they may be middle income or high income, but yet the Democrat leadership continues to use class warfare, and I think it is wrong.

We are not going to take the dollars from Americans, but yet the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) said that the billions of dollars is just a little bit, a good investment. Well, that little bit we already funded Africa at the same level, but they want more. They want more money not for American citizens but for foreigners, out of the Social Security Trust Fund, and I think that is wrong. The President vetoed it. They also want back the majority, but I think it is going to backfire.

The President wants more spending for Africa, but yet the President, in his trip this spring to Africa, took 1,700 staffers and press, 1,700, at a cost of $47 million. Africa would have loved the $47 million extra and let the President stay home.

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) quoted the Constitution of the United States. Well, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is our libertarian. I do not agree with everything he says, but he, if anybody, is a constitutionalist on spending. He votes against almost everything. But the Democrats vote against the Constitution every single day, in my opinion.

Remember when the President said he wanted 100 percent for Social Security in his address before Congress and the American people? Well, 3 weeks later he came back and said, no, 62 percent, and then 15 percent for Medicare. And what he does not tell us, and why we do not trust this President, is because he takes $100 billion out of Social Security and Medicare. He increases taxes $74 billion, and he spends it for brand new social spending. Not even the old social spending, new social spending. And we said no, Mr. President, we are going to put that money in a lockbox, not spend it, we are going to accrue those savings to protect Social Security and Medicare forever.

But yet now the President wants to take the money out. And we are saying absolutely not. We are going to send this bill back to the President. We are not going to spend money unless the President identifies where he wants those cuts to come from or unless he spends Social Security money.

I want my colleagues to look up WWW.DSAUSA.ORG, Democrat Socialists of America. They list the progressive caucus. There are 58 Democrats listed under the Democrat Socialists of America.

CONCERNS ABOUT IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION GROWTH IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to discuss an issue of great concern to me, I think of a number of people in the United States of America, but an issue that seldom makes its way to the point of being a topic of debate here in the Congress of the United States, and that is because, quite frankly, there are many, many people who are concerned, actually afraid, to bring this topic forward. I am talking specifically about the issue of immigration into the United States. And I mean massive immigration, immigration both legal and illegal.

I want to talk tonight about some of the effects of this particular phenomenon, because I believe they are detrimental; and I believe that we should confront them, even though it is sort of, politically anyway, very scary to do so.

Each year, close to 900,000 legal immigrants enter the United States from foreign countries; and these numbers have inflated our population to over 272 million. Mr. Speaker, the other day the world's population, we are told, reached 6 billion. Several cartoons have appeared in the papers in my State of Colorado depicting this phenomenon and saying that we are reaching a point where the resources of the country, of the Nation, of the world cannot support this kind of population growth.

Well, I do not know what is the critical mass in terms of population growth that the world can sustain, but I know in the United States we are reaching the point where growth is impacting upon us quite dramatically. Certainly it is in my State of Colorado. We are facing now at least two bond issues on our ballot in November dealing specifically with the issue of growth, both in terms of highway construction and how to deal with the massive increase in the numbers of people that have come to Colorado, and light rail construction totaling several billion dollars anyway, and then, of course, there are all the school bond issues we are going to face. This is just in Colorado. It is happening all over the country because of growth.

But where is this growth coming from? Is it from the population of the United States, the natural born population of this country? Are we experiencing just this kind of pressure because people in the United States are having children in such numbers that they are placing these burdens on our infrastructure? No, Mr. Speaker, it is not because of that kind of population growth. It is because of immigration policies.

We, tonight, are looking at immigration numbers that I just mentioned, of somewhere close to a million legal, and that is just legal immigrants. That does not count what we call refugee status, people coming in. It certainly does not count illegal immigrants. Every year there is a net increase. I mean we have a lot of people coming into the country illegally, everybody knows that. Some of them leave, go back to their native country, but many stay. So there is a net increase every year of at least this amount of legal immigrants. And it is difficult to count, of course, but we know that the pressures are there.

