violent criminals to recommit their crimes. A typical molester will abuse between 30 and 60 children before they are finally arrested and the danger to other children eliminated. More shocking, a recent survey conducted by the Washington Post found that each pedophile in the survey had molested an average of 300 innocent victims. Even one more victim is too many, and the Two Strikes and You're Out Child Protection Act will aggressively curb sexual abuses and assaults.

With the emergence of the Internet, children are even more vulnerable to sexual predators. Luring children across state lines has become even more prevalent as a result of the Internet. In this world where state lines have less meaning to our everyday lives, we need a concerted, national effort to combat this perverse threat. The Two Strikes and You're Out legislation does exactly that, not by creating more cumbersome crimes or by removing the role of the states, but by strengthening the penalties for crimes already on the books.

As a state legislator, I worked tirelessly to pass a piece of legislation called the Tyler Jaeger Act. The bill helps California law enforcement officials combat child abuse by strengthening the penalties against individuals who commit child abuse that results in the death of a child. My goal in passing this legislation was to provide a greater level of protection for our children. As a form of child abuse, sexual assault is among the saddest of crimes that can be committed, largely because the victim is defenseless. With high recidivism rates, we know that pedophiles will repeat their crimes until we get them off the streets. Just like Tyler Jaeger gave California new tools to fight child abuse, H.R. 4047 will provide federal law enforcement with a greater ability to remove these threats from society. Supporting this bill is the least we can do for all of our children. I urge my colleagues to vote for this important tool.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this legislation offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Child sex offenders are justly condemned by our society as being the worst kind of criminal. The bill being considered today reminds us that perhaps our policies dealing with them do not fully match our rhetorical reproach.

The proposal we will vote on today represents the tough approach that must be taken if we are to succeed in reducing sex crimes against our children. An examination of the issue tells us that pedophiles are more likely than virtually any other type of criminal to repeat the same offense—yet the convicted pedophile currently spends on average less than three years behind bars.

We have got to do better than that. Child sex offenders ruin lives. They are predators with no conscience. The defenseless children upon whom they prey must deal for the rest of their lives with the scars left by a child sex offender's cowardly actions.

We must do more to keep these pedophiles off our streets and away from our children. This bill clearly takes a significant step in this direction through its provision of tougher sentences for repeat offenders, so I thank my colleague from Wisconsin for his efforts on this matter, and join him today in advocating its passage.

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

□ 2200

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4047.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## ILLEGAL PORNOGRAPHY PROSECUTION ACT OF 2000

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4710) to authorize appropriations for the prosecution of obscenity cases.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4710

*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 ''Illegal Pornography Prosecution Act of 2000''.

**SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice for fiscal year 2001 not to exceed $5,000,000 to be used by the Criminal Division, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, for the hiring and training of staff, travel, and other necessary expenses, to prosecute obscenity cases, including those arising under chapter 71 of title 18, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4710.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT) be permitted to control the time, and I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Oklahoma.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT) for yielding this time to me, but, more importantly, for his leadership in combatting the serious problem of child sexual abuse and pornography in this country, particularly the explosion that has taken place with the advent of the Internet.

The Internet is one of the most wonderful developments that we have experienced in the history of this country and the history of mankind. It allows people the opportunity to learn, to experience new things, to have educational opportunities, business opportunities, opportunities to shop on-line. We want people to use the Internet. We want them to feel safe in doing so, but one of the biggest businesses on the Internet is that of obscenity, of hardcore pornography.

There are thousands of sites, estimates range from 40,000 to 100,000 sites. And the gentleman's legislation is designed to provide the resources to law enforcement to combat this problem. He has been very supportive of efforts that I have initiated to combat this by giving grants to local law enforcement agencies.

This $5 million goes to the Department of Justice for funding for the child exploitation and obscenity section of the Department. The monies would be authorized only for prosecutions under title 18, chapter 71, obscenity.

Federal statutes make it illegal to transport obscenity. Obscenity has been defined by the Supreme Court and is not protected by the first amendment. The amount of material on the Internet is growing exponentially.

Law enforcement was doing a pretty good job until a decade or so ago of working with postal authorities and so on to deal with this, of shutting down some adult book stores in many parts of the country. It was a battle that we were in some respects winning.

