

Cincinnati, Ohio, and I had a chance to visit with Alanna. I asked her, "What do you think about the president's proposal?" She said, "Well, dad, right now my class size is 25. If it were reduced to 18, I could be a better teacher. I could spend more time with the 5 or 6 kids in my class who really need help."

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my Republican colleagues, instead of blindly opposing this very important proposal by the President to reduce class size from 25 to 18, get out and talk to some public school teachers and find out what is really going on in the real world.

THE BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION ACT

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that the United States has the most advanced health care system in the world, 3 percent of our children are born with birth defects. Approximately 150,000 babies are born each year in this country with a serious birth defect.

Although some birth defects are minor and have no permanent consequences, others cause permanent disability, which necessitates constant medical care, special education and other services that cost victims and their families countless tears and thousands of dollars each year. All too often serious birth defects result in death. In fact, birth defects are the leading cause of infant death in America today.

Next week, the House will consider legislation that could dramatically reduce the incidence of birth defects in America. The Birth Defects Prevention Act, sponsored by Senator KIT BOND and passed by the Senate last year, would direct the Centers for Disease Control to serve as the national clearinghouse for the collection and storage of data on birth defects, help states establish birth defect surveillance programs or improve existing ones, and make grants available to the public and nonprofit organizations to develop and implement birth defect prevention strategies.

SUPPORT EDUCATION FOR A MODERN WORKFORCE: OPPOSE VOUCHERS

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important than giving every child a chance for good education. Our economy is changing and technology is more important than ever. We must prepare our students to compete in a growing, global economy. That is why Democrats want to strengthen our public schools, build and renovate more than 5,000 schools, reduce the class size to 18, hire over

100,000 teachers, and ensure that every child has a chance to get ahead in our society.

What do Republicans propose? Just yesterday the majority leader came to this floor and suggested draining funds from our public schools for private school vouchers. This plan would weaken our public schools; it would help the few and deprive the many. That is the Republican plan. It is not right, it is not fair to the majority of our students, it is the wrong road to travel.

Mr. Speaker, we must support strong public schools for every student in America.

A BUDGET DEAL IS A DEAL

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, back home we say a deal is a deal and a bargain is a bargain. A farmer back in Minnesota described our deficit dilemma best when he said the problem is not that we are not sending enough money into Washington; the problem is that Washington spends it faster than we can send it in. In other words, "It is spending, stupid."

When I came to Washington, the Congressional Budget Office was predicting \$200 billion deficits for as far as the eye could see, well into the next millennium. Well, since I came to Washington, we have eliminated over 300 programs, reformed welfare and dramatically cut the growth of spending here in Washington. As a result, the Federal budget is balanced today.

Last August we set tough spending caps. Now the President wants to renege.

This is what the President is recommending. The blue line represents what we agreed to spend in our spending caps. Now the President wants to exceed those by \$69 billion.

Mr. Speaker, a deal is a deal. Keep faith with the caps. Let us pay down some of the debt, and slow down the Washington spending machine.

INCREASING FAIRNESS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues' support for legislation I will introduce this afternoon to increase fairness in international trade.

As my record shows, I am a strong supporter of fair trade and expanding markets for American products. Regardless of whether we vote to use more American money to replenish the IMF accounts, we already are the largest contributor to the fund. As such, it is our obligation to speak up for what is right.

□ 1030

My bill is focused on what the Asians should do to help themselves by upholding their trade reform commitments and ensuring fair trade. We need to take responsibility as world leader in trade and democracy.

This bill would use our voice and vote in the international finance institutions to insist that promised market opening reforms are carried out in Asia. I urge my colleagues to support the Asian Trade Reform and Implementation Act, it would send a strong message to Asia: Open your doors to U.S. products.

THE SITUATION IN KOSOVA

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, democracy is struggling to take root in Kosova despite the continued pattern of Serb violence against the ethnic Albanian population. Parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled to be taken in Kosova on March 22. This will be the first general election this volatile region has had since 1992 and it represents a landmark event for the 90 percent Albanian population in Kosova in their struggle for freedom and independence.

Today we are just hearing reports of artillery shelling and aerial bombing of villages, part of a continuing pattern of violence against the ethnic Albanian population by the Serbs. This must stop. I call upon President Clinton to initiate strong measures, including tougher sanctions against the Belgrade government of President Milosevic. For the sake of the ethnic Albanian people in Kosova and a lasting peace in this troubled region, we cannot allow this violence to continue.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS COMMITTED TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. ADAM SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, the most recent estimates show that we are actually going to have a budget surplus for fiscal year 1998 if all continues to go well this year.

