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