

What we have done though is pass the first tax cut in 16 years, we have balanced the budget for the first time since 1969 when Woodstock was at Max Yasgur's farm, and Mod Squad was on TV, and Neil Armstrong was on the moon. We have reformed Medicare on a bipartisan basis. We have reformed welfare, and almost 40 percent of the people on welfare have gotten off it in the last 3 years. What have we done in this budget agreement? Strong drug interdiction, strong prevention and rehabilitation programs. What have we done for education? We have returned more dollars and more power and more flexibility to the local level where the teacher in the classroom gets most of the money, where the teacher in the classroom can make most of the decisions, where the teacher in the classroom can call the shots on how to teach Johnnie to read and how to teach Susie to read because they might be a little bit different in Georgia then they are in California or New York.

These are important steps. This is not a do-nothing Congress.

THE HIT-AND-RUN CONGRESS

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

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, this Republican controlled Congress has failed, and it has wasted the American people's time. Let me just say that what they have not done is they have accomplished less than a Congress typically does across a 2-year period. On specific issues, they made no progress on making sure that Social Security and Medicare were preserved for future generations. They did not change the way, in fact, we run our campaigns and the amount of money that is raised in those campaigns, and they have done nothing about protecting patients' rights and managed care reform.

Last night they caved under the President's pressure, Democrats' pressure, to allow 100,000 new teachers to go into our schools in grades 1 through 3 to help our children, and yet today they take pride and view it as a victory that they did not want to move on modernizing our schools, to wire up our schools so that kids can get the opportunity to be on an Internet, so they can in fact be able to compete in the future. They view that as a badge of honor.

Quite frankly, this is a Congress that has done a hit and run on the American people.

DO-NOTHING CONGRESS? I DO NOT THINK SO

(Mr. RIGGS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, good morning. As my colleagues know, I guess this partisan debate really boils down

to whether we want to see the glass as half empty or half full, and it is too reminiscent of I think the all too common American mindset of what have you done for me lately. The do-nothing charge though does not stand up to scrutiny because this is the Congress that balanced the budget and passed major tax relief for working Americans for the first time in a generation. We have fundamentally, as earlier speakers have pointed out changed, the debate in Washington, and we can take pride not in being the do-nothing Congress, but in being the surplus Congress.

We have also reigned in the IRS through real reform of the IRS, shifting the burden of proof from taxpayers to the IRS in legal proceedings, and we put Medicare, the health insurance program for older Americans, on solvent solid footing.

Do-nothing Congress? I do not think so. The glass is half full and only getting better as the Republican majority grows in Congress and in the country.

WE DO NOTHING TO HARM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, do-nothing indeed. Members forget that just about a month ago the President of the United States signed into law a little recognized bill that we had been working on for about 2 or 3 years, the Bio Materials Access bill. This provides a steady flow of vital materials to people who need medical devices like hip replacements, and heart shunts and brain shunts. That was a bill that this do-nothing Congress put into place and attacked the problems of health care, prevention of disease and products liability all in one bill. The President signed it right after we promoted it and passed it into law.

Do-nothing indeed. That is a slander to say something like that.

At the same time we passed an IRS reform bill that the American people by 90 to 10 advocated, supported and applauded when it finally became law.

Do-nothing indeed. We will do nothing to harm the American people. We will do nothing to harm Social Security. We will do nothing to harm the prospects of a steady economy in the near and far future. That is what we are, we do something.

□ 1030

TAKING CREDIT FOR BALANCING THE BUDGET

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me take a minute to look at this question of a balanced budget. We hear our Re-

publican colleagues talk with pride about the fact that they passed a balanced budget and we have a surplus.

Let us go back five short years ago when there was a bill in 1993 before this House. The bill said let us cut \$250 billion of programs, and let us increase \$250 billion of taxes on the top 2 percent of Americans. Ninety-eight percent of the Americans were exempt from that tax increase.

At that time, not one single Republican vote was cast for that plan that President Clinton gave to the American people. It was passed overwhelmingly by Democrats, without one single Republican vote, a \$500 billion process that put us on the target now where we have over 16 million new jobs, a \$70 billion surplus and many other positive things. We did it, not them.

FOREIGN AID BUDGET

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

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, sometimes it is amazing to me the memory of some of our colleagues about we did nothing this year.

One of my responsibilities in the House is to Chair the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs, how much money we are going to give the President for foreign aid. It is not a pleasant job.

But just to remind my colleagues, we did our job. The President wanted \$13.5 billion. We did our job, but we would not give him all he wanted. We passed the bill through the House, we passed it through all the committees, we passed it through the Senate, but the President said, "There is no sense in sending it down here, because I will veto it if you do not give me another \$1 billion."

Well, we felt like we had better things to do with that \$1 billion. But the President said no, and there we were faced with the possibility of shutting the government down or giving him his \$1 billion.

So it was not that we did not do our job, because we did everything we were supposed to do, except the President refused to sign the bill, telling us that unless we gave \$1 billion more, that he was going to shut the government down.

BLOCKING DOLLARS FOR THE CLASSROOMS

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

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans are standing in the schoolhouse door and they refuse to allow Federal dollars to build classrooms or to modernize and renovate classrooms. The Republicans are blocking dollars for the classrooms. They have a bill called

“dollars for the classrooms,” which is really dollars to the governors and state bureaucracies to play around with Federal money.