One State in which this pressure is evidenced day in and day out, besides the State of Colorado, of course, is the State of Texas. And there are a number of border States across the United States that are heavily influenced by this and that things are changing dramatically in those States, not just in terms of infrastructure costs, but there are a number of changes that are impacting those States that I think deserve to be discussed.

□ 2015

With me tonight to do that is a colleague of mine, I should say a mentor specifically on this issue. Because the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) has been laboring in this vineyard for many, many, many years, far more than I; and I do look to him and his leadership in this area. I am pleased that he is joining me tonight to discuss this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), for yielding me time; and I appreciate his giving me the opportunity tonight to be able to make some comments of my own on such an important subject.

But first I want to thank him for his giving the attention to such a complex, sensitive and yet important subject that it deserves and also thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) for his expertise and for his knowledge of immigration, which I think provides a great contribution to those of us here in the House who certainly can benefit from his personal knowledge, firsthand knowledge, of immigration as it impacts his State of Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to the destructive effect of our current immigration policy. It is having a destructive impact on recent immigrants and black and Hispanic citizens and also how a more enlightened immigration policy would benefit American minorities and, in fact, the overall American economy.

Each year, close to 900,000 legal immigrants enter the United States. Of these, about 300,000 have less than a high school education and their competition for scarce jobs does have a destructive impact on the opportunity of American workers with no more than a high school diploma who are disproportionately and unfortunately recent immigrants and black and Hispanic citizens.

Mr. Speaker, among reports of a growing, prospering economy are other more troubling reports on a growing

gap between the well-to-do and the working poor. The national unemployment rate is about 4 percent; where, for those with less than a high school education, it is more than twice as high, over 8 percent.

In many cities where there are high recent immigrant populations, the unemployment rates are in double digits for those with less education. Where is opportunity for these individuals and their families?

Numerous polls indicate that black and Hispanic Americans know this only too well. This is no surprise, given that they are hurt disproportionately by our immigration policy today. We cannot pretend that the adverse impact of mass immigration on minorities does not exist. We can and should find solutions to protect the jobs and wages of recent immigrants and black and Hispanic citizens.

How often do we read about the long-term unemployed or the working poor or single mothers with no mention of the serious impact of immigration on their employment wages and working conditions? How often do we hear comments about the growing gap between the well-to-do and the working poor that do not mention that almost half the relative decline in wages of those who do not finish high school is caused, in fact, by competition from immigration?

Think of a single mother barely surviving in a minimum wage job who sees her annual wages depressed by $2,000 because she must compete with more and more unskilled immigrants. She very well might be a recent immigrant herself seeking a better life for herself and her children, or she might be able to trace her roots in this country back generations and is simply seeking the American dream that has been denied her ancestors.

Think what she can do for herself and her children with that lost money. Buy a used car so she does not have to take a bus to work. Put a down payment on a modest home. Or even fix the furnace before winter comes. Worse, think what would happen if she actually loses her job because of the never-ending competition from new arrivals.

It is certainly not the immigrants themselves who are to blame and who understandably want to come to America. It is our immigration policy that is to blame. But who knows how many people have been hurt by the unintended consequences of our outdated immigration policy.

A series of recent studies have all documented the effects of immigration policy on low-skilled American workers and recent immigrants. The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences concludes that immigration was responsible for about 44 percent of the total decline in relative wages of high school dropouts between 1980 and 1994.

The Rand Corporation reports that in California the widening gap between the number of jobs available for non-college-educated workers and the increasing number of new noncollege-educated immigrants signals growing competition for jobs and, hence, a further decline in the relative earnings at the low end of the labor market.

The U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, finds that ''immigration of unskilled immigrants comes at a cost to unskilled U.S. workers.''

The Hudson Institute states that ''U.S. immigration policy serves primarily to increase the number of U.S. residents who lack even a high school degree. America must stop recruiting workers for jobs that do not exist or exist only at the lowest wages.''

The Brookings Institute published a paper concluding that ''immigration has had a marked adverse impact on the economic status of the least skilled U.S. workers.''

The Center for Immigration Studies calculates that immigration may reduce the wages of the average native in a low-skilled occupation by over $1,900 a year.

CIS also found that the poverty rate for persons living in immigrant households of 1997 was 22 percent, almost double the 12 percent rate for persons in native households.

