I am very grateful, Mr. Speaker, for the bipartisan support that this legislation received last year when I introduced it. We tried to lay the groundwork for passage this year. And so now it is my hope that we can pass this into law, get the National Commission on Alcoholism established, develop that comprehensive national strategy to deal with this costly, deadly disease. I urge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to join me, join our bipartisan effort in cosponsoring this critically important legislation.

TRIO MUST CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997 the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. FORD] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, 31 years ago Congress established the TRIO Programs as part of the Higher Education Act. Since that time it has been instrumental in helping millions of students overcome barriers to postsecondary education.

TRIO is effective because it directs resources where they are needed the most. It is based on a Jeffersonian principle that education should be available to those who have an ability to learn rather than an ability to pay. Two-thirds of TRIO students come from families with incomes under $24,000 a year.

My vision for education and for TRIO and for all Americans is TRIO's vision, a commitment to foster the ideals of equal educational opportunity regardless of background.

TRIO is the heir to several successful education programs supported by the Federal Government over the past 200 years. From the Ordinance of 1785, which set aside lands in western territories for schools, to land grant legislation in the 19th century which established State universities, to the G.I. bill after World War II, to legislation creating historically black colleges and universities, the Federal role in education has moved countless Americans into the middle class, making our economy the most dynamic in the world.

In 1983, a Nation At Risk, a report commissioned by the Secretary of Education, sent a wakeup call to the Nation. The condition of our educational system, the report said, was threatening our position as an unrivaled economic, technological and scientific power in the world. The report stated:

> We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational achievements.

After this seminal report, which, Mr. Speaker, I would say still has relevance and truth today, the Nation again dedicated itself to improving education. States across the Nation have undertaken ambitious educational reform. Congress passed Goals 2000 and targeted more Federal resources to elementary and secondary education, especially to low income school districts. Congress expanded and improved Federal higher educational assistance, making postsecondary education accessible to many more young people.

Our rededication, Mr. Speaker, to education is working. The Department of Education reports that more students are spending time on their homework than they did in the 1970s. SAT and National Assessment of Education Process scores are increasing.

Mr. Speaker, it is so critical at this juncture in American history that we do not abandon the American student, the American school or the American teacher. Students in the TRIO Upward Bound Program are 4 times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than their counterparts who did not participate in TRIO.

Postsecondary education, Mr. Speaker, pays off. The Department of Education reports that every year of formal education is associated with a 5 to 15 percent increase in annual earnings later in life.

Passage of welfare reform requires us to provide more education and training opportunities for those who will make the transition from welfare to work. TRIO Programs are well positioned to do this. TRIO can provide the support services to help welfare recipients earn a high school degree and participate in postsecondary education programs.

The President's budget contains a 13.5 percent increase in spending in TRIO over 1996. A 30 percent increase in 1998 will enable TRIO to serve more than 186,000 more young people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to take a close look at how TRIO is making a difference in their districts and to remember their commitment to the millions of young Americans who will benefit from this successful program.

BURDEN OF AMERICAN TAXPAYER TO INCREASE WITH PASSAGE OF AIRPORT TRUST FUND TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997 the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. HILLEARY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILLEARY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of the American taxpayer. There are many of us, and it is a bipartisan feeling up here, there are many of us that feel for those folks back home, those families where both spouses have to work, they both get out there, sometimes they have to work two jobs just to keep up with the tax monster, that 50-point-something percent that our friend from Florida talked about earlier that goes to the government. They get out there and they work hard. These are not folks who are not trying to make ends meet. They are out there obeying the rules and doing what they are supposed to. But we keep on increasing their burden by one more tax here, one more tax there, one more program here, one more program there. We feel for those folks. They are not seeing their wages go up. Wages are probably not going to go up that much for the near term because so many jobs are going overseas and that tends to have a deflationary effect on wages. But what we can do to improve their livelihood and to improve their lives is to let them keep more of what they earn.

