Nationwide Geologic Mapping Program.

TITLE X, SECTION 1001 WOULD ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REPORTS

Emergency Law Enforcement Assistance.
Diversion Control Fee Account.
Damage Settlement.
Banking Law Offenses.
Banking Law Offense Rewards.
Banking Institutions Soundness.

TITLE XI, SECTION 1101 WOULD ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING NASA REPORTS

Activities of the National Space Grant and Fellowship Program.
Notification of Procurement of Long-Lead Materials for Solid Rocket Monitors on Other Than Cooperative Basis.
Capital Development Plan for Space Station Program.
Notice of Modification of NASA.
Expenditures Exceeding Astronomy Program.
Proposed Decision or Policy Concerning Commercialization.
Joint Former Soviet Union Studies in Biomedical Research.

TITLE XII, SECTION 1201 WOULD ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION REPORTS

Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards.
Price-Anderson Act.

Section 1202 would modify the following Nuclear Regulatory Commission report

Status of Health, Safety, and Environmental Conditions at the Gaseous Diffusion Uranium Enrichment Facilities of NRC.

TITLE XIII, SECTIONS 1301 AND 1302 WOULD ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING OMB AND OPM REPORTS

Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990.
Voluntary Contributions by the United States to International Organizations.
Prompt Payment Act.
Data Integrity Boards.
Administrative Law Judges.
Federal Employee Retirement and Benefits.
Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund.
Placement of Non-Indian Employees.

TITLE XIV, SECTION 1401 WOULD ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING: TRADE AGENCY REPORTS

Coffee Trade.
Recommendations for Legislation.
East-West Foreign Trade Board.
Uruguay Round Agreements Act.
Restrictions on Expenditures.

TITLE XV, SECTION 1501 WOULD ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REPORTS

Government Pension Plans.
Transportation Air Quality.
Indian Reservation Roads.
Impact of Climatic Conditions.
Bumper Standards.
Highway Safety.
Project Review.
Suspended Light Rail System Technology.

Section 1502 would modify the following Transportation Department reports

Coast Guard Majority Acquisition Projects.
Aviation Security.
Public Transportation.
National Ballast Information Clearinghouse.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1364, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 214. Concurrent resolution recognizing the contributions of the cities of Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, and their people to the origins and development of Country Music, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 700. An act to remove the restriction on the distribution of certain revenues from the Mineral Springs parcel to certain members of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

H.R. 2327. An act to provide for a change in the exemption from the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 for minors who are 17 years of age and who engage in the operation of automobiles and trucks.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed bills and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1642. An act to improve the effectiveness and performance of Federal financial assistance programs, simplify Federal financial assistance application and reporting requirements, and improve the delivery of services to the public.

S. 1722. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend certain program with respect to women's health research and prevention activities at the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

S. 2116. An act to clarify and enhance the authorities of the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Agriculture.

S. Con. Res. 123. Concurrent resolution to express the sense of Congress regarding the policy of the Forest Service toward recreational shooting and archery ranges on Federal land.

The message also announced, that pursuant to Public Law 100–696, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, announces the appointment of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) as a member of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission.

□ 1230

YEAR 2000 PREPAREDNESS ACT OF 1998

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4756) to ensure that the United States is prepared to meet the Year 2000 computer problem, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4756

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Year 2000 Preparedness Act of 1998''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term ''end-to-end testing'' means testing data exchange software with respect to—

(A) the initiation of the exchange by sending computers;

(B) transmission through intermediate communications software and hardware; and

(C) receipt and acceptance by receiving computers;

(2) the term ''small and medium-sized businesses'' means businesses with less than 500 employees;

(3) the term ''Year 2000 compliant'' means, with respect to information technology, that the information technology accurately processes (including calculating, comparing, and sequencing) date and time data from, into, and between the 20th and 21st centuries and the years 1999 and 2000, and leap year calculations, to the extent that other information technology properly exchanges date and time data with it;

(4) the term ''Year 2000 computer problem'' means, with respect to information technology, any problem which prevents such technology from accurately processing, calculating, comparing, or sequencing date or time data—

(A) from, into, or between—

(i) the 20th and 21st centuries; or

(ii) the years 1999 and 2000;

(B) with regard to leap year calculations; or

(C) with regard to such other dates as the Year 2000 Conversion Council may identify and designate; and

(5) the term ''Year 2000 Conversion Council'' means the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion established under section 2 of Executive Order No. 13073, issued on February 4, 1998;

SEC. 3. CRITICAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

The President shall provide for the acceleration of the development of business continuity plans by Federal agencies necessary to ensure the uninterrupted delivery by those agencies of critical mission-related services.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the President should take a high profile national leadership position to aggressively promote Year 2000 date change awareness for information technology systems and sensitive infrastructure applications;