It concluded that reducing the flow of less skilled immigrants who enter each year would have the desirable effect of reducing job competition between more established immigrants and new arrivals for low-wage jobs. Reducing the supply of this kind of labor would create upward pressure on wages and benefits for the working poor, including immigrants already in the country. Over time, this should reduce poverty among immigrants who work.

These studies reinforce what common sense already tells us.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, add three other facts together. First, immigrants will account for half of the increase in the workforce in the 1990s.

Second, the skilled level of immigrants relative to Americans has been declining for years. Thirty-five percent of immigrant workers who have arrived since 1990 do not have a high school education, compared to only 9 percent of native-born workers. Some 300,000 illegal immigrants without high school educations arrived last year and will total 3 million this decade.

Third, close to 90 percent of all future jobs in America will require more than a high school education.

The mismatch is clear. Nearly half of all immigrants today are not prepared for the jobs of the future. Current immigration policy has many Americans and recent immigrants competing with hundreds of thousands of newcomers without high school degrees for a fixed number of low-skilled jobs. This is a recipe for disaster for millions of blue-collar workers and their families.

No one should complain about the plight of the working poor or the persistence of minority unemployment or the levels of income inequality in America without acknowledging the unintended consequences of our present immigration policy.

Of course, immigration is neither all good nor all bad. Immigrants benefit America in many ways. But we should design our immigration policies so that it enhances rather than diminishes opportunity for American workers. We should protect the jobs of working Americans, and we can make a better life for all Americans wherever they were born.

Just as American minorities would benefit from a reduced number of low-skilled immigrants, the American economy and American firms trying to prosper in this era of global competition would benefit enormously from an increased flow of more educated immigrants. American industry is pleading for more skilled and educated workers.

The chairman of the National Association of Manufacturers recently stated that ''the shortage of skilled employees is not a distant threat anymore. The skills gap is now catching up to us and could threaten the amazing growth and productivity gains of the past decade. Finding an adequate supply of qualified employees is the number one issue for American industry today.''

NAM found that 88 percent of manufacturers are experiencing a shortage of qualified workers, 60 percent find that current workers lack basic math skills and that 55 percent find serious deficiencies in workers' basic writing and comprehension skills. These problems can be solved with more educated workers. And because immigration accounts for such a high percentage of workforce growth, almost one-half, an emphasis on more educated immigrants would be an important part of the solution. The result would be a more productive American economy and more productive American businesses. As the productivity of the American economy increases, so will the prosperity of all Americans.

American citizens and legal residents will benefit in another way from more educated immigrants. To borrow a line from a new book by George Borjas, ''Skilled immigrants earn more, pay higher taxes, and require fewer social services than less skilled immigrants.''

The National Academy of Sciences states that over his or her lifetime, each immigrant with less than a high school education will cost American taxpayers $89,000. That is, the Government benefits consumed by each immigrant will exceed taxes they paid by $89,000.

To citizens concerned about how we are to rebuild our schools and protect and preserve Social Security in the next century, these numbers should set off alarms. More than 300,000 immigrant workers with less than a high school education entering our country this year will require $27 billion more in government services and benefits than they will contribute in taxes.

That is $27 billion, for example, that will not be available to rebuild our schools and protect and preserve Social Security and Medicare.

Next year another 300,000-plus immigrants will enter the country with less than a high school education. Over their lifetimes, they will claim another $27 billion that could provide education and training to recent immigrants and black and Hispanic citizens who have less than a high school education and who are disadvantaged in our economy.

Common sense tells us that we should align our immigration policy with the needs of America. The economy is crying out for more educated workers, and one of the easiest and most cost-free ways of providing these workers is through immigration reform. Doing so would mean more economic opportunity for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, now I am happy to yield back to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) and thank him again for sharing his time tonight with me and thank him again for his attention to such an important subject and for his expertise on the subject, as well.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) for his comments, and I sincerely appreciate his contribution to this discussion which I consider to be quite definitive. As I say, he has had quite some time here even in the Congress of the United States to become involved with it, and I only hope that the rest of our colleagues will pay heed to his admonitions and to his clarion call for a change in immigration policies in the United States, and I want to thank him very sincerely for his support on this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, every time we talk about the issue of immigration, it always results in someone coming up and saying something like, this is a Nation of immigrants. We are all immigrants.