The Internet has changed that. The feeling that some people have that they are so anonymous they can be in their home viewing this material creates a serious problem, and it is a problem that is not simply a matter of looking at pictures of women under certain circumstances. It is pictures of children engaged in sexual activities, best described to me by a law enforcement officer who said that child pornography is viewing a crime in the process of being committed.

It is entirely appropriate that we devote these resources to this. The prosecutions for obscenity have dropped dramatically over the last 8 years. The excuse used by the Justice Department is they do not have the resources. Let us change that today by making sure that they have adequate resources to prosecute these people who would prey on our children.

Estimates are as high as 400,000 children who are victims of child pornography in this country. I urge my colleagues to support this excellent legislation.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I

rise in opposition to H.R. 4710. It purports to add $5 million to the Department of Justice's 2001 budget for prosecuting obscenity cases. However, in reality, if the bill passes, it probably does not mean any new money to the Department to be used for this purpose. Rather it likely means that money already appropriated to the Department, of that money $5 million must be devoted to prosecuting obscenity cases.

We are told by the Department prosecutors that this would mean that they would have $5 million less to prosecute other serious crimes, such as sexual exploitation, such as child pornography, and other serious crimes which may be a priority now in order to pursue adult obscenity cases.

As the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), my colleague, says, the bill restricts the $5 million to obscenity cases, which may not include child pornography, and certainly does not cover child exploitation, nor drug conspiracies, nor organized crime, nor repeat sexual abuse, sexual molestation cases, like the bill that we just finished with would have had, which we could clarify to make sure that these kinds of cases could be covered; but we are under the suspension of the rules and amendments are not allowed.

Congress should not be managing the Department activities to this degree of detail. But even if we did, it makes no sense to prioritize adult obscenity prosecutions which are allowed under this bill over sexual exploitation and child pornography prosecutions.

Rather than making an assessment of the Department of Justice's funding, which they would need to prosecute all serious crimes, including obscenity cases, we are now taking this potshot approach which prioritizes certain politically popular cases of the moment at the expense of prosecuting more serious offenses, including other offenses against children. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to vote no on this bill.

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

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT).

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Illegal Pornography Prosecution Act introduced by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT), my friend. I want to commend the gentleman for introducing this important piece of legislation, because it addresses a growing and serious problem in our communities today, the proliferation of illegal hard-core pornography.

Mr. Speaker, pornographic, obscene material is illegal. It has no protection from the first amendment, nor does it deserve it. Hard-core pornography appeals to the darkest side of humanity, and it debases the value and dignity of human life.

Yet under the current administration, and this is the reason we need to specify, we have allowed obscenity to thrive in the streets of America. In fact, trading of this horrid material has grown exponentially in the last few years because of the new medium of the Internet.

Let me repeat, pornography is illegal; yet it is thriving in America today.

Mr. Speaker, this must change. H.R. 4710 authorizes $5 million in funding for the child exploitation and obscenity section of the Department of Justice. It is unconscionable that, while the current administration pays lip service to the concerns of millions of parents and families, their actions show a total disregard for common decency.

The lack of prosecution has been so noticeable that in the last few years that the adult entertainment industry has acknowledged that it has had years of benevolent neglect from the Justice Department.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. The children and families of America deserve better. My own hometown of Greenville, South Carolina, has recently waded through the disturbing discovery of patrons viewing pornography in the public library and inviting and even forcing children to view the disgusting material as well.

After documenting the widespread and serious nature of the problem, the library board has taken strong and proper measures to curtail the abuses and to protect children in our community. But this illegal material should not even be available to the public in the first place.

Pornography is illegal, and it should be treated as such; and those who trade in this illicit material should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The Justice Department already has the authority to prosecute on-line and off-line obscenity. It has had the general, if not specific, resources to do it. It has heard congressional concern on this issue for years, and it has done nothing. In fact, there has been a precipitous decline in the prosecution of cases.

With H.R. 4710, the administration can no longer use the excuse that it does not have enough money. Congress with this bill is declaring that continued lack of action is unacceptable. We demand that the administration protect our children and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 4710, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this important bill.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for yielding the time, as we may disagree on the merits of this bill, because I am one of the sponsors of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT) for his leadership on this legislation, and I rise in support of H.R. 4710. What this bill really does is it allows the Department of Justice to keep pace with the challenges posed by the Internet. Everyone is aware of the explosion of the Internet, the explosion of Web sites on the Internet, and with the aggressive marketing tactics of the adult entertainment industry.