(2) the President should authorize the Chair of the Year 2000 Conversion Council to take a leadership role in resolving Year 2000 issues in any critical Federal civilian agency system that is in jeopardy because of ineffective management of not meeting the January 1, 2000, deadline with respect to the Year 2000 computer problem;

(3) consistent with the spirit of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Chair of the Year 2000 Conversion

Council, in consultation with the President's Council on Infrastructure Assurance, officers of the Federal Government and of State and local governments, and representatives of the private sector, should work toward a national strategy to assure that the critical infrastructures and key sectors of the economy will be prepared for the Year 2000 date change, with such strategy including, for each sector, goals appropriate to each;

(4) the Chair of the Year 2000 Conversion Council is making a significant contribution to Year 2000 computer problem awareness by scheduling a National Y2K Action Week for October 19 through 23, 1998;

(5) the Small Business Administration, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and other appropriate Federal agencies should undertake maximum efforts to assist American family businesses and farmers in assessing their exposure to the Year 2000 computer problem, undertaking the necessary remedial steps, and formulating contingency plans; and

(6) State and local governments, as well as private sector industry groups and companies, should find ways to participate in this effort to prepare the American economy for the year 2000.

SEC. 5. AGENCY REPORTS.

All Federal agency reports to the Office of Management and Budget relating to the Year 2000 computer problem shall be concurrently transmitted to the Congress, including all Federal agency monthly submissions to the Office of Management and Budget.

SEC. 6. GUIDELINES.

The Chair of the Year 2000 Conversion Council is encouraged to develop, in consultation with industry, guidelines of best practices and standards for remediation and validation with respect to the Year 2000 computer problem to provide better direction for government and private sector efforts.

SEC. 7. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF YEAR 2000 COMPUTER PROBLEM.

The Chair of the Year 2000 Conversion Council shall submit to the Congress any national assessment of the Year 2000 computer problem, conducted through or in conjunction with the Year 2000 Conversion Council, covering all critical national infrastructures and key sectors of the economy, including banking and finance, energy, telecommunications, transportation, and vital human services which protect the public health and safety, the water supply, housing and public buildings, and the environment.

SEC. 8. FEDERAL AGENCY ACTIONS.

To ensure that all computer operations and processing can be provided without interruption by Federal agencies after December 31, 1999, the head of each Federal agency shall—

(1) take actions necessary to ensure that all systems and hardware administered by the agency are Year 2000 compliant, to the extent necessary to ensure that no significant disruption of the operations of the agency or of the agency's data exchange partners occurs, including—

(A) establishing, before March 1, 1999, schedules for testing and implementing new data exchange formats for completing all data exchange corrections, which may include national test days for end-to-end testing of critical processes and associated data exchanges affecting Federal, State, and local governments;

(B) notifying data exchange partners of the implications to the agency and the exchange partners if they do not make appropriate date conversion corrections in time to meet the Federal schedule for implementing and testing Year 2000 compliant data exchange processes;

(C) giving priority to installing filters necessary to prevent the corruption of mission-critical systems from data exchanges with noncompliant systems; and

(D) developing and implementing, as part of the agency's continuity and contingency planning efforts, specific provisions for data exchanges that may fail, including strategies to mitigate operational disruptions if data exchange partners do not make timely date conversion corrections;

(2) beginning not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, convene meetings at least quarterly with representatives of the agency's data exchange partners to assess implementation progress; and

(3) after each meeting convened pursuant to paragraph (2), transmit to the Congress a report summarizing—

(A) the results of that meeting; and

(B) the status of the agency's completion of key data exchange corrections, including the extent of data exchange inventoried, an assessment of data exchange formats agreed to with data exchange partners, testing and implementation schedules, and testing and implementation completed.

SEC. 9. ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES.

To ensure that the Nation's small and medium-sized businesses are prepared to meet the Year 2000 computer problem challenge, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, in conjunction with the Small Business Administration, shall develop a Year 2000 compliance outreach program to assist small and medium-sized businesses. Such program shall include—

(1) the development of a Year 2000 self-assessment checklist;

(2) an explanation of the Year 2000 computer problem and an identification of best practices for resolving the problem;

(3) a list of Federal Government Year 2000 information resources; and

(4) a list of Year 2000 compliant products provided by the General Services Administration.

SEC. 10. CONSUMER AWARENESS.