And it is absolutely true that, unless our heritage is native American, and even then I guess you could say that they immigrated here, of course, across the Bering Strait, we are in fact a Nation of immigrants. This is undeniable. There was a time when immigration patterns across the world were such that the United States was the recipient of many hundreds of thousands of people, going into the millions, over a period of time.

Of course, I am speaking specifically of the turn of the century, especially where the United States was the place to which people came; it was a harbinger of hope. And it still is to many millions of people throughout the world.

I totally understand it. If I were an immigrant, if I were someone not in the United States, if I were someone born in other lands, especially into poverty, I would be doing exactly the same thing that we see millions and millions of them doing; and that is trying to come here. But my responsibility is different as a Congressman in this body. It is to address the issues that I believe are of concern and of a negative impact in terms of the general population of the country. And I believe immigration at this level, what I would certainly refer to as massive immigration, is not positive anymore.

Let me talk for a moment about the differences that exist between what we see today as immigration patterns and the situation in the United States as opposed to what it was around the turn of the century, of the last century.

The fact is that, of course, my grandparents came here about the same time as did millions of other people. And at that time this country was a place that relied upon brawn far more than anything else. We needed immigrant labor, low-skilled immigrant labor. It contributed to the capital development in this country, and it contributed to the well being of everyone.

□ 2030

The economy grew, the economic well-being of the families that emigrated grew, people prospered, and it was, generally speaking, a positive thing for the Nation. But we are in a brand new environment, a brand new environment that is not as hospitable to low-skilled labor as it was at the turn of the century. Today's needs are different. This Nation's needs are different. What we now see is that a massive immigration of low-skilled people have a detrimental effect on a number of things in the United States, including, of course, people who are at the lowest level of the economic scale. This is, I think, something that should concern us all and it is something I believe that my colleague from Texas addressed very clearly and very articulately, that the people in the United States that we find in most need of help are those people who are detrimentally affected by massive immigration. By the way, never before in our Nation's history, never, even at the beginning of the century, have we ever experienced the numbers of immigrants as we are presently that are a result of, quote, legal immigration alone, let alone illegal immigration. The numbers are far greater today than they ever were before. At present, just over 60 percent of the population growth in the United States is due to immigration. By 2050, it will be 90 percent, with a domestic population approaching 400 million people. Even if we allowed for a zero net increase in immigration, the population would increase by almost 75 million people by 2050 because of our recent track record. That is if we stopped immigration totally, today.

From 1997 to 1998, just 1 year in Colorado, almost 10,000 immigrants moved in and 3,000 people settled in Denver alone. These are legal immigrants. Far more came in illegally. Everybody knows it. Employers know it. School districts know it. The people who try to get to work and are confronted with massive traffic jams know it. I do not mean to say that all the people on the roads in Colorado and everywhere else, States not necessarily border States, are people who just came here from other countries, emigrated legally or illegally. But what I will tell you is that massive immigration causes a dislocation of populations, a movement of populations, and there are literally thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people even in my State, even in Colorado, who have moved there recently as a result of population pressures in the States from which they came, California, Florida, Texas and others, those population pressures brought on by immigration. So even though it may not be specifically immigrants in Colorado that caused the massive sort of problems we have with growth, they are exacerbated by our immigration policies nationally which do affect population trends in States all over the Nation.

With this major influx of people comes an influx of problems for United States citizens. Immigrants, both legal and illegal, are affecting all aspects of life within our society. From influencing our domestic job market causing lower wages for American citizens and even other recent immigrants, to the environment where a surging population means greater stress on our natural habitat, placing a true burden on our welfare system, we are feeling the strains of massive immigration in our economy.

