

full \$2,000 provision in the way of a deduction and put that money away tax-free. Henceforth, he or she will be able to do that.

We also permitted withdrawal without penalty for first-time home buyers, and that was certainly a great expansion. We also put in place a little provision to help save for our children's higher education, and that was good. So we did some pretty neat expansions.

But let me say it seems to me that that only goes partway to where we need to be. The IRA program is good, it has been proven good for middle-class American families, and has been proven to help people save. It has encouraged savings throughout our society, and it seems to me that in all the talk that is going on around here about tax reform, that we ought to look at how we can help even more.

Now, the \$2,000 limit we are still living with today was established decades ago, and decades ago \$2,000 was a lot of money. It is still a lot of money, but it was multiple times as much money in real terms back when it was established.

Some time ago, I introduced a bill to increase that \$2,000 amount by \$500 a year for 10 years, so that 10 years from the time my program would be adopted, the amount that we could save, put away each year in our IRA and have as a deduction, would be \$7,000. Built on top of the \$2,000 that we have now, \$500 a year for 10 years, 2 plus 5 is 7. I think that is real progress.

We also proposed that middle-class America, yes, middle-class America fits within \$80,000, but when you have got a couple of folks working, say they are both schoolteachers, and say the combined income is \$100,000; today they do not even qualify under the expanded program that we put in place this year.

So I suggest we increase that not to \$80,000, as we already have, but to \$100,000, so hard-working families whose mom and dad go out and make \$50,000 apiece working hard can also qualify.

In addition, we might want to consider there are some other worthwhile needs we need to save for and can withdraw from the program without penalty. Retirement is one currently, higher education is one currently, and first-time home buyer is one currently, with different little ramifications along the way.

Unemployment is a need we have traditionally saved for, and we might want to consider adding unemployment as a provision we could withdraw for without penalty.

Adoption is another one, obviously, that folks on both sides of the aisle talk about as being a very worthwhile activity. So we might want to look and talk among ourselves about some other things that we could withdraw from the fund for penalty-free.

So, the individual retirement account bill I think is a very worthwhile bill to consider in terms of expansion. I call the new bill that I introduced the

Individual Reinvestment Act, or IRA. The Individual Reinvestment Act.

Let me also say, Mr. Speaker, that as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, I know that throughout our society not only would individuals who save under this program benefit, but our entire economy and our entire society would also benefit under the program, because one of the things that is absolutely necessary for economic growth across the board is the ability to have access to capital.

When people in small businesses or people in medium-sized businesses or people in large businesses want to expand their business, they have to borrow, and having those funds available in institutions to be borrowed is very important. This bill will help expand the pool of money available to us as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this time. I urge everybody to give this matter very serious consideration.

OPPOSITION TO FAST TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LIPINSKI] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in opposition to fast track. There are many, many, many reasons to oppose fast track. Certainly one reason you could oppose it is because of the hypocrisy of President Clinton and Vice President GORE when they spoke about pressure being put on individuals to oppose fast track.

The hypocrisy is that it has been the President, the Vice President, and the Republican leadership that have been putting pressure on individuals in this body to support fast track. That is where the pressure has been coming from, that is where the intimidation has been coming from, and, as I say, that would be one reason to vote against fast track right off the bat, the hypocrisy of the Clinton administration.

You could also vote against fast track because none of our trade policies over the last 15 to 20 years have done anything whatsoever to improve the standard of living or the working conditions of foreign workers. Our trade policy has done nothing to improve the environmental conditions in foreign nations where we have signed trade agreements. Those would be more reasons for voting against fast track.

But to me, the most important reason for voting against fast track is the fact that it will continue the downward slide of the standard of living of all American working people.

Twenty years ago, the standard of living of the American working man and woman was tops in the world. Because of the trade policy that we have followed in these 20 years, there has been an erosion in that standard of living. NAFTA accelerated that erosion considerably.

If we support fast track tomorrow or on Sunday in this House of Representatives, we simply are saying to the American working man and woman that we do not care about your standard of living. We do not care if your standard of living falls down by 25 percent, 50 percent, 75 percent. All we care about is what profits the corporations in this Nation and in other nations of the world can make at the expense of American working men and women.

With the economy that we have in this country, the large economy, the strong economy, the prosperous economy, every nation in the world wants to get into this economy, wants to trade with this economy. Because of that, we should be in a position to negotiate trade agreements that are totally and completely advantageous to the American working man and woman.

That is what we should be doing. That is what we could be doing. And if we can defeat fast track in this body this weekend, then we can start to turn things around and start rebuilding the American dream for the American working man and woman.

ERADICATION OF DISEASE, A NEW NATIONAL GOAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced legislation that would create a Presidential-congressional type of commission for the investigation of ways and means on the part of the American people, through their elected officials and through their institutions, to commit themselves to a new national goal.

Mr. Speaker, during the 20th century the main goal of the United States was necessarily to throw back the aggressive totalitarian governments that tried to dominate the 20th century and also to defeat communism as a world power or global entity.

In those attempts, the United States was successful, and today we find ourselves, after the Berlin Wall, as the only superpower left and with no really visible goal in front of us.

The bill that I introduced allows our fellow Members, who would serve on a commission, along with others to be appointed by the President and the Senate, to fashion a new national goal, which is to eradicate disease from the face of the Earth.