But when it comes to straight bulleting of money for construction, which most school boards in America realize is one of their greatest needs. They understand that they need help; they cannot get local or state dollars. Why not bring home our Federal dollars? All taxes are local. They come from the local level. They just print money here. They do not really have taxes based in Washington. It comes from the local level. Give it back to the local level, without strings attached.

This is the best deal ever for local school boards and states. It says you can have the money. You can float the bonds, and the Federal Government will pay the interest on the debt you accumulate to build classrooms. What better deal is there; or has ever been offered? The Republicans are blocking dollars to build classrooms in America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIGGS). 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 is concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 3 p.m. today.

EXTENDING VISA PROCESSING PERIOD FOR DIVERSITY APPLICANTS DUE TO EMBASSY BOMBINGS

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4821) to extend into fiscal year 1999 the visa processing period for diversity applicants whose visa processing was suspended during fiscal year 1998 due to embassy bombings.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4821

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION INTO FISCAL YEAR 1999 OF VISA PROCESSING PERIOD FOR DIVERSITY APPLICANTS WHOSE VISA PROCESSING WAS SUSPENDED DURING FISCAL YEAR 1998 DUE TO EMBASSY BOMBINGS.

(a) EXTENSION OF PERIOD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding clause (ii)(II) of section 204(a)(1)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154(a)(1)(G)), in the case of an alien described in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (b)—

(A) the petition filed for classification under section 203(c) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(c)) for fiscal year 1998 is deemed approved for processing for fiscal year 1999, without the payment of an additional \$75 filing fee; and

(B) the priority rank for such an alien for such classification for fiscal year 1999 is the earliest priority rank established for such classification for such fiscal year.

(2) VISAS CHARGED TO FISCAL YEAR 1999.—Immigrant visas made available pursuant paragraph (1) shall be charged to fiscal year 1999.

(b) ALIENS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS.—

(1) PETITIONING ALIEN.—An alien described in this paragraph is an alien who—

(A) had a petition approved for processing under section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(c)) for fiscal year 1998; and

(B)(i) had been scheduled for an immigrant visa interview on or after August 6, 1998, and before October 1, 1998, at the United States embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, at the United States embassy in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, or at any other United States visa processing post designated by the Secretary of State as a post at which immigrant visa services were suspended in fiscal year 1998 as a result of events related to the August 7, 1998, bombing of those embassies; or

(ii) had been interviewed for such a visa but refused issuance under section 221(g) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(g)) during fiscal year 1998 at such an embassy or post.

(2) FAMILY MEMBERS.—An alien described in this paragraph is an alien who—

(A) is a family member described in section 203(d) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(d)) of an alien described in paragraph (1); or

(B)(i) is a family member described in such section of an alien described in paragraph (1)(A); and

(ii) meets the requirement of clause (i) or (ii) of paragraph (1)(B).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4821.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, last August 7, as everyone will recall, our Nation was shaken by the news that our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed and hundreds of natives and American diplomats as well were killed.

As tragic as that is, and it still has tragic consequences in leftover items that will haunt us for years to come, there was another unintended but serious consequence of those bombings. That is, there were many people filing into those embassies prior to this bombing who were making application for diversity visas to which they might have been entitled.

Now, with the extinction of these embassies, these people, who might have a right to come to the United States to exercise their skills, were denied that privilege of applying for this diversity visa. What has happened is they may lose that chance forever, unless we pass

this piece of legislation, because what this does is in effect put a hold on the deadlines that would have ordinarily applied to these applicants for diversity visas, thus, allowing the system to move ahead into 1999, without allowing it to come to an end by the process that would have come to an end this year, but for the bombings of the embassies in those countries.

We urge the passage of this legislation as one that is absolutely necessary. This would not guarantee, by the way, that those applying would automatically be granted the visa, but we do not want to rob them of the opportunity to file an application to receive such a visa. That is the purpose of the bill, and what it does is make up for lost time by reason of the destruction of the embassies.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) for his support of this legislation. I rise in support also today of H.R. 4821, a bill to extend into next year the visa processing period for Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, due to the U.S. embassy bombings.

This is one of the most heinous acts of state-sponsored terrorism that has been done anywhere in a long time. The bombs that exploded on August 7th at the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam killed 247 people in Kenya and 10 people in Tanzania and left more than 5,500 people injured, including many Americans. Sadly, on August 7th of this year, the U.S. embassies in East Africa were the target of state-sponsored terrorism backed by financier Osama Bin Laden.

Fighting terrorism is a complex and very, very difficult task, and in the aftermath of every sinister terrorist act a rebuilding process must occur to restructure buildings, send food and shelter and rehabilitate the lives of the victimized men, women and children, so I am pleased to hear that the U.S. will extend a helping hand to the innocent victims during this tragic period.

Our immigration process is oftentimes complicated, as we know. It is mired with confusion and, at many times, is discriminatory. The annual diversity visa lottery permits 50,000 applicants from countries that are underrepresented in legal immigration to qualify for a U.S. immigrant visa.

At the time of the bombings, hundreds of visa applicants were suspended because of lack of manpower to operate our counselor services. The temporary closure meant that applicants were unable to process their visas.

One story that has particular meaning to me was from a young lady named Maritee who lived in Nairobi. She had told her family she was looking forward to coming to the United States of America with her sister. She was at the U.S. embassy's consular office waiting in line filling out an application to come to her dream country,