In 1997, the National Research Council calculated the net fiscal cost of public services to immigrants, and I want to stress here, Mr. Speaker, the net fiscal cost, because when we get into this debate about what immigrants produce, what they contribute to the society as to what they take from the government services, there is always a debate about this, because we say, after all they come here, they get jobs, they pay taxes, that is true. But when they calculate the net fiscal cost of public services to immigrants, that is, after those taxes are paid and when we include education, welfare, Medicaid, housing assistance and Social Security beyond what immigrants pay in taxes, it was between 15 to $20 billion a year.

Now we are being asked to shoulder the burden placed on the economy of our current massive levels of immigration. In California, for example, each household must pay $1,178 a year in added taxes to cover the services which immigrants receive each year. Then there is the issue of poverty. We address that almost daily in the Congress of the United States. In every committee this issue comes up over and over again. We are now wrestling with all of the appropriations bills and we are constantly dealing with the issue of the poverty rate in the United States and we are fighting it. We are attempting to do what the government can do to reduce poverty levels in the United States. But it is the fact that a great percentage of this, of the group that we identify as being in poverty in the United States, far over a majority, as a

matter of fact, are recent immigrants to the United States, again both legal and illegal.

Why is that? For one reason, over 300 of the legal immigrants who enter the country have less than a high school education as was pointed out by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH). Likewise, the unemployment rate for people with less than a high school education is twice as high than for those with more schooling. I will tell you, also, there is another difference. I mentioned earlier there is a significant difference between what is happening in America today and what happened in America at the turn of the century with regard to immigration. When you came to the United States in 1900 as an immigrant, you had very few options in terms of what you were going to do for the rest of your life. You could work, or you could starve. There were no other options available to you. And in order to work, in order especially to progress in an upward way in order to go up the scale in America, to get a better job, to do better for your family, you had to do something else. You also had to learn English. It was an absolute necessity. It was not brought about because of any law. Well, it was a law, it was a law of economics. That is to say, if you wanted to do better in the United States, you had to learn English and you had to get a job.

Well, things are different in the United States today because of the welfare system we have in the United States, which is, by the way, bad for native-born Americans just as it is bad for immigrants, because of our insistence on issues like bilingual education and a type of bilingual education that allows children to actually try to go to school and be educated in a language other than English, and for a variety of other reasons we find ourselves looking at this immigration issue much differently than we did in 1900. It has an impact, a much more negative impact than it ever did before. One-third of the yearly immigration population is competing for jobs with a sector of society that is already plagued with high levels of unemployment.

Let us look at what is happening in our schools. Currently, there are 8 million school aged children with immigrant mothers. The influx of immigration is having dire effects on the ability to educate our children. In Los Angeles, for example, nearly two-thirds of the children in Los Angeles County schools are Hispanic and 43 percent of school children in California have parents who are immigrants. What does this mean? Well, it means, of course, larger classes. More children receive less attention. It means that precious resources for books, classroom space are being strained to the breaking point, trailers having to make do where classrooms once stood. It means a diversion of funds into remedial programs and away from the programs of hard science, math and history. It leads to racial separation between and among schools. There are significant problems we face because just the cost of bilingual education in this country is dramatic. Certainly in my own State we have noticed that the costs of supporting a bilingual education plan in several of our districts have caused school districts to come forward and request more funds time after time after time. This is not even talking about the value, the relative value of bilingual education which I would certainly like to critique, because I do not believe it is of great educational benefit.

It is not just the numbers, Mr. Speaker. That, we could deal with. The fact is that yes, we will have to build more schools; yes, we will have to hire more teachers; yes, there will be pressures for greater and greater resources to address the issue of more people. But then it is what happens even afterwards, in the development of, as I say, these bilingual programs and multicultural programs that have a tendency, unfortunately, I must say this, have a tendency to balkanize America. That is the other difference between the kind of immigration patterns we saw in the early 1900s and immigration patterns today. Instead of pressures within the United States to amalgamate the people who were coming here and bring them into the melting pot, instead of having a great desire on the part of most if not all of the immigrants in the early 1900s to become part of the American experience in every single way, we are seeing something else happening with recent immigrants to the United States, in that their desire is, of course, to achieve an economic level of existence that is comparable to what we would call the typical American experience, but something happens in terms of the willingness on the part of a lot of people to accept the greater American dream. We see a tendency to balkanize America, to break ourselves up into separate little enclaves, separated by language and culture.