To ensure that the Nation's consumers are aware of and prepared to meet the Year 2000 computer problem challenge, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology, in consultation with the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, shall develop a Year 2000 consumer awareness program to assist the public in becoming aware of the implications of the Year 2000 computer problem. Such program shall include—

(1) the development of a Year 2000 self-assessment checklist;

(2) a list of Federal Government Year 2000 computer problem information resources;

(3) a list of Year 2000 compliant products provided by the General Services Administration;

(4) a series of public awareness announcements or seminars on the impact of the Year 2000 computer problem on consumer products and services; and

(5) a series of public awareness announcements or seminars on the potential effect that the Year 2000 computer problem could have on the provision of services by the Federal Government to the public, and the progress made in resolving the problem by the Federal agencies providing those services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4756.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I think we all know the dangers that lurk around the corner if we fail to take the action necessary to fix the Year 2000 computer problem. We all know that time is running out. We are competing in a race against time to avert an impending computer catastrophe. If we do not act fast, we will be ringing in the beginning of the new millennium with the mother of all computer glitches. If computers around the world will think that it is the Year 1900 when it is the Year 2000, millions of computer programs as well as products that use a computer microchip may be in jeopardy, billions of dollars may be lost and just about every human on the planet will be affected. Affected will be critical government functions such as air traffic control systems, veterans' benefits, Social Security and student loans, as well as the everyday conveniences of modern life, like home security systems, video recorders and elevators in high-rise buildings. Additionally our energy utilities, the financial service industry, the telecommunications industry, vital modes of transportation and virtually every critical indispensable industrial sector could be adversely affected. By failing to address the Y2K problem, our Nation is in danger of being plunged into a catastrophic economic recession with severe business disruptions in the delivery of essential government and private industry services.

We in Congress have been working diligently over the past 2½ years to raise the Nation's awareness and to push our Federal Government as well as State and local governments and private industry for immediate corrective action. We have aggressively pursued Year 2000 issues through legislation requiring a National Federal Y2K strategy and prohibiting the purchase of information technology which is not Y2K compliant. We have also conducted an ongoing series of hearings and provided attentive oversight on government and industry Y2K efforts. Yet despite all of our efforts we have great concern that our Nation may simply not be moving with the required alacrity to be Year 2000 compliant by the new millennium.

While the Federal agencies and the private sector have been scrambling to avert a disaster, our hearings and reports demonstrate they are not scrambling fast enough. If our Nation does not develop a greater sense of urgency and if we do not take immediate aggressive action, the Federal Government will be risking the delivery of vital services or functions that are

critical to the health, safety and welfare of the American public. With just 450 days before January 1, 2000, we need to take more direct action.

Since the Speaker established a House Year 2000 Task Force, which I cochair along with the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) for the majority and with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for the minority, we have been attempting to move our Nation's Year 2000 efforts forward. The creation of this task force underscores the House's commitment to correct the Y2K problem, and will begin to build on the extensive work the House has already started through the committees. The House Y2K Task Force is intended to coordinate all House initiatives and be the counterpart to the Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem which is chaired by Senator BENNETT of Utah.

The formation of the House Y2K Task Force has allowed us to collaborate more effectively with our Senate colleagues to expedite oversight and legislative measures to ensure that both government and private industry are moving forward with the necessary dispatch to correct the problem in a timely manner. To that end, along with the assistance of the majority leader's office, we have been successful in engaging virtually every one of our committees to hold hearings reviewing the potential Y2K impact on agencies and programs within their jurisdiction. To this date the House has held over 40 hearings on the Year 2000. As a result, we have a well-documented need for taking the enhanced measures contained in H.R. 4756, the bill before us.

H.R. 4756 seeks to ensure that the United States is prepared to meet the Year 2000 computer problem. What the bill does is it urges the President to provide for the acceleration of business continuity plans to ensure uninterrupted delivery of Federal services and programs; it urges the President to take a high profile national leadership position to aggressively promote Y2K; it enhances congressional oversight by providing that all agency reports be submitted to Congress; it codifies certain recommendations made by the General Accounting Office regarding electronic data exchanges which GAO has identified as critical to Y2K compliance; it provides for Y2K assistance for small and medium-sized businesses; and it develops a Y2K consumer awareness program.

H.R. 4756 is essentially an amalgamation of three introduced Year 2000 bills and incorporates certain provisions from each bill. H.R. 4706 is included, the Year 2000 Preparedness Act, which I introduced; H.R. 4682, the Year 2000 Act, introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Technology; and H.R. 3968, the National Year 2000 Critical Infrastructure Readiness Act, introduced by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), chair of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services. This is a very important bill that addresses a number of our concerns and problems.

Special thanks to our staff who helped enormously: Ben Wu, Joe Pinder, Cindy Sprunger, Harrison Fox and Mike Quear.

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

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentlewoman from Maryland for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4756, the Year 2000 Preparedness Act. This legislation is the product, as has just been mentioned, of the bipartisan efforts of the Science, Banking and Government Reform and Oversight Committees. In addition, I want to commend Mr. Koskinen, chair of the President's Y2K Conversion Council, for working with us to craft legislation that we could bring to the floor expeditiously. Working together, we were able to address the need for greater Y2K information among consumers and small business. I want to also thank the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) as well as the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) for including the provisions of H.R. 4682, a bill I introduced on a bipartisan basis with 11 of my colleagues last week. The provisions in H.R. 4682 have three very specific goals: First, to raise the consumer awareness and create a consumer Y2K checklist; secondly, to raise the Y2K awareness in small and medium-sized businesses; and, thirdly, to create a Y2K self-assessment checklist for the Nation's small and medium-sized companies as well as to require Federal agencies that have worked with outside entities to ensure that all date sensitive data exchanges are Year 2000 compliant.

