the American people need relief, not only from their ever-increasing tax burden of 38 percent but from the lengthy and complicated tax code itself.

I ask the President to join those of us who are fighting to provide the taxpayers with the relief they so rightly deserve. Reject the status quo and support a fairer, simpler tax system for the American people.

CONGRESS TO LOOK INTO MATH-SCIENCE EDUCATION AND NATION'S SCIENCE POLICY

(Mr. EHLERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, earlier a colleague from Maine registered concern about the results of the third International Mathematics and Science Study, which indicated that in the area of mathematics we were at the bottom of the list of Nations who took the test, with the exception of Cyprus and South Africa. And in science we are very little better. We only passed up Italy, Lithuania, Cyprus and one other country.

This is indeed a sad state of affairs. I appreciate my colleague's interest, and I also want to mention that the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGRICH), and the chairman of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), earlier during the previous session decided that this was a serious problem that had to be addressed by the Committee on Science. Mr. SENSENBRENNER has commissioned me to head up the effort on the part of the Committee on Science to look into math-science education as well as our Nation's science policy.

In particular, we will be having a hearing tomorrow in which we will

have Mr. Bill Nye, the Science Guy; a representative from Sesame Street; and others, talking in particular about the question of how we can maintain interest among our students in science and mathematics as they get older. I encourage the Members of the House to attend that hearing, and I am sure we will learn a great deal about what we can do as a Nation to improve our students' performance in mathematics and science in elementary and secondary schools.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SNOWBARGER). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 5 of rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON H.R. 217, HOMELESS HOUSING PROGRAMS CONSOLIDATION AND FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to file on behalf of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services a supplemental report to accompany the bill (H.R. 217), to amend Title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act to consolidate the Federal programs for housing assistance for the homeless into a block grant program that ensures that States and communities are provided sufficient flexibility to use assistance amounts effectively.

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

There was no objection.

HOMELESS HOUSING PROGRAMS CONSOLIDATION AND FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 217) to amend title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act to consolidate the Federal programs for housing assistance for the homeless into a block grant program that ensures that States and communities are provided sufficient flexibility to use assistance amounts effectively, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 217

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 "Homeless Housing Programs Consolidation and Flexibility Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) the United States faces a crisis of individuals and families who lack basic affordable housing and appropriate shelter;

(2) assistance from the Federal Government is an important factor in the success of efforts by State and local governments and the private sector to address the problem of homelessness in a comprehensive manner;

(3) there are a multitude of Federal Government programs to assist the homeless, including programs for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, Native Americans, and veterans;

(4) many of the Federal programs for the homeless have overlapping objectives, resulting in multiple sources of Federal funding for the same or similar purposes;

(5) while the results of Federal programs to assist the homeless generally have been positive, it is clear that there is a need for consolidation and simplification of such programs to better support local efforts;

(6) increasing resources available to reduce homelessness are utilized in the development of services rather than the creation of housing;

(7) housing programs must be evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness in reducing homelessness, transitioning individuals to permanent housing and self-sufficiency, and creating an adequate plan to discharge homeless persons to and from mainstream service systems;

(8) effective homelessness treatment should provide a comprehensive housing system (including transitional and permanent housing) and, while not all homeless individuals and families attain self-sufficiency and independence by utilizing transitional housing and then permanent housing, in many cases such individuals and families are best able to reenter society directly through permanent, supportive housing;

(9) supportive housing activities support homeless persons in an environment that can meet their short-term or long-term needs and prepare them to reenter society as appropriate;

(10) homelessness should be treated as part of a symptom of many neighborhood and community problems, whose remedies require a holistic approach integrating all available resources;

(11) there are many private sector entities, particularly nonprofit organizations, that have successfully operated homeless programs;

(12) government restrictions and regulations may discourage and impede innovative approaches to homelessness, such as coordination of the various types of assistance that are required by homeless persons; and

(13) the Federal Government has a responsibility to establish partnerships with State and local governments and the private sector to address comprehensively the problems of homelessness.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act—

(1) to consolidate the existing housing programs for homeless persons under title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act into a single block grant program for housing assistance for the homeless;

(2) to allow flexibility and creativity in rethinking solutions to homelessness, including alternative housing strategies and an improved service sector;

(3) to provide Federal assistance to reduce homelessness on a basis that requires recipients of such assistance to supplement the federally provided amounts and thereby guarantee the provision of a certain level of housing and complementary services necessary to meet the needs of the homeless population; and