This has a number of detrimental effects, of course. I hope that we will have the courage to address them as we get into the greater issues of immigration policies in America. But I think they are significant and I think most people in America know to what I am referring. I am referring to this phenomenon that changes the way we think about ourselves as Americans, as opposed to one Nation, one set of ideas, one historical perspective, to a Nation totally divided into a number of different camps with different ideas about American history.

I think we should cut back, and I think we should cut back dramatically on the number of immigrants which we are allowing into the country and we should do that through the implementation of legislation such as the moratorium bill of the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP). We would better serve these immigrants by enabling them to have a better chance of achieving employment. Likewise, with less numbers of total immigrants these new arrivals to the United States would have an easier time of assimilating into their new society and the future American citizen. I agree with my colleague from Texas who indicated that perhaps a different group of immigrants ought to be identified as appropriate for immigration into the United States, and that being better educated.

There is one last issue I want to address, and, that is, the issue of immigrants and crime. Criminal aliens, that is, noncitizens who commit crimes, accounted for over 25 percent of the Federal prison population in 1993. I want to say that again, Mr. Speaker, because I do not think many people realize this. But criminal aliens, noncitizens who commit crimes, accounted for over 25 percent of the Federal prison population in 1993. They also represent the fastest growing segment. This does not count naturalized immigrants who commit crimes. About 450,000 noncitizens have been convicted of crimes and are either in American jails, on probation or on parole. In May 1990, foreign-born criminals comprised 18 percent of the inmates passing through the LA County jail inmate reception center. Some 11 percent had offenses sufficiently serious to qualify them as deportable aliens. A year later, in May 1991, a follow-up study showed only half of those deportable aliens had been returned to their country of origin.

□ 2045

Over 40 percent had already been rearrested in the United States for new offenses.

This is a result of a massive immigration problem and an immigrant policy, an immigration policy of this administration that chooses to ignore some of the most significant problems, the most significant crimes committed by people even before they come into this country. We do not go through their backgrounds, as we used to, and we end up with this kind of a problem in the United States.

I know in Colorado that a significant portion of the Colorado inmate population is made up by immigrants, both legal and illegal. The costs, again, of this kind of thing have to be added to the costs of education, costs of welfare, other costs of social services. So it is a significant issue.

The last, Mr. Speaker, and I mentioned that was the last thing; there is one more thing, Immigrants To The Public Charge. According to law, legal permanent residents are liable to be deported on a public charge if they use public benefits during their first 5 years in the United States, and although actually millions of people do this, only 41 people were deported on these grounds from 1961 to 1982.

Another issue is children under the birthright citizenship provision who are born in the United States and are automatically American citizens entitled to cash payments under the Federal Aid For Families With Dependent

Children program. Parents who often are illegal aliens are able to collect these checks, gain a foothold in the United States until their child turns 18, at which point they can be sponsored and made legal immigrants. The IRS makes no effort to prevent illegal aliens from receiving earned income tax refunds, which are sometimes payable even if no income tax is due and can exceed $2000. If a false Social Security number is used, an IRS agent will then assign a temporary number.

Well, these are some of the more egregious examples of the problems that we experience as a result of massive immigration into this country, Mr. Speaker; and I do hope that my colleagues will pay attention to them and will try to address them both by reducing the number of legal immigrants and by enforcing that with stricter policies on the border with using, if necessary, with using the Armed Forces of the United States to protect our borders which, as a matter of fact, is a perfect reason for having an Army, and that is to protect your borders, and in this case we need that protection against a flood of immigration of illegal immigrants that are seriously jeopardizing the situation in America today.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION AGREEING TO CONFERENCE REQUESTED BY SENATE ON H.R. 3064, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. LINDER (during special order of Mr. TANCREDO), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106–395) on the resolution (H. Res. 333) agreeing to the conference requested by the Senate on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3064) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 71, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2000

Mr. LINDER (during special order of Mr. TANCREDO), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106–396) on the resolution (H. Res. 334) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 71) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

A NEW VISION FOR RUSSIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss Russia, the current problems that we are seeing unfold in Russia, discuss consistent with the hearings that are being held in the Committee on International Affairs and the Committee on Banking and Financial Services and other committees of this Congress, the Committee on Government Reform, what impact, if any, the U.S. has had in the current economic and political turmoil inside of Russia and the former Soviet States.