As a member of the House Y2K Task Force and the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Technology, I have found that many people do not know how Y2K will impact them nor do they know what specific actions they can take to minimize the impact of the Y2K problem on their everyday lives. This bill requires the Under Secretary for Technology at the Department of Commerce in consultation with the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Protection Agency to develop a Year 2000 self-assessment checklist for consumers, provide a list of Federal Government Year 2000 computer problem resources, a list of Year 2000 compliant products provided by the GSA, and conduct a series of public awareness announcements or seminars on the impact of the Y2K problem on consumer products and services. These goals are consistent with the recommendations made by witnesses who have appeared before the Subcommittee on Technology. I am confident that with the right information, consumers will be able to make those decisions necessary to minimize the disruption the Y2K problem may pose.

The situation at small and medium-sized businesses mirrors that of consumers. The Nation's more than 381,000 small and medium-sized manufacturers contribute more than half of the country's total value in manufacturing. However, as of 1997, 88 percent of all companies with fewer than 2,000 employees had not yet started Year 2000 remediation projects. Small and medium-sized companies are an integral part of the business supply chain. They are increasingly reliant on computer applications for manufacturing operations, accounting and billing practices, and meeting just-in-time order and delivery concepts. To assist our small and medium-sized manufacturers in meeting the Y2K challenge, this bill requires that the National Institute of Standards and Technology's highly successful Manufacturing Extension Partnership program, working with the Small Business Administration, identify the best practices to attack the problem, develop a Year 2000 self-assessment checklist, and list all Federal Government Y2K resources including the General Service's listing of Y2K compliant products.

Federal agencies make thousands of date sensitive data exchanges every day. These data exchanges include Social Security and Medicare information, information related to the air traffic control system which the distinguished gentlewoman just mentioned so eloquently in her remarks, and other important financial transactions. Data exchange partners include State and local governments, Federal contractors and the private sector. As Federal computer systems are converted to process Year 2000 dates, the associated data exchanges must also be made Year 2000 compliant. The testing and implementation of Year 2000 compliant data exchanges must be closely coordinated with exchange partners. Agencies must not only test its own software but effective testing includes end-to-end testing and agreed-upon date formats with all exchange partners. If these Year 2000 data exchanges do not function properly, data will not be exchanged between systems or invalid data could cause receiving computer systems to malfunction. In other words, regardless of Federal efforts to fix its own computer systems, unless their data exchange partners have Y2K compliant systems, the computer network as a whole will fail.

A recent GAO report entitled ''Year 2000 Computing Crisis: Actions Needed on Electronic Data Exchanges'' found that Federal agencies have made little progress in addressing this data exchange issue. This legislation is based on these specific GAO recommendations and will help ensure that Federal agencies fully address the data exchange issue. This legislation also requires agencies to establish a test schedule with data exchange partners,

notify exchange partners of the implications and consequences of noncompliance, develop contingency plans and send a quarterly report to Congress outlining their progress.

With so much to be done before January 1, 2000, there is not much time to act. While we cannot legislate Y2K compliance, we must ensure the availability of good information so that consumers and small businesses are able to check existing products, make sure their equipment will work with other equipment and, most importantly, successfully address any Y2K problems in their operations. With this information in hand, I believe that the public and Congress will be able to make the right decisions and avoid the panic which is so often predicted in articles about the Y2K computer crisis. I urge my colleagues to support this badly needed bipartisan legislation.

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

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) for the kind of leadership and enthusiasm and energy he has put into trying to do something about this Y2K computer glitch.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) who really is in a dual capacity because he is a member of the Subcommittee on Technology of the Committee on Science and he is also a member of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology of Committee on Government Reform and Oversight and represents a high-technology community.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4756, a bill that will help ensure that American citizens can count on the Federal Government and this administration to be ready for the Year 2000 computer problem.

Despite hearings held by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) beginning 2 years ago in the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology and then in the Subcommittee on Technology chaired by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), we have really very little assurance today from the administration that the Federal Government is going to be able to ensure that critical public and private services will not be shut down at 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2000.

