

THE OMINOUS OMNIBUS BILL

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. At 3,500 pages, 34 pounds, members of the minority had roughly 1 day to review its contents. Mr. Speaker, here comes the bus. But the American people don't want this Congress to get on. Last night, the House passed a massive omnibus spending bill that gives deafening evidence that this government is broken. This budget process is broken.

I want to commend men and women of good will in this Congress who improved this bill along the margins, but \$515 billion without a penny for Iraq is wrong and evidence that the budget process is broken. \$515 billion with \$10 billion in budget gimmicks and hundreds of unexamined earmarks gives evidence that this budget process is broken.

President Reagan said it 20 years ago from this podium. He said: "The budget process is broken down; it needs a drastic overhaul. With each ensuing year, the spectacle before the American people is the same as it was this Christmas." He added: "Budget deadlines delayed or missed completely, hundreds of billions worth of spending packed into one bill, and a Federal Government on the brink of default."

The more things change in Congress, the more they stay the same. Say "no" to the ominous omnibus bill.

OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL ADDRESSES INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

(Mr. CUELLAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the passage of this year's omnibus appropriation bill which covers 11 appropriations bills that were passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year. The omnibus appropriation bill includes language from my bill, H.R. 2431, the Border Infrastructure and Technology Modernizations Act of 2007, which authorizes appropriations for a nationwide strategy to address infrastructure needs at the land ports of entry.

The language from H.R. 2431 that was included in the homeland security section of this bill requires an assessment to study to identify ports of entry infrastructure and technology improvement projects to minimize border-crossing wait times at our Nation's ports of entry. I worked in a bipartisan way with my cosponsor of this legislation, Congressman REHBERG, and I want to thank him for his leadership on this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to give my sincere thanks to the chairman, Mr. OBEY, of the House Appropriations Committee and Chairman PRICE for including this language.

FINAL OMNIBUS BILL IS A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST

(Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we need a tear-down reform of our national health care system. But until we do that, we have an obligation to fund the providers and institutions that make our system work despite the system. That is why I am so proud of the budget passed by the House last night.

President Bush's budget would have required cuts of 800 grants for medical research at the National Institutes of Health. He would also cut programs that provide access to health care by \$595 million and rural health care initiatives by more than 50 percent. We rejected those cuts last night in a bipartisan fashion. We approved a bill that included \$607 million above the President's request for critical medical research. And we approved money for community health centers so that they can provide access to 280,000 more uninsured Americans. Finally, we approved \$147 million above the President's budget request for rural health care for those critical access projects.

Mr. Speaker, the health of the United States is stronger today because of the budget we passed last night.

THE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today the House will be voting on the Energy Independence and Security Act. With this legislation, the new Democratic Congress is leading America in a new direction on energy policy, the most significant energy bill in a generation. We are taking a major step toward ending our dependence on foreign oil by increasing efficiency standards for cars and trucks for the first time in 30 years. This will reduce America's need for oil by 1.1 million gallons per day, cut millions of tons of global warming pollution, and save families up to \$1,000 every year.

The bill implements landmark energy efficiency standards for appliances, lighting and buildings, which will save American families and businesses billions of dollars in unnecessary energy costs. Finally, the bill boosts the production of environmentally protective home-grown bio-fuels such as cellulosic ethanol.

We can and we will do more: promote solar, wind and other renewable energy sources, for example. But this legislation finally begins to address high gas prices, America's oil addiction and the global warming crisis. It will help cre-

ate hundreds of thousands of jobs in clean energy technologies. So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting a new direction of energy. Vote for H.R. 6.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF CONGRESSWOMAN JULIA CARSON

(Mr. ELLSWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in sadness, but also to honor the life and memory of the gentlewoman from Indiana that passed this week, Congresswoman JULIA CARSON. JULIA will be remembered as a political trailblazer, a tireless advocate and dedicated public servant to the people of Indiana.

Her life was a shining example of the power of the American Dream: rising from the humble beginnings of poverty and segregation to become a leading champion for civil rights, women's rights and the working poor in this House. She leaves behind a legacy of standing up for those most vulnerable among us. But most of all, JULIA accomplished what we should all strive to do. She left the world a better place than what she found it. She will be deeply missed by this House, by me, and by the people of Indiana. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends during this difficult time.

PRESIDENT BUSH IS OUT OF TOUCH WHEN HE SAYS THE AMERICAN ECONOMY IS STRONG

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has to get out of the White House a little more often so that he can see firsthand how average Americans are struggling to make ends meet during this holiday season. Over the past 7 years, the President has presided over an economy in which the poverty rate has gone up and household incomes have gone down. The average family is making less today than they did last year, while at the same time, everyday costs for food, home heating oil, gas, college tuition and health care skyrocket out of control.

Former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan voiced concern this weekend that the economy may be heading into a recession early next year. Despite all of these warnings, President Bush stood before the American people and proclaimed that the American economy was strong and pointed to the tax cuts of his first term as a reason for this strong economy.

Well, the President needs a reality check. It is time for the President to recognize that the struggles of average working families are here to stay and he needs to check them out. Together,