This afternoon we are going to debate a bill, H.R. 668, the Airport and Airway Trust Fund tax increase. This is yet another slice out of their livelihood.

When we got out of here last fall, we were asked to vote for billions of dollars in more spending. The liberals knew that we basically had to do that. We were being pounded back home on TV saying we were mean-spirited for doing this and for doing that, and we were stuck here in Washington and could not defend ourselves.

So sometimes you have to take a step backwards before you can take two steps forward, and that is what we did. We voted for increased spending against our wishes to get out of town and defend ourselves, and we won. We lost that battle that day, but we won the battle on election day so we could come back this year and start again.

We have the opportunity to take a step forward today, but it looks like we are going to be asked to take a step backwards. The first substantive act of the 105th Congress, if this happens, will be a $2.7, nearly $3 billion tax increase on people once again. This goes to fund airline safety. Everybody is for airline safety. No one would be against airline safety. There is a trust fund in place that has funds available now and it will have funds available for the rest of the fiscal year. If we do not vote for this tax increase that we are going to be asked to vote for tomorrow, we are going to debate it this afternoon, if we do not vote for this, airplanes are not going to fall out of the sky, the operational safety will still be there.

But let us not vote on this without an offsetting tax cut. No one is against a user fee, which is basically what this is. If you got to have a tax, let us make it a user fee. Let us make the folks who are using that service pay for that service. No one disagrees with that idea. But let us not do it without an offsetting tax cut.

I have dropped a bill today that will do just that. That does not have to be my idea, to have an offsetting tax cut; does not have to be the one I came up with. But the one that I came up with would suspend President Clinton's 4.3-cent-a-gallon tax increase at the gas

pump. It is a perfect match, as much as anything up here is perfect. The same amount of revenue that we would save taxpayers is the amount of revenue that this tax increase would bring in.

So it does not have to be that one, but it also does another thing. It also tends to shift the burden away from those folks who are on fixed incomes that live from paycheck to paycheck. You know, everybody has to pay that tax at the gas pump, not just those folks that are making a lot of money; everybody does. And so this solution would also shift that burden away from them.

I do not have any pride of authorship; it does not have to be that offsetting tax cut, it can be anything.

But, folks, let us not as our first act, a conservative Congress—that is what we call ourselves, a conservative Congress—let us not as our first substantive act of this 105th Congress push through a $2.7 billion tax increase.

The National Taxpayers Union agrees with me and opposes this bill; Citizens For a Sound Economy opposes this bill; many groups, grassroots groups, will be opposing this bill; let us put one in for the taxpayer, not for another tax increase. Let us do the right thing, let us be clearheaded about this, let us come up with an offsetting tax cut.

SLOW-MOTION PEARL HARBOR ON AMERICA'S WELL-BEING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHAMBLISS) Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRABACHER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, Congress this year will pass legislation that will determine the technological status of the United States of America in the 21st century.

Let us put this in perspective. America has had the most productive work force and provided a higher standard of living for the average person and met every challenge to our national security and our economic prosperity. Why? Because we were technologically superior. That is what gave us the edge; we were technologically superior. Why were we technologically superior? We were technologically superior because we have the strongest patent system in the world. It did not just happen that we had this American miracle, that our standard of living here increased, that the average person had opportunities never dreamed of in other countries. It happened because we were producing the wealth because we had the technology, because written into our law, into the very Constitution of the United States, is patent protection as a right of the American people. We traditionally have had the strongest patent protection of any country of the world.

Well, now, unbeknownst to most Americans, our patent system, the one that has kept our country No. 1, is being destroyed, and the patent rights of the American people are being greatly diminished, this in a very low-key effort that very few Americans know about. In fact most Members of Congress know nothing about this.