□ 1245

Congress is taking a proactive role in keeping the focus on how much work remains to be done in resolving the Y2K problem, and this bill is another step in that direction. We recently passed the Year 2000 Information and Readiness Disclosure Act and sent the bill to the President in order to encourage businesses to share information that will help resolve the Y2K problems without fear of incurring civil liability. This was a major step. H.R. 4756 builds on this legislation by combining 3 Year 2000 bills that will make Federal efforts more cohesive in this regard. The bill urges the President to accelerate business continuity plans by taking steps to protect the uninterrupted delivery of Federal services and programs. It encourages the President to take a more high-profile role in promoting Y2K compliance because Americans need to know that this administration is providing leadership on one of the most important technical issues facing our economy. H.R. 4756 requires all Federal agencies to establish a testing schedule before March 1, 1999, to ensure that Y2K compliance of the agency as well as outside entities with which that agencies exchanges data are included. Most importantly, this legislation will ensure that all Americans are prepared for any Y2K related problems by requiring the Commerce Department to develop a consumer awareness program.

This problem goes back to the 6th century monk Dionysius Exigus, Dennis the Small, who invented the consecutive year calendar, and we were taught in high school that in the year 999 Christians and pagans were there cowering at the moon waiting for the end of the millennium and the fulfillment of scriptural prophecy, but we now know that did not happen because in the Year 999 about one-tenth of 1 percent of the population knew what year it was, let alone what day it is. The irony is that in the Year 2000 everybody is going to know what day and year it is except for the computers which run our lives. Thus we have come full circle unless we get this situation taken care of.

There is an extraordinary amount of work yet to be done. At this point Congress has a moral responsibility to do as much as we can to protect the smooth operation of agencies and their Y2K departments. While every Federal agency is now aware of the problem, the challenge now is to pick up the pace in the long process of fixing the problem. This legislation is critical to achieving our goals in this and achieving as many Y2K fixes as possible before then.

For this reason I want to urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I wanted to particularly thank the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) for swiftly bringing H.R. 4756 to the floor today.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), a senior member of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

(Mr. LAFALCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like very much to congratulate the individuals who have spoken thus far and who will speak because they have taken a real leadership role: The gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), et cetera, a real leadership role in trying to cope with the extremely significant problems that could be posed by the Year 2000 problems.

The Year 2000 Readiness Act before us today is another in a series of bills aimed at fashioning a national strategy for curing this well known millennium bug. As all Members are now aware, this glitch threatens national disruptions in the entire computer grid, and this in turn could very adversely affect everything from the power supply to all financial transactions, and so I am happy to be a cosponsor of this legislation, the passage of which is now not objected to by the White House.

Additionally, I would point out that this bill is a bipartisan effort in which most of those Members who are heavily involved in Year 2000 issues have joined. Two weeks ago we enacted S. 2392, the Year 2000 Information Disclosure Act, a mirror of legislation which a number of us had cosponsored in July as H.R. 4355. That legislation set the stage to allow groups like the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers to post massive bulletin boards on the Internet to let millions of computer users know about the millennium bug defects. Instead of tedious, expensive and time consuming searches for information on how to cure their computers, the business and consuming public can now quickly and efficiently locate and begin to fix their problems.

The currently pending measure lays out a further strategy which strengthens the role of the President's Year 2000 Conversion Council in dealing with the domestic and international situation. Under John Koskinen the council in the Executive Office of the President is doing yeoman work to banish the Y2K threat from our systems. The legislation also points the way toward improved performance reviews at all levels without imposing inflexible standards on the council to achieving such estimates. With these tools the council can measure, as it sees fit, how serious the inevitable shortfalls in preparation

for the beginning of the next millennium might be and make contingency plans to meet them.

While the bill itself is very meritorious, I want to point with some satisfaction to the bipartisan way it has been developed. I know the Year 2000 problem has always contained the seeds of a partisan division. Next year it will become a very hot issue as questions of liability, insurance and fault for Y2K failures emerge as we draw closer to the various deadlines. A number of cases have already been filed. My sincere hope is that this spirit of working together in the national interest, as we have in this bill, will continue to pervade the Y2K effort, and with the passage of this bill we move another step in the direction of preserving this spirit.

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

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the comments of the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE). This is a good example of bipartisanship in the best interests of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the very distinguished gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), who chairs the Committee on Banking and Financial Services ever so ably and has always been a mentor of mine.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maryland for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of the Year 2000 Preparedness Act, and I would like to commend the chairwoman of the subcommittee, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), as well as the ranking member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA), for bringing this bipartisan legislation to the floor. As one of the cosponsors of this new bill, I am pleased that it incorporates several aspects of H.R. 3968, the National Year 2000 Readiness Acts, which I introduced earlier this year along with my colleague on the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), as well as the chairmen of all five of the banking subcommittees.

There are over 20,000 financial institutions in the United States today. Millions of individuals as well as businesses depend as never before on technology, intensive banking and financial services. Americans are accustomed to timely access to their direct deposit paychecks and Social Security benefits. They use credit and debit cards for billions of dollars of commercial transactions each year, and most of us have long forgotten the days before we had easy access to 24-hour cash through ATMs.