Obscene material is being brought into our homes of millions of American families, without their request or without our consent.

Why is there obscenity, and why are we placing the emphasis on this legislation and why is it necessary? Because no one can even be sure of how many sites exist. Estimates range that those sites are from 40,000 to 100,000. These sites feature all types of obscenity from child nudity to graphic sexual depictions. Adult entertainment sites on the Internet account for the third largest, it is the third largest sector of sales in cyberspace with an estimated $1 billion to $2 billion per year in revenue.

Clearly, these Web sites have no incentive to regulate themselves or to restrict access by minors. Innocent adults and minors are increasingly encountering these sites. In fact, these sites are often used in spam e-mail and technical manipulations to trap someone in the site on-line, and they may not even need to escape while they are on-line. Also as the Committee on Commerce noted in some hearings that we had this year, in the past because of sophisticated, yet easy to use navigating software, minors who can read and type are capable of conducting Web searches as easily as it is to operate a television in their own home.

The $5 million that we authorize with this legislation provides essential service for the Justice Department to prosecute obscenity cases on the Internet and elsewhere. Obscenity is not protected speech, and it should not be protected just because we do not have the money to prosecute it. This bill will give it the authorization to put forth $5 million to begin the crackdown on Internet obscenity.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LARGENT), my friend and colleague, to support this legislation that will fund this very important fight. I would hope that we would all support H.R. 4710, the Illegal Pornography Prosecution Act.

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

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

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to strongly support this, and I understand that our job is to set priorities for the administration. There is no question in the debate that this has not been a priority for the administration.

They have said that this has not been a priority, and no matter how much money we send to the Department of Justice, it behooves us to direct the spending of that money in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I want to relate a couple of things to my colleagues. I delivered a 9-year-old child of a baby, 9 years old, pregnant and delivering her. I want to tell my colleagues that that is never going to be and never will be a positive circumstance. The kind of actions that brought about that situation are the very actions that we are trying to get the Justice Department to look at, to follow the law and to prosecute the law.

The problem is much greater than we would say, because if, in fact, we look on the Internet today, under stop AIDS, we will find information under that category that is funded by our own CDC that lists how you participate in S&M sex. Also in that same area, it shows the same type of obscenity that we are paying for with our tax dollars to do that.

So the question is, this bill does not go near far enough. This should just be the first step as we attack this attack on our children.

□ 2215

The other point that I would like to make, if this is an addictive procedure, we are big about protecting our children from tobacco, we are big about protecting our children from alcohol, we are big about protecting our children from drugs, we are big about talking about the violence that our children are seeing, but we are not big when it comes to one of the things that can undermine their future more than any other thing.

So where is our priority? If we are really concerned about our children, then we ought to be concerned about every aspect that will undermine their future. This is one of, if not, the largest threat facing our children today, and I would hope that we would all support this legislation.

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

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

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

I serve on the subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations that funds the Department of Justice, and on March 8 of this year in the routine annual testimony, Attorney General Janet Reno came before our committee and I asked her specifically to answer six questions about the issue of illegal pornography. She could not answer the questions in person, so she asked for time to answer in writing.

Today is July 25, and I have not heard the first word, the first answer, from the first question. I think that is unfortunate, because I do think this is an issue that we should in a bipartisan way meet at the water's edge. This is like national security, it is undermining, I think, the foundation of our country. I think it is important.

People may say is this one set of people trying to impose their values on another set of people? And I would say there is a differential between pornography which is protected under the first amendment and illegal pornography, the way it is defined under Supreme Court rulings. There is a difference.

This is the stuff we are all supposed to not approve of because it is illegal, and we are not prosecuting it, and the referrals are coming. All this says is it is time to make this a priority, because it is a cancer in our culture.

We are in an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity, but people know there is a deeper issue here. These things cannot be good. As a matter of fact, this is the darkest side of humanity, and we need to draw a line and say it is not right, it is not just, it is a cancer, and this entire country of ours will fall and collapse on the weight of this kind of cultural flaw.

The Word itself, the Good Book, says be wise as serpents, yet innocent as doves.

We need to root this out, and we need to prosecute it in the United States of America for the next generation.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, for a long time this has been a concern of mine, and I do not know if we are approaching this in the right direction, but I do say that this is an important step, and I support this legislation.