Now, this may sound lofty and unattainable, and it probably is not within our means to totally eradicate every vestige of disease known to mankind. But if we have that as a national goal, knowing that the United States already leads in biomedical research, in the production of methodologies of health care, of pharmaceuticals, of new ways of producing medical devices, the whole host of things that benefits the human condition, if we make that our

goal for the next century, then not only will humankind be better off throughout the world, but the economy of the United States, the enterprise of the United States, the leadership of the United States will continue in wondrous ways for the benefit of our people, because when we talk about an attempt, a bold attempt, to eradicate disease from the face of the Earth, are we not talking about trade between countries on matters that would lead to new products in health care, new medicines, new ways of treating disease? Would we not have our hospitals and our medical colleges and our universities honed in on the great goal that we are going to be articulating?

This is so important to me personally and, I believe, to our country, to focus our energies, our innate initiatives that have served us so well over the years, into this goal of humanitarian capacity in such a way that it benefits every strata of our society; not just the health care community, but everyone in the community who, in one way or another, will have to come into contact with the health care system and with those things that benefit humanity.

I have had discussions about this with individuals at the National Institutes of Health, with people in the medical universities, with newsmen and media people who have more than a passing interest in this kind of issue, and have found a warm reception in every one of those projections.

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So I would invite my colleagues to join with me in this bill. We would create this commission, we all would have input as to the ways and means that they would adopt for achieving this national goal, and then when our time is completed in the Congress of the United States, we will have laid the groundwork for a 21st century replete with American accomplishment.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundegran, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment joint resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H.J. Res. 91. Joint resolution granting the consent of Congress to Apalachicola-Chatahoochee-Flint River Basin Compact.

H.J. Res. 92. Joint resolution granting the consent of Congress to Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin Compact.

H.J. Res. 101. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1998, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 738. An act to reform the statutes relating to Amtrak, to authorize appropriations for Amtrak, and for other purposes.

NAFTA IS NOT GOOD FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KUCINICH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, for those who have been following the debate over fast track, I would just like to review a few facts. First of all, fast track is legislation which provides for expedited congressional consideration. It is called fast track because it is a way to force through Congress an up-or-down vote on a major trade package. Those who are interested in the history of this should remember that fast-track authority was first granted by the Congress in 1974. It gave the President the ability to move along trade agreements.

In 1994, fast track expired, after the approval of NAFTA and the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, also known as GATT.

What is happening now is that the President is asking for renewed fast-track authority and wants to expand NAFTA and the free trade zone to Chile and the other South American countries, and he wants trade agreements with even more countries as well, using the fast-track legislation.

We must keep in mind that fast track does not provide for any amendments, so that this Congress has no ability to change the terms of the fast-track agreement and, therefore, to have an impact on American trade policy. The reason why so many of us in Congress are concerned about this issue is this: I would like to look at the effect that NAFTA has had, because we are really talking about expanding NAFTA here, at northeastern Ohio.

Now, I am from the State of Ohio, I am in the 10th Congressional District in Ohio, and I represent an area that includes the city of Cleveland and surrounding suburbs. My constituents include auto workers, steel workers, and their families. They are very dependent on the auto industry and the steel industry for jobs. These are people who have fought for this country, who believe in this country, who have given much to this country, who helped to build this country through building the major industries with their labor. Americans secured its freedom through our strategic industrial base of steel, automotive and aerospace, and the people in Cleveland have been an important part of that.

But when a report came out a few months ago on NAFTA, it was learned once and for all how the people of Cleveland and how communities like ours across the United States have been adversely affected by NAFTA. We found out that U.S. exports to Mexico have been inconsequential, a little over \$1 billion in the 3 years covered by the study, that Mexico was not the consumer market that everyone said it would be. We were promised that there was going to be expanded trade with Mexico.

Well, the fact of the matter is, workers in Mexico who are making 90 cents an hour cannot buy cars made in the

United States that cost \$16,000. The truth is that Mexico has become increasingly an export platform for vehicles sold in the United States. U.S. auto imports from Mexico are more than 10 times the value of U.S. exports to Mexico. And most importantly, the U.S. auto trade deficit has grown since NAFTA by about 400 percent to \$14.6 billion, from \$3.6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the business of politics is a very complex business, as those of us who have been in politics for a while understand, and even those who have the best of intentions often are not able to get to their goals that they have stated in promises in order to achieve support for their proposals.

There were many promises made to secure support for NAFTA years ago, a few short years ago, and those promises moved votes in this House. Those promises caused people to have hope that somehow NAFTA that we are voting on in the next 2 days, an agreement that would expand NAFTA, that NAFTA would benefit the constituencies which we represent. People were promised that NAFTA would create 200,000 new U.S. jobs. All of us remember that promise.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the United States has lost more than 430,000 jobs due to NAFTA. For example, Kodak will cut 14,000 jobs and shift production to Mexico. The U.S. people were promised that the United States would inspect imported food for pesticides. Well, we know, the truth is that inspections of illegal pesticides on imported food have actually decreased, and we have seen the consequences with the great strawberry scare of a few months ago where school children in a few States were adversely affected by the pesticides which were put on strawberries.

Mr. Speaker, NAFTA has not produced benefits for the American people. It has increased the trade deficit; it puts downward pressure on wages, and I am hopeful that within 4 hours NAFTA will be soundly defeated through us defeating fast track and coming back with a plan to make our trade agreements in this country fairer to the American workers and to their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

SPECIAL ORDER IN MEMORY OF JOHN STURDIVANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. POSHARD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sorrow over the passing of John Sturdivant. His death is a great loss not only