We love the convenience of our 20th century technology. Unfortunately, as the American people are now coming to realize, our dependence on that technology has left us vulnerable to the Year 2000 computer bug. Because of this challenge, the Committee on Banking and Financial Services has held five hearings on the problem this year. During the course of our work the committee has broadened the authority of Federal thrift and credit union supervisors to examine data service providers for Year 2000 readiness and approve legislation to direct the Federal financial regulatory agencies to hold seminars for financial institutions and to provide model approaches for dealing with the year 2000 problem.

The good news is that after the establishment of timetables and benchmarks the five Federal financial regulatory agencies have testified that the vast majority of banks, thrifts and credit unions had earned satisfactory ratings during the first round of Year 2000 exams. Nevertheless, the Year 2000 issue remains not only a significant safety and soundness problem for banks, but unless comprehensively dealt with a potential precipitator of a global recession. While there is no guarantee that 100 percent of our financial institutions will be 100 percent compliant, Americans can be assured that their deposits in federally-insured financial institutions are protected up to the statutory limit in the event of a Year 2000 computer glitch.

There is no reason for the average American to panic and put savings in mattresses. Indeed, there has never been a greater case to save in secure federally-insured institutions.

While it would be irrational to assume that regulators will be on top of every detail of bank compliance, the Committee on Banking and Financial Services and numerous other committees of this body are doing everything we can to assure the public that their interest in welfare of the highest priority and that Year 2000 accountability is expected. When we first started working with Federal financial regulators on the issue, there was a great deal of discomfort among the agencies about their roles in the oversight intrusion of the Congress in this process. However, we strived to establish a constructive and cooperative relationship and believe that ultimately this oversight process is motivating parts of the government and private sector which may have been behind to catch up.

Clearly a great deal is being done to get the banking industry ready for the Year 2000. More than any other sector of our economy, financial institutions are being held accountable for performance and Year 2000 goals and timetables. However, it is not clear how well some of the other critical infrastructures are doing. We have a highly inter-dependent economy at home and abroad. Financial institutions are critically dependent on power and telecommunications infrastructures to deliver services to customers. A serious Year 2000 problem in any infrastructure industry will quickly become a Year 2000 problem for other industries.

We cannot let that happen. As with the banking industry, we need clear goals and measures for each critical infrastructure to build confidence that each is fixing the most important problems and each is achieving these goals in a timely fashion.

It was to address this concern that my colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) and I introduced the National Year 2000 Readiness Act to require the President's Year 2000 Conversion Council to assess the status of the nation's critical infrastructures and to develop a national strategy to make sure these infrastructures are up and operating when we get to January 2000. Unfortunately, the chairman of the President's Conversion Council had objections to aspects of this initiative. I disagreed with the council chairman's objections and am pleased that despite these objections, the spirit of the critical infrastructure initiatives is incorporated in a strong sense of Congress language in this bill. I would like, however, to take a moment to address the council chairman's objections because I believe it goes to the character of leadership and would like to read a portion of a letter I received from the council chairman which represents one of the starkest denials of public accountability I have seen in my 20 years in Congress. The sentence reads:

I think it unwise at this time for Congress to indicate that it and Executive Branch assume direct responsibility for failures in the private sector. That is not the precise purpose of our legislation, but administration concerns reveal a lot. It wants to avoid at all cost accountability for a problem that has huge public ramifications.

Mr. Speaker, we have here a contrast of two styles of leadership, that of the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) on the one hand along with Mr. BENNETT in the Senate, and the other we have the President's representative who wants to avoid the establishment of potentially embarrassing public accountability. Leadership obligations should not and cannot be ducked. This bill, while modest in scope, is designed to establish greater private sector awareness and public sector accountability for a profound problem. I urge my colleagues to give it their unanimous support.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), who has expended a great amount of time and energy on this issue and who also is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA) for recognizing me and also thank my counterpart, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Management and Information Technology, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), for the many long hours that we have worked together on this matter. Chairman HORN has been exemplary in his willingness to carry this issue forward on behalf of the American people as well as, of course, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the

gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the other Members of Congress who have been very concerned about this. So I am pleased to join my colleagues today in supporting H.R. 4756, the Year 2000 Preparedness Act of 1998.

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This legislation represents a measured but effective step in the continuing efforts of Congress and the Clinton Administration to prepare for the Year 2000 computer problem.

I am also pleased at the bipartisan fashion in which this bill was developed. The Y2K problem is a serious threat to our economy and could have a large impact on the government and the private sector. We have heard the discussions throughout the last year about the potential impacts on communications, on utilities, on transportation, on finance. Safety, public services, consumer products all could be affected. If we are to solve the Y2K problem, it must be done in a bipartisan fashion. It must not, cannot, become purely political.

The next 15 months will be a challenge to the government, the public sector and the private sector, and we need to work together cooperatively in a manner analogous to the networking which computer systems allow.