We always could do more. We always could be more precise. We will never find out unless we try. This initiative provides $5 million to the Criminal Division Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section to hire and train those individuals who will be able to prosecute cases that would arise under the chapter 71 of title XVIII.

When we did the Telecommunications Act some few years ago, one of the concerns was how would we stop obscenity on the Internet or on the computer system? Unfortunately, at that time we had difficulty in passing legislation. In fact, I believe the Supreme Court overturned some legislation that we did include in that omnibus bill.

We did manage to pass the V-Chip, which deals with television viewing, so parents could have control over their children and what they watch. Unfortunately, the Internet, the computer, is a vehicle and a tool that children are often using alone.

What I am concerned about is there is a whole range of obscenity and pornography. There is the enticing of children through the Internet. I know that this legislation does not particularly deal with that, but I do think it is important for this Congress to go on record that we oppose the manipulation of our children and pornography concepts that our children may be exposed to as they are attempting to learn on the Internet.

The Internet should be a learning tool for our children.

I might just say my good friend from Oklahoma, who mentioned the Clinton Administration, I would hope and think that the administration is not opposed to fighting pornography on the Internet and would welcome this legislation.

For that reason, let me say that I support the legislation, and as a co-chair of the Democratic Task Force on Children, I believe all of us should be concerned about issues such as this and find a way to make the first step and then look to make legislative initiatives better, but to take the first step.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me just make a couple of closing comments. We have heard a lot of comments about obscenity is illegal and child pornography is illegal. The bill, unfortunately, restricts the use of this money to obscenity cases, not child pornography cases.

Now, if we had a hearing and a markup, maybe we could cover what we want to cover, and I assume we are trying to cover child pornography. But you cannot use the $5 million to prosecute child pornography, because it is restricted just to obscenity.

We heard the case of the 9-year-old mother, and obviously there is somebody out there that ought to be prosecuted for rape. This bill is restricted just to obscenity. You cannot use the money to prosecute those rapes.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have $5 million. It has got to be taken out of something. Nobody said we ought to be prosecuting organized crime less or child rapes less or drug conspiracies less. They have not said that we ought to spend $5 million less on that. Obviously the money has to come from somewhere. It is not going to be additional money, because we have already had the appropriations bill pass the House.

So I would hope that we would not get into the minutia of the Justice Department budget and take money from an area, when we have not said where it is coming from, particularly when it could be coming from the prosecutions that we wanted prosecuted, like child pornography, which is illegal, but which you can use this money for.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, there is a cancer in our culture today, and it literally is corroding our national character. The problem of illegal pornography is a cancer, eating away at America. Unless we begin to aggressively treat this cancer by prosecuting it as the law says and intends, it will continue to attack our marriages, our children, and our society.

It used to be that we were concerned about the dirty little bookstore down

at the end of the street and the problems of criminal behavior and declining property values associated with it. Now the aggressive marketing tactics of the pornography industry have brought such material directly into the family rooms, our schools, our libraries, and offices of millions of Americans.

Do we think the social costs and community problems associated with those adult book stores have diminished just because it is on the Internet? Absolutely not. Instead, they have become more internalized and more destructive and more pervasive because of their accessibility, their affordability and the fact that you can now be anonymous. That is the nature of illegal pornography on the Internet today.

So what is the extent of the problem? Well, as has been mentioned already, estimates range somewhere between 40,000 and 100,000 Web sites are pornographic in nature today, and 200 new Web sites are created each day devoted to pornography, most of it illegal pornography, or ''obscenity'' as the legal term of art. Adult entertainment sites on the Internet account for the third largest sector of sales in cyberspace, with an estimated $1 to $2 billion per year in revenue on the Internet alone.

It is a well-known fact that the largest consumer group of this pornography is young boys ages 12 to 17 years old in this country. In fact, the average age of exposure because of the Internet has fallen to the age of 11. Illegal pornography is teaching an entire generation of young men distorted values about their sexuality, about marriage, about healthy relationships with women and respect for others. Rapists, for example, it has been found, are 15 times more likely to have had exposure to hard-core pornography during childhood.

