

There was no objection.

EMINENT DOMAIN DISASTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, you can never satisfy government's appetite for land or money. They always want more.

Today the Federal Government has taken and controls over 30 percent of the land in this Nation. States and local governments and quasi-governmental units have taken and control another 20 percent. Tremendous amounts of land in my home area of east Tennessee have been taken by numerous Federal agencies and departments. Not all of this is bad, but people in government have never been sensitive enough about taking other people's property. They just do not seem to realize how much this can hurt a person or a family. In fact, very few people get concerned about this until it is their land or their home that is being taken.

Fortunately, this has not happened to me or my family, and I am not on some personal vendetta, but many people in east Tennessee have had this heartbreaking experience happen to them. These people were for the most part people like many of my ancestors, good, intelligent, hard-working people, often poor, often with not a lot of education, but people with common sense, and often smarter in reality than the elitist do-gooders who came in and used the power of the Federal Government to take their homes.

To show how much this can hurt, I would like to read a letter that was published in the Knoxville News this past Sunday from a man who no longer lives in my district, but whose family home was in my district. This is the letter from John Webb of Gainesville, Georgia, a man whom I have never met.

He wrote, "In the spring of 1964, there was a storm that hit Marion County, Tennessee, that resembled the recent storms of Katrina. It left behind people who were devastated and lives that were changed forever." He says, "I was only 12 years old at the time and was on a camping trip with the Boy Scouts when I was told that I had to go to the hospital to see my father. There was a good possibility that he would not live through the night.

"The name of the storm was the Tennessee Valley Authority; my father had a stroke during a battle with the government agency which had condemned his farm of 110 acres on the Tennessee River.

"A panel of judges decided during the next 12 months of deliberation that the offer made by TVA to purchase my father's farm for \$240 per acre was indeed too low and that it should pay the outrageous sum of \$400 per acre.

"Court records show that the TVA experts stated under oath that this

property had no present or future value as anything but farmland."

Mr. Webb continues, "Even as my father lay in bed completely paralyzed on his left side from the stroke, unable to be present at proceedings, the court system granted TVA its wish, using the power of eminent domain.

"With the simple stroke of a pen, my father's farm was gone, completely against his will.

"Left behind was a woman with two teenagers to raise, a husband who required 24-hour medical care at home, and a future that looked as bleak as those victims of the hurricanes."

"For the next 3 years," Mr. Webb writes, "we learned a lot about bed sores, bed pans, and what it was like for a once proud man to lose his health and his humility.

"My father finally succumbed to pneumonia, and my mother lived for another 20 years with the aid of family, friends and Social Security.

"I still wonder about how all of our lives would have been different if it had not been for the power of politics and money. John E. Webb of Gainesville, Georgia."

Mr. Speaker, if we do not wake up and realize how important private property is both to our freedom and our prosperity, we are going to destroy our Nation. Politicians love to create parks, and this sounds so good, but when we continue to take more and more private property, we have to continually raise taxes on the property that remains in private hands, and we drive up prices on that remaining land. More and more young people cannot then afford homes, or they have to be jammed together in high-rises, condos or homes on postage-stamp-sized lots. In addition, the government cannot and does not take as good of care of land as private owners do.

We need to put more people in office who understand how hurtful it is when government takes property and takes people's homes and farms, and we need to put more people in office who will pledge to take better care of the land government already has and stop government land grants and give poor and lower-income people a chance to own property and appreciate this very important part of the American dream.

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REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2744, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. PUTNAM, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109-257) on the resolution (H. Res. 520) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2744) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural

Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes at this time.

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

There was no objection.

URGING CONGRESS TO MAKE WISE BUDGET CHOICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, since 2000 this Congress has racked up more than \$3 trillion in additional new debt, and by the year 2008, we will cross the \$4 trillion mark. Why? It is trying to do something that no other Congress and no other President has ever tried in American history. It is trying to fight two wars with four tax cuts. This Congress has served as an ATM machine to the special interests, showering them with billions of tax breaks and tax shelters and handouts of the hard-working tax dollars of the American people.

Yet suddenly our Republican friends are finding themselves as fiscal hawks. In fact, right now the House is working to slash more than \$50 billion from education, health care, environmental programs, all that are important investments for the American people. Why? So they can do another \$70 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent in America.

At the same time that these so-called fiscal conservatives are complaining about the deficit, they are trying to add a total of another \$100 billion in tax cuts to the special interests.

I ask my colleagues, are these the right choices for the American people? We are now paying \$445 billion to date for the war in Iraq, \$20 billion to rebuild Iraq. We just have a spanking new dam in Mosul, Iraq, with all of the levees, yet we cut the Corps of Engineers here in the United States, which affected the levee in New Orleans.

In fact, we built 110 primary health care centers in Iraq, vaccinated 3.2 million children in Iraq. This Congress cut \$10 billion from Medicaid, cutting Medicare programs, cutting back community health care clinics in the United States and training of doctors.