Our ability to meet the Y2K task, Mr. Speaker, is not just a technical challenge, it is a social one, which requires us, perhaps as never before, to work together for the common good; together, not just as Democrats and Republicans, but as Americans, concerned that our country be prepared for the Year 2000.

In a sense, the Y2K problem represents a crisis in linear thinking, in the reliance of our society on boolean algorithms to design our world, a placing of our technical inventions superior to the slower human systems, instead of the old fashion reliance on the American heart, of people working together, of human interaction, of cooperative pursuits as one Nation.

As the new millennium dawns, Y2K gives us a new opportunity to review questions of how our society is structured, of what is important, of what is essential to our Nation, to our families and to ourselves. As we grapple with Y2K, perhaps we will also grapple with the dichotomized thinking which creates the conflict which slows a fast resolution not only of our technical problems, but of our social, political and economic ones as well.

So as we enter a new millennium, we are challenged to shift not only our clocks and our computers, but our thinking, the way we look at the world and the way we look at each other. We are challenged to create new thinking which leaps over the prophesies of doom, which are often self-fulfilling, and create a new epic which is all-fulfilling for the social, economic and political progress of every human being.

So as we move forward with this legislation, I would like to thank my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA), the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) for their hard work on this legislation.

I would like to thank John Koskinen for his efforts to help shape the final bill. Because Mr. Koskinen and my colleagues in Congress were able to compromise and work together, the result is a solid piece of legislation which will help the Clinton administration solve the Y2K problem, to at least get a good start towards resolving it.

The Clinton Administration has been working hard on the Y2K problem to prevent damage to our economy, and I support this bill because I believe it will help them do that. The legislation contains new provisions that will assist the Small Business Administration in reaching out to small businesses and helping them to solve Y2K problems.

It also requires the Secretary of Commerce to develop consumer awareness to inform and educate consumers as to the potential Y2K problem. By educating our consumers and assisting small businesses, this legislation will go a distance towards helping prevent long-term Y2K problems.

We have much to do in order to solve Y2K before January 1, 2000. This legislation is a beginning. I thank the Speaker and the Members of Congress for their participation on it.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) not only for his statement, but for the kind of passion he has shown with regard to solving this particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to yield four minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), who not only chairs the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology, but is my cochair on the Year 2000 Computer Problem, and as one who has created the agencies, the professorial facet of Mr. HORN comes through in his precision.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maryland (Chairman MORELLA) and the gentleman from Iowa (Chairman LEACH), and the ranking Members, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA), the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

This is truly a bipartisan effort. It is nonpartisan. It is the old story of the city manager movement. Garbage is not Democrat or Republican, it simply has to be removed from the streets, and that is exactly the way we have all worked together on this.

I particularly appreciate the input made by Assistant to the President John Koskinen, who is coordinating this effort within the Executive Branch. This legislation is designed to be helpful, not just to add another report. Afterall, we just rid ourselves of 132 of them a few minutes ago.

Let me note a few findings that the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology found in its report that was approved by the full committee last week and will be printed this week.

The Federal Government is not on track to complete necessary Year 2000 preparations before January 1, 2000. Some state and local governments are lagging in Year 2000 repairs and in many cases lack reliable information on their Year 2000 status. The Year 2000 status of basic infrastructure services—including electricity, telecommunications, water and sewage—is largely unknown. Embedded microchips are difficult to find, difficult to test, and can lead to unforeseen failures. These are just a few of many findings that one could note.

Let me tell you why this is urgent. Some people say, ''Oh, well, it isn't a serious matter. We will struggle through it,'' and so forth and so on. One ambassador of a very progressive country in Europe told me that two months ago. He is just wrong. On January 1, 2000, they will wake up in his country and find they have great difficulties.

Let me tell you what we already know. In terms of our staff and the General Accounting Office that has been so helpful on this, the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight projects that four departments and agencies will not be ready at the current rate of progress for the 21st Century. One will not conform until the year 2023. That is the Agency for International Development. The Department of Justice and the Department of Education will not conform until 2030. That is unacceptable.

Let me tell you about the NORAD blackout. NORAD is the North American Air Defense Command. The potential problem was demonstrated by a simulated test in 1993. Out of curiosity, the technicians rolled the dates up to January 1, 2000. The result was a total system blackout.

Vendor information—private software vendors cannot always be relied on—and an audit report of the Department of Defense Inspector General noted ''because vendor claims on the compliance of commercial off-the-shelf products can be incomplete or erroneous, the information may have little real value to system management and technical staff.''