I rise to make a couple of comments about that. First of all, I think we can all be proud of that accomplishment. It was just 5 years ago that the deficit was \$300 billion and climbing, with no end in sight. It was depressing to look as the interest on the debt rose to the point where we felt we would never get out of that hole. Now we are starting to make progress and can be proud of that.

I feel that both parties can have some degree of credit for that accomplishment. But as a Democrat, I am

particularly proud that my party has shown that it can be fiscally responsible. It can be fiscally responsible, where at the same time caring about other things that are important to the American people: investing in our future through education, protecting our seniors by making sure that they have health care and Social Security.

One final point. While we have accomplished a lot, there is still much to accomplish. Fiscal responsibility is not accomplished in one day. You cannot do it once and forget about it. It is a continual task. In the months and years ahead we must remain committed to that fiscal responsibility. I am proud that my party has made that commitment.

WIRELESS PRIVACY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1998

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 377 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 377

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2369) to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to strengthen and clarify prohibitions on electronic eavesdropping, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 2(1)(6) of rule XI are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Commerce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the committee on Commerce now printed in the bill. Each section of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the

committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time is yielded for the purpose of debate.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Committee on Rules met and granted an open rule to H.R. 2369 which provides 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Commerce. The rule also waives points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with the 3-day availability of committee reports.

House Resolution 377 also makes the Committee on Commerce amendment in the nature of a substitute now printed in the bill as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and provides that it shall be considered as read.

The rule allows for priority recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Votes may be postponed during consideration of the bill, and voting time may be reduced to 5 minutes if the postponed vote follows a 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides one motion to reconsider, with or without instructions.

The right to privacy is one of the most sacred rights our Founding Fathers fought and died to establish. Since the early days of our Nation, subsequent generations have defended this right. Today advanced technology provides the latest threat to each individual's privacy.

I was shocked to hear during testimony before the Committee on Rules yesterday that the FBI actually had to stop using cellular phones during the investigation of the TWA Flight 800 disaster because they were being intercepted by members of the press corps. We have to put a stop to that sort of thing.

It is not the high-tech geniuses that we have to worry about. Off-the-shelf scanners are easily modified to turn them into electronic stalking devices. Simply clip the correct wire and someone can listen in on your private conversations. An entire industry which produces these intrusive devices has sprung up.

H.R. 2369 is a bipartisan bill which will clearly permit the modification of scanners. It requires the FCC to develop regulations which extend existing protections to new services, including personal communications services, protected paging, and specialized mobile services. H.R. 2369 clearly states

that intercepting wireless communications is illegal.

Finally, the bill requires that the FCC must investigate violations under this law. H.R. 2369 is a bipartisan bill which moved quickly through the Committee on Commerce and should be supported by the entire House. I urge all my colleagues to support this open rule.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 377 is an open rule allowing for full and free debate on a bill that seeks to enhance privacy for all commercial users of cellular technology, both analog and digital. H.R. 2369 takes into account the development of new technologies in digital cellular and digital personal communications services, the generations beyond analog wireless communication.

The bill also prohibits the manufacture or modification of off-the-shelf radio scanners which would be capable of intercepting digital cellular telephone communications. It is already illegal to manufacture or import such equipment capable of intercepting analog cellular communication; this legislation advances Federal law to deal with advances in technology since the law was enacted.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation requires the Federal Communications Commission to step up its enforcement of existing laws, as well as the new prohibitions which will be imposed by this proposal. This legislation makes a significant change in current law by providing that the act of scanning cellular communications is in and of itself illegal. Thus, the manufacture or the possession of the equipment capable of scanning these private conversations, as well as the actual scanning of private cellular communications, will be illegal.

Mr. Speaker, with enhanced enforcement on the part of the FCC, perhaps some of the predatory practices which threaten the privacy of the millions of cellular conversations that take place each and every day can be stopped.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was unanimously reported from the Committee on Commerce, and is one of importance in today's world of rapidly changing technological development. I urge support of this open rule and support of the bill.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina for yielding me time and I rise in strong support of this open rule.

I commend my friend from Louisiana, Chairman TAUZIN, for his leadership on this issue. He's right—we need to tighten current laws on wireless privacy. It's important to ensure that our constituents are afforded privacy protections when they are using their cell phones or other wireless devices. But we should remember that under current law it is already illegal to tap into wireless conversation—both Congress and the FCC have spoken on this matter.