I have documents detailing why this has happened, because you may say why would anyone want to destroy the very basic patent system that has been so important to the United States of America? I have a document that I will put into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD detailing an agreement between Mr. Bruce Lehman, the head of our Patent Office, and his counterpart in Japan to harmonize American patent law with that of Japan's; and I hate to tell you, but we are not bringing up their weak patent system to become strong like the patent protection in America. Their harmonization process is weakening the rights of the American people, so it will be the same as the Japanese.

This is an absolute catastrophe in the making, a slow-motion Pearl Harbor on America's well-being.

This agreement to harmonize patent law between the United States and Japan by making our patent law weaker will do nothing but destroy America's leadership in the years ahead, and again at a very slow pace, so that future Americans will never know what hit them.

H.R. 400 is the legislation aimed at implementing this hoard agreement with the Japanese. I call it the Steal American Technologies Act. Among other things, it reconfirms that the guaranteed patent term, which we have always had, no matter how long it took you to get your patent issued, you knew you were guaranteed 17 years of patent protection. That is out the window; that is gone. It reconfirms that.

It also mandates—now get this—all American patents, if you make an application, even before those patent applications are issued—so someone does not have a patent yet, it is going to be published for the whole world to see after 18 months. So inventors will have every secret that they have got, all the work they put into building new technologies will be given to America's competitors to beat us economically.

And of course the third part of H.R. 400, the Steal American Technologies Act, would be eliminating the Patent Office, just obliterating it. That is right; we are going to obliterate the patent system, as we have got it, and we have had it since the founding of our country, and we are going to restructure it as a corporatized entity. A corporatized entity? Who is in charge? These people at the Patent Office, these diligent patent examiners trying their best to do a diligent job because they know their decision means billions of dollars in jobs for America, they are going to be turned over. They are now going to be employees of a corporatized structure and who is going to be in charge of that? Lord only knows.

H.R. 400 is an abomination. It has to be defeated. But the American people know little about it. Yet the lobbyists and the power structure in this town are pushing this bill through. There will be a hearing tomorrow on it in the Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property of the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 400, the Steal American Technologies Act, will be defeated or it will destroy the well-being of the American people. I am dropping legislation today which will take us in exactly the opposite direction. It guarantees the patent term that has been part of our rights since our country was founded. It brings back the right of confidentiality. We are not going to give up and publish everything after 18 months so the thieves in the world will steal all of our new ideas

No, it remains confidential, the way it has always been confidential since our country's founding. We have a right of confidentiality, if you have a new idea, until you are granted that patent.

And No. 3, my bill will bolster and strengthen and make more efficient the current patent system.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting my legislation, and I ask that they oppose the Steal American Technologies Act, H.R. 400.

The document I referred to is as follows:

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE JAPANESE PATENT OFFICE AND THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE, JANUARY 20, 1994

Actions to be taken by Japan:

1. By July 1, 1995, the Japanese Patent Office (JPO) will permit foreign nationals to file patent applications in the English language, with a translation into Japanese to follow within two months.

2. Prior to the grant of a patent, the JPO will permit the correction of translation errors up to the time allowed for the reply to the first substantive communication from the JPO.

3. After the grant of a patent, the JPO will permit the correction of translation errors to the extent that the correction does not substantially extend the scope of protection.

4. Appropriate fees may be charged by the JPO for the above procedures.

Actions to be taken by the U.S.:

1. By June 1, 1994, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) will introduce legislation to amend U.S. patent law to change the term of patents from 17 years from the date of grant of a patent for an invention to 20 years from the date of filing of the first complete application.,

2. The legislation that the USPTO will introduce shall take effect six months from the date of enactment and shall apply to all applications filed in the United States thereafter.

3. Paragraph 2 requires that the term of all continuing applications (continuations, continuations-in-part and divisionals), filed six months after enactment of the above legislation, be counted from the filing date of the earliest-filed of any applications invoked under 35 U.S.C. 120.

WATARU ASOU,
Commissioner, Japanese Patent Office.

BRUCE A. LEHMAN,
Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Commissioner of Patents.