Let me say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that I have discussed many times on this floor in the past, and I do not just come here tonight to criticize this administration, although some of my comments will appear to do just that. I come to offer some suggestions for perhaps a new way of dealing with Russia. In fact, what I come to offer tonight, Mr. Speaker, is a new vision for Russia, a new way that this country can relate to the people in Russia who have been dominated by a centrally-controlled Communist regime for 70 years and for the last 6 years or 7 years actually by a government that was totally focused on Boris Yeltsin and the people around him.

Mr. Speaker, I want the same thing for the Russian people that the President wants, and that is a stable, free democracy, a free market system allowing the people of Russia to enjoy the benefits that we in the West and we in America enjoy. I want them to be trading partners of ours; I want them to reap the benefits of free markets; and I want them to become a partner with us in helping to ensure world stability. From my position as chairman of the National Security Research Committee, my job is to oversee $38 billion a year of defense spending for new weapon systems and new technologies, and money of those technologies and much of that investment is focused on threats, either perceived or real, coming from Russia and the former states. So it is my interest, as a subcommittee chairman, to try to find ways to work with Russia so that perhaps we can create a more stable relationship, not have to spend so much of the taxpayers' money on building exotic new weapon systems that are designed to kill people.

Let me say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, I think we made a fundamental mistake in 1991. The Russia that people were so excited to throw off communism, they were so happy to finally be able to have the opportunity to enjoy the kind of democracy and free market capitalism that they saw us enjoying in the West. And in those first few months we were so excited with the leadership provided by Boris Yeltsin. And all of us were solidly behind him at the time, that I think we forgot one very important and basic notion, that Russia's success as a democracy was not dependent upon one man. It was not going to depend upon Boris Yeltsin, but rather we should have focused on upon helping Russia establish the institutions of a democracy that would last beyond one person.

If we look at America, we can see that quite evident in our history. Yes, we have had great leaders from George Washington, to Abraham Lincoln, FDR, Ronald Reagan, all good people. But America's success is not based on individual people and the work that they do. It is based on the institutions that allow our government to have a system of checks and balances. It is based on a Constitution. It is based upon the institutions mandated in that Constitution that allow people to assume positions, but that the institution can never be circumvented by those individual people.

In our rush to help Boris Yeltsin, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that our focus was wrongheaded. We were so preoccupied with reinforcing Boris Yeltsin, the man, that we forgot that Russia could not and would not succeed and become more stable unless we focused on institutions and strengthening those institutions.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise to me that for 7 years, as Boris Yeltsin called the parliament in Russia, the lower house, the State Duma, and the upper house, the Federation Council, repeatedly called them a bunch of misfits and rogues and crooks and thugs, and while there may be one or two in that Duma or perhaps more that would fit those categories, what we did as a country was reinforce Yeltsin's notion of what the Russian Parliament was, that it was not an institution to be taken seriously. And, therefore, the President, largely through his policies of reinforcing Boris Yeltsin, sent a message to the Russian people and to the elected leaders of the state Duma that America's policy was based on a strong Yeltsin and that we were not, in fact, concerned with helping to strengthen the institution of the state Duma and the Federation Council and those institutions that would allow Russia's Constitution and the Russian government to stabilize itself. And now we are paying the price for that, Mr. Speaker.

Yeltsin's popularity in the most recent poll in Russia is 2 percent. In fact, one poll had him being disliked by the entire electorate, which is something I cannot believe, that everyone in Russia that would be polled would say that Yeltsin was not good for Russia as a nation and that, in fact, he should be replaced.

But the most recent poll that I see, provided by one of our think tanks here in Washington, showed Yeltsin's acceptance rate in Russia at 2 percent. Now that leaves us as a country that has been Russia's closest partner in this new experiment in democracy as a country that has totally reinforced