Then we get into the Russian situation. I am delighted to see that Secretary of Defense Cohen has been working with the Russians on this, and it is so right that he does, because there are great difficulties with a lot of their missiles and with a lot of their launchers because of the embedded chips they use. We need to share with them how we are dealing with Year 2000 conformity to make sure there are no errors.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maryland (Chairman MORELLA) for yielding me time. This is a worthwhile measure, and it ought to

be approved overwhelmingly by the House.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the American people are counting on all of us to correct the Year 2000 computer problem. By working with the President and by passing this bill, I think we can begin to move toward achieving that goal. We only have 450 days left before January 1, 2000. So I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan, nonpartisan House Year 2000 task force legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4756, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH TRAVEL REPORTS

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4805) to require reports on travel of Executive branch officers and employees to international conferences, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4805

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

SECTION 1. REPORTS ON TRAVEL OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.

(a) REPORTS TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), each officer and employee of an Executive Branch agency who travels abroad to attend an international conference shall submit to the Director of the Office of International Conferences of the Department of State a report with respect to such travel under subsection (b) not later than 30 days after the completion of such travel.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in the case of travel by the following:

(A) The President.

(B) The Vice President.

(C) Any officer or employee who is—

(i) carrying out an intelligence or intelligence-related activity;

(ii) performing a protective function; or

(iii) engaged in a sensitive diplomatic mission.

(b) REPORT.—Each report under subsection (a) shall set forth the following:

(1) The name and agency of the officer or employee concerned.

(2) The duration and cost of the travel involved.

(3) The name of the official who authorized the travel.

(c) BIANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—(1) Not later than April 1, 1999, and every six months thereafter, the Director shall submit to the Committees on Foreign Relations and Appropriations of the Senate and the Committees on International Relations and Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report regarding the travel covered by the reports submitted to the Director under subsection (a) during the six-month period ending on the date of the report under this paragraph.

(2) Each report under paragraph (1) shall set forth with respect to the period covered by such report the following:

(A) The names and agencies of the officers and employees who traveled abroad to attend an international conference during such period.

(B) Each official who authorized the travel covered by subparagraph (A) and the total number of officers and employees whose travel was authorized by such official.

(C) The total cost of the travel covered by subparagraph (A).

(d) ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the President shall submit to the committees referred to in subsection (c) a report setting forth—

(1) the total expenditures by the Federal Government on all official travel abroad by each Executive Branch agency during the preceding fiscal year; and

(2) the total number of officials, officers, and employees of each such agency who engaged in such travel during that fiscal year.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''Executive Branch agency'' has the meaning given the term ''Executive agency'' in section 105 of title 5, United States Code, except that the term also includes the Executive Office of the President but does not include the General Accounting Office.

(2) The term ''international conference'' means any meeting held under the auspices of an international organization or foreign government at which representatives of more than two foreign governments are expected to be in attendance and to which one or more Executive Branch agencies will send an aggregate of 10 or more representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in 1995 I traveled to Beijing, where I cochaired the Congressional delegation, along with my good friend and colleague the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

I had many reactions to the conference, but one of the most vivid impressions was how difficult it was to get straight answers to some of the most basic questions, such as who was running the conference and who was paying for it. One of the very hardest things to find out was the exact cost to the American taxpayer.

At the time of the Beijing conference itself, we knew only that the State Department's total annual budget for international conferences that year was $6 million, and most of the amount was budgeted for smaller and less extravagant international meetings. So our participation in Beijing should have cost perhaps $1 million, certainly no more.

Yet the facts on the ground were very different. It took five months and a GAO report to Congress to learn the true extent of U.S. costs on the Beijing conference. It turned out to be $5.9 million, spread out among the budgets of 13 different Federal agencies and the White House. The State Department's reported expenditures were just under $1 million, but they comprised only about one-sixth of the total cost to the U.S. taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, the bill we are considering today would ensure that Congress and the taxpayers have complete and accurate information on what it costs to send Federal officials and employees overseas to international conferences, no matter what the subject is. The bill is similar to an amendment introduced by Senator JOHN ASHCROFT which was ultimately included in H.R. 1757, the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act.

The bill takes a moderate balanced approach to the problem. It imposes no unreasonable reporting requirements on the administration. In fact, the bill reflects many of the administration's own suggestions for improving the provision during the conference on H.R. 1757. For instance, the bill requires no reports on travel to international conferences by the President, the Vice President or Federal officials or employees carrying out intelligence-related activities or performing protective junctions or engaged in sensitive diplomatic missions.

Other Federal officials and employees attending international conferences, and they comprise the vast majority, would be required to report their expenses, the duration of the travel and the name of the authorizing official. The reports will be submitted to the State Department's Office of International Conferences, and the department will file a report to the Congress every six months. So this legislation would help the State Department, as well as Congress and the American people, get a handle on who the various Federal agencies are sending to international conferences.

Mr. Speaker, U.S. participation in international conferences in many cases is useful and necessary, but it should not take a GAO report to Congress to find out who we are sending and how much it costs.

I think Senator ASHCROFT should be thanked for this very important initiative, and I also want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman of the full Committee on International Relations, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), the ranking member of the full committee, Senator HELMS, Senator GRAMM and Senator BIDEN and others for their contributions and their staffs as this was