budget that has topped $1.5 trillion in the last several fiscal years.

As many of you know, I have had a longstanding and deep commitment to American music, especially jazz. The downsizing of the NEA, dictated by the 104th Congress, led to an elimination of the NEA's music program and of all individual grants to jazz artists, with the exception of the Jazz Masters Awards.

How does that sound? The world's greatest democracy eradicates its music program? The world's greatest democracy eliminates funding for individuals who travel the globe as cultural ambassadors, demonstrating in their very art the superiority of the democratic form of government? I would say it sounds like the Nation's leading arts agency was forced to virtually abandon what the 100th Congress, in House Concurrent Resolution 57, which ''designated as a rare and valuable national American treasure * * *.''

I am sure that there are thousands of artists and creative workers of all disciplines who feel similarly abandoned. I hope that the 105th Congress will be remembered for many positive achievements, foremost among them, the restoration and strengthening of the NEA.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

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

There was no objection.

INTRODUCTION OF THE JAMES GUELFF BODY ARMOR ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is recognized for 13 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, before the gentlewoman from New York retires from the floor I would just like to add that as a member of the congressional arts caucus I certainly do support her position here tonight, and I enjoyed listening to her special order, and I would just like to add that I think that the arts signify the heart and soul of a nation and its people, and the U.S. Congress should continue its funding of the arts and humanities, and I join with you in that effort.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to announce that last week I reintroduced legislation which would prohibit the mail-order sale of bulletproof vests and body armor to all individuals except law enforcement or public safety officers. My legislation, H.R. 959, would require that the sale, transfer, or acquisition of body armor to anyone other than law enforcement or public safety officers be conducted in person. In essence, what my bill does, it prevents the mail order of body armor. You can still purchase it, but you would no longer be able to purchase it through the mail.

My bill is entitled the James Guelff Body Armor Act of 1997 and is named for a San Francisco police officer named Guelff who was killed in 1994 by a gunman wearing a bulletproof vest and Kevlar helmet. More than 100 police officers of the San Francisco police department were called to a residential area where the gunmen fired in excess of 200 rounds of ammunition. Several officers actually ran out of ammunition in their attempt to stop the heavily armed gunmen and heavily protected gunmen. Mr. Guelff, who was killed, was raised in my northern Michigan district in Marquette, MI.

□ 1845

As a former law enforcement officer, I know all too well the challenges confronting those who serve to protect public safety and fight crime. We all saw the vivid and terrifying film from the botched California bank robbery last week, demonstrating that body armor gives criminals an unfair advantage during gunfights with police. Eleven Los Angeles police officers and six civilians were injured in that gunfight. Thousands of rounds were fired by two criminals, both of whom were wearing full protective body armor.

Witnesses from the crime scene reported that the bullets fired from the police officers' guns bounced off the bank robbers and mushroomed as they fell to the ground. Had my legislation become law in the 104th Congress, it would have made it more difficult for those criminals to obtain body armor that protected them during the gunfight with police.

We just do not have to look to California for examples of the way criminals use body armor. Last year in Michigan a 14-year-old driving a stolen car in the early morning hours was dressed in body armor from head to toe. You do not need body armor to steal a car, and police believe that the youth was going to kill an individual. It was a contract murder.

I have heard from law enforcement officers all across America about the increasing occurrences of drug dealers and other suspects who possess and use body armor in their confrontations with the police. Criminal elements are being transformed into unstoppable terminators with virtually no fear of the police or other people who are trying to apprehend them. These heavily protected criminals are capable of unleashing total devastation on civilians and police officers alike, and the increasing availability of body armor in the wrong hands portends a future of greater danger to America, greater danger to the American people, and a growing threat to our institutions.

For the past 3 years now I have advocated the passage of this legislation. Despite some verbal assurances, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime, the gentleman from Florida, has not allowed a hearing on my bill. I hope he will now reconsider.

So tonight I urge my colleagues and the folks listening at home to support and urge their Members of Congress to cosponsor my new bill, H.R. 959. It is a good step toward making our streets safer for America and the law enforcement community. Let us quickly pass my new bill, H.R. 959, and prevent these kinds of gunfights from happening in the future.

I would like to give special tribute tonight to police officer Kurt Skarjune for his continual efforts in helping me in our effort of trying to ban the sale of mail-order body armor. I hope the U.S. Congress will join with me and Officer Kurt Skarjune in this 3-year fight, and hopefully we can have the mail-order body armor banned so no one can obtain it through the mail.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCHREST). The Chair would remind the gentleman that his remarks should be confined to the Chair and not to the listening audience.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. KAPTUR (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for March 11 and 12, on account of personal business.

Mr. COBLE (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today until 3 p.m. on account of Committee on the Judiciary business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. CAPPS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HINOJOSA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SKAGGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LAMPSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KIND, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HASTINGS of Washington) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BILIRAKIS, for 5 minutes, on March 13.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GOSS, for 5 minutes each day, on March 13 and 18.

Mr. MICA, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. CAPPS) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. LEVIN.

Mr. SCHUMER.