So what exactly has the Department of Justice done in response to this epidemic, this cancer, in our culture? Prosecutions of obscenity have dropped over 75 percent since 1992, this at a time when pornography has become ubiquitous in our culture today, giving a false sense of legitimacy to the pornography industry. In fact, there have been porn industry people that have actually gone with public offerings now on the stock exchanges. The Department of Justice has turned a blind eye to this cancer, allowing America's children to be bombarded with obscenity.

In a Committee on Commerce subcommittee hearing in May of this year, the Department of Justice said that the prosecution of obscenity has not been a priority for them. In fact, it was suggested that if we gave them $50 million more, that they still would refuse to prosecute obscenity. So money is not the issue. It is the fact that this is not a priority. They stated that in the subcommittee hearing that I participated in and actually called for.

Furthermore, they could not name a single major distributor or producer of obscenity, although most Americans access these sites accidentally by searching through innocent key words on the Internet. This at a time when we would like to sit here in Congress and say well, you know, the real producers and purveyors of pornography, they are not from this country. But that is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I would tell you that the facts are that America is the leading producer and promoter of pornography in the world today, in the world. We are leading in producing material that is degrading towards women, and yet the DOJ was unaware of even one major producer.

But what does the adult industry say about the Department of Justice's turning a blind eye? Here is what Adult Video News said, a trade magazine for the porn industry. They reported in 1996, ''There have been fewer Federal prosecutions of the adult industry under Clinton than under Reagan and Bush. With no reason to change his hands-nearly-off porn policy, vote for Mr. Clinton.''

In March 1998, following just six obscenity prosecutions in 1997 by all 93 U.S. Attorneys, the same magazine announced, ''It's a great time to be an adult retailer.''

In March of this year, the Adult Entertainment Monthly, another publication for the porn industry, mused over how unlikely it is that the adult entertainment industry will enjoy the same ''benevolent neglect'' under the next administration that the industry has enjoyed under Janet Reno.

Lieutenant Ken Seibert of the Los Angeles Administrative Vice Unit, quoted in the Los Angeles Daily News, stated, ''Adult obscenity enforcement by the Federal Government is practically nonexistent since the administration changed in 1992.''

Porn video distributor David Schlesinger told TV Guide in 1998, ''President Clinton is a total supporter of the porn industry, and he's always been on our team.''

These are not my quotes, these are not Republican quotes, these are the quotes from the porn industry itself. Just today a porn industry legal analyst stated, ''On the Federal side the industry has not seen a Federal prosecution in years.'' That is what the porn industry legal analyst said.

H.R. 4710 is important. It is an important first step towards prodding the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section to prosecute obscenity and also holding them accountable to do so. H.R. 4710 authorizes $5 million in funding for the Child Exploitation and Obscenities Section of the Department of Justice for the prosecution of obscenity exclusively.

Obscenity is illegal under Federal law. Obscenity has been defined by the Supreme Court. Obscenity is not protected by the first amendment, and the vast majority of Americans believe obscenity laws should be vigorously enforced.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 4710, which is a vote to prosecute obscenity, to uphold the law, and to protect our children from illegal pornography.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4710.

The question was taken.

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 2230

## CONGRATULATING PEOPLE OF UNITED MEXICAN STATES ON SUCCESS OF DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS HELD ON JULY 2, 2000

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 544) congratulating the people of the United Mexican States on the success of their democratic elections held on July 2, 2000.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 544

Whereas the United States and Mexico have a long history of close relations and share a wide range of interests;

Whereas the people of the United States and the people of Mexico have extensive cultural and historical ties that bind together families and communities across national boundaries;

Whereas a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Mexico is of vital importance to the security of the United States;

Whereas a close relationship between the United States and Mexico, based on mutual respect and understanding, is important to the people of both nations;

Whereas Mexican leaders from across the political spectrum and representatives of civil society recognized the need for political and electoral reform and took important steps to achieve these goals;

Whereas on July 2, 2000, nearly two-thirds of all eligible voters in Mexico participated in the national election;

Whereas both domestic and international election observers declared the July 2nd elections to be the fairest and most transparent in Mexico's history;

Whereas the election of Vincente Fox marks the first transition in power at the presidential level in 71 years from the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), completing Mexico's transition to a total multi-party democratic system;

Whereas Vincente Fox, the winning presidential candidate, and Ernesto Zedillo, the current president, have both pledged themselves to a peaceful and cooperative transition of power; and

Whereas this transparent, fair and democratic election should be broadly commended: Now, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the people and Government of the United Mexican States for the