

NORTH ST. VRAIN PROTECTION
ACT

HON. DAVID E. SKAGGS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 20, 1995

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am again introducing a bill to protect North St. Vrain Creek, the largest remaining roadless canyon along Colorado's Front Range. This bill was almost enacted last year when it was approved by the House and reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Unfortunately, the full Senate did not have time to consider the bill before the end of the session.

This legislation will prevent construction of new dams on the North St. Vrain Creek as it flows through Rocky Mountain National Park and the Roosevelt National Forest, and will clear up public land ownership along the creek. The North St. Vrain should be kept free of additional dams and impoundments for all times. This is some of the best meeting of land and water we have in Colorado—and that is saying a lot.

The bill incorporates the recommendations of a citizens' advisory committee, which I appointed in conjunction with the Boulder County Commissioners, and which spent over 5 years developing a consensus proposal on how to protect the creek and canyon while protecting local property and water rights.

This bill represents an astonishing amount of work by Coloradans—especially the 50 people who took part in 103 advisory committee meetings and performed over 300 hours of independent research. Another 600 people attended 12 public hearings on the proposal. With the work that is already been done by all these people to produce this consensus, I hope it will be possible to move this bill through Congress quickly and early in this session and not disappoint them again.

The legislation would prohibit any Federal agency from approving a new dam or reservoir on the North St. Vrain Creek or its tributaries in Rocky Mountain National Park, or on the main stem of the creek below the park and above Ralph Price Reservoir, in the Roosevelt National Forest.

The advisory committee originally recommended prohibiting dams just on the stretch of the creek below the park. However, at a special town meeting I held in Allenspark, CO, to hear comments on the advisory committee's recommendation, I received suggestions that the prohibition on dams also apply within the national park. After getting agreement from advisory committee members, I agreed that the change is an improvement.

To some, I suppose this prohibition might appear to be redundant to existing national park protection. However, dams are not currently prohibited in the national park, just as they are not in the national forest. With the inevitable pressure to supply more water for the Denver metropolitan area, it is possible that there will be new proposals for smaller water supply projects all along the Front Range to meet future urban water needs. As recently as 1979, the city of Longmont considered building a dam on the North St. Vrain Creek that would have inundated part of Rocky Mountain National Park. And, in the early 1980's, we had to deal with the proposed Coffintop Dam on

the South St. Vrain. That is why it is important to prohibit dams on this wild stream.

The bill also would direct the National Park Service to negotiate with the city of Longmont to acquire the city lands that would have been used for the city's now-abandoned plan for a dam. The lands are located within the park boundaries but not owned by the Federal Government. Another provision of the bill would direct the Forest Service to pursue negotiations for a proposed land exchange involving other Longmont lands in Coulson gulch, along a tributary of the creek in the adjoining national forest.

This legislation itself is the heart of a larger package of policies and agreements that will protect the distinctive natural features of this area, while assuring the continued enjoyment of privacy and productivity by local landowners and water users. I will again seek to win committee approval of report language, recommended by the advisory committee, to clarify various points.

The North St. Vrain Creek is located 20 miles northwest of Boulder. It is the primary stream flowing from the southeastern portion of Rocky Mountain National Park, arising in snowfields near Longs Peak, and tumbling through waterfalls and cascades in the Wild Basin area of the park. After leaving the park, the creek cuts a narrow, deep canyon until it reaches Ralph Price Reservoir. To watch and listen to the creek's falls, either in the park or downstream in the forest, is to stand silent in wonder—not just because it is difficