

than it was 30 years ago. If we continue our present course, it will be even better 10 years from today. Thanks to the Heritage Foundation, I can share my reasons for this optimism.

Even though 16 billion cubic feet of timber are harvested each year in the United States, net tree growth exceeds tree cuttings by 37 percent. Today we have more forest area in America than we did in the 1920's and it is growing.

The loss of wetlands has been slowing over the past 45 years. From 1992 through 1996, 160,000 acres of wetlands were restored privately through voluntary arrangements each year. The United States is within 47,000 acres of achieving a "no net loss" of wetlands acreage.

Since 1945, the amount of land committed for parks wilderness and wild-life has expanded twice as fast as the growth in urban areas.

Unfortunately, our major media prefer to focus on the negative; they still rely on dire predictions based upon questionable scientific data and misinformation. The American people of today and of future generations deserve their rich natural heritage of clean air, pure water, and unspoiled land. Across the board over the last 3 decades, our water, land and air have gotten cleaner. They will be cleaner in years to come. That is a message we should be sharing on Earth Day 2001.

PERMANENT MOST FAVORED NATION STATUS FOR CHINA IS BAD IDEA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, 3 weeks from this week, the Republican leadership will ask this House to pass legislation granting Permanent Most Favored Nation status trading privileges to China. This is a very bad idea. Let me count the ways.

First of all, China is a nation that practices slave labor and practices child labor. Why should we give trade advantages to a nation that engages in that kind of behavior with no oversight from us, with no check on Chinese behavior?

China is a nation that allows forced abortions, a government that sometimes encourages forced abortions, again, a violation of any kind of behavior that we and most of the nations around the world find unacceptable.

The Chinese government, the Chinese Communist Party, is also a nation and a government that persecutes Christians and Muslims and Buddhists and also local religious sects such as the Falun Gong in a China that, again, has no respect for human rights.

The government of China also has repeatedly sold nuclear technology to countries that have no business having that kind of nuclear technology that can very easily turn into weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, in the last few weeks, we have seen the People's Republic of China threaten the Republic of Taiwan. Three or 4 years ago, during the last Taiwanese elections, the Chinese government, the People's Republic of China, the Communist Chinese Government sent missiles shooting into the Straits of Taiwan to threaten that Nation that was holding the first free elections ever in Chinese history.

Giving China Most Favored Nation status, giving China permanent trading privileges with the West simply makes no sense. China is a market that has been closed to us. We, 10 years ago, 11 years ago, when President Reagan and President Bush, now President Clinton, began this policy of engagement with China where we would trade freely back and forth with China, in those days, 11 years ago, we had \$100 million, with an "M," \$100 million trade deficit with the People's Republic of China.

Today, after 11 years of this policy, we have a \$70 billion, with a "B," \$70 billion trade deficit with the People's Republic of China. Why? Because of slave labor, because of child labor, because they have simply closed their markets to us.

Last year, we bought \$85 billion worth of goods from the People's Republic of China. They only let us sell \$15 billion of goods into their market. We sell more to Belgium than we do to China. We sell more to Singapore than we do to China. We sell more to Taiwan than we do to China, countries that have, at most, 1-50th the population of the People's Republic of China.

No issue in my 8 years in Congress has been debated as heavily or lobbied most importantly, lobbied as heavily by as many wealthy special interest groups as the annual MFN review for China and now permanent trade relations with China.

There are more corporate jets at National Airport when the China vote comes up. There are more CEOs individually, the CEOs of the largest corporations in America, walking the halls of Congress, stopping in every Member's office, lobbying them about supporting permanent trade privileges for the People's Republic of China.

Wei Jing-Sheng, a Chinese dissident who spent time in Chinese prison camps, said that the vanguard of the Chinese communist party in the United States is American CEOs. Think about that. CEOs of the largest companies in this country are doing the dirty work, doing the heavy lifting, doing the lobbying for, doing the support of the Communist leaders in the People's Republic of China.

This body would never even consider, would not even come close to supporting permanent trade relations with China, would not even come close to supporting any kind of tariff reductions, Most Favored Nation status, trading privileges for China, if these CEOs of America's largest corporations were not walking the halls and lob-

bying for the Communist leaders in the People's Republic of China.

These same CEOs say, well, the reason we need to knock down all barriers to China and ignore human rights violations, ignore the forced abortions, ignore the persecution of Christians and Muslims, the reason that we in the United States should ignore the nuclear sales to rogue nations, the reason we in the United States should ignore slave labor and child labor in China is because it will help the United States of America, and they say it will mean 1.2 billion consumers for American products. The fact is their excitement is not over 1.2 million consumers, it is over 1.2 million workers. We should defeat China MFN.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, this chart is on Social Security. I have been very interested and concerned about Social Security for the last 5 years. I have introduced three Social Security bills that have been scored by the actuaries of the Social Security Administration that would keep Social Security solvent, would keep it going to the next 75 years. So three bills over the last 5 years.

I also chaired the bipartisan task force on Social Security where we were very successful. We have bipartisan agreement on 18 findings that moves us ahead.

Last night, I was listening to television, and I heard AL GORE talk about his proposal to fix Social Security and criticize Governor George W. Bush's suggestion that we allow some of that money to be kept and invested by individuals. I was so concerned that I took an earlier flight so I could speak this noon on Social Security.

I criticize Mr. GORE for suggesting that we do not have to do anything to fix Social Security. Chris Lehane, Mr. GORE's spokesman, says that one of the reasons Social Security has been so successful is that it depends on one generation to take care of another generation. When in fact there is no need to do anything right now, Mr. GORE suggests that we use the extra money coming in from Social Security. Look at this chart a minute. We have got a short-term, where there is more money coming in from Social Security taxes than is needed to pay out benefits. Mr. GORE suggests that we take some of this money, we borrow from this fund, and we use that money to pay down the debt, the so-called Wall Street debt.

It is also so disconcerting that ABC, NBC, CBS pick up those press releases out of the White House that says we are going to pay down \$180 billion of debt this year, and that is good, we are

moving in the right direction, but what is happening is we are borrowing the money from Social Security to pay down the Wall Street debt so the \$5.7 trillion that we now have as a national debt continues to go up.

Maybe an analogy is saying that Mr. GORE suggests that we take out one credit card and we use that credit card to pay off another credit card when there is no real money out there.

I think this is the time in this presidential election year to discuss and debate how we are going to fix Social Security, how we are going to keep it there, not only for the existing retirees and the near retirees, but for future generations. It is the most important program that probably we have in government. It is the largest program in this country. It is the largest program in the world.

What is happening is some people suggest, look, the United States is as good as its word. If it borrows the money, it is going to pay it back. Even if it paid it all back, it is only going to keep Social Security solvent until 2034. But will the Federal Government pay that money back? Where is it going to come from? We are going to have to increase borrowing, cut other government programs, or increase taxes. That is where it is going to come from.

As a demonstration of Federal Government's commitment, this Congress and the President, in 1977, when there was a problem of fewer dollars coming in than was needed to pay out benefits, what did they do? In 1977, they increased taxes and reduced benefits. In 1983, again, we ran out of enough money to pay benefits, so, again, they reduced benefits and increased taxes.

If we do nothing, I say to Mr. GORE, then taxes are going to increase up to 55 percent, increase in Social Security taxes for our kids. That is what the trustees of the Social Security Administration said. If we do not want to increase taxes, then we cut benefits by 33 percent.

This is an appropriate time to discuss where we are going to go on Social Security to keep it solvent. If my colleagues look at the red area, how much we are going into the red over the years, the Social Security actuaries project that we are short \$120 trillion. Remember, our annual budget here is \$1.7 trillion. Over the next 75 years, we are short \$120 trillion of there being less money coming in from the Social Security tax than we need to pay out the benefits that are promised.

If we look at the possibility of getting real investment, then all we have got to do is beat a zero percent return. Some of the think tanks around town have projected that one is not even going to get back the money that one paid in. Some of the projections go as high as a 1.7 percent return on the Social Security money that one pays into Social Security.

Can the stock market do any better than that? The average for any 12-year period since 1926 has been 3.7. The aver-

age for a retiree's lifetime has been up to a 7.88 percent return. We can do better than Social Security. Let us move ahead. Let us debate it. Let us discuss it. Let us not hide the problem under the rug.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, in past days, we have celebrated with our brothers and sisters of faith the Passover of the Lord and the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. With family customs and solemn traditions, we have participated in the annual rights of spring.

Shower on us Your waters of renewed life and penetrating freedom so that we may truly live as children born of Your Spirit.

May the profound suffering of others and the death of anyone, embraced with the utter abandonment of faith, create in us compassionate hearts ready to respond to those in most need of Your justice.

May the awakening of the heart or the birth of any of Your creatures produce in us a vibrant respect for all life. In this season of hope, we search for continuing signs of Your presence in our midst. For You live now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following commu-

nication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 14, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted to Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on April 14, 2000 at 10:20 a.m.

That the Senate agreed to House amendments, S. 1567.

That the Senate agreed to House amendments, S. 1769.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H.R. 1231.

That the Senate agreed to House amendments to Senate amendments, H.R. 1753.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H.R. 2368.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H.R. 2862.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H.R. 2863.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H.R. 3063.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H.R. 3090.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H. J. Res. 86.

That the Senate passed without amendment, H. Con. Res. 269.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHLL,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to announce that pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, Speaker pro tempore WOLF signed the following enrolled bills and joint resolution on Wednesday, April 19, 2000:

H.R. 1231, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain national forest lands to Elko County, Nevada, for continued use as a cemetery;

H.R. 1615, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to extend the designation of a portion of the Lamprey River in New Hampshire as a recreational river to include an additional river segment;

H.R. 1753, to promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of gas hydrate resources, and for other purposes;

H.R. 2368, to assist in the resettlement and relocation of the people of Bikini Atoll by amending the terms of the trust fund established during the United States administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands;

H.R. 2862, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to release reversionary interests held by the United States in certain parcels of land in Washington County, Utah, to facilitate an anticipated land exchange;

H.R. 2863, to clarify the legal effect on the United States of the acquisition of a parcel of land in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve in the State of Utah;

H.R. 3063, to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase the maximum acreage of Federal leases for sodium that may be held by an entity in any one State, and for other purposes;

H.R. 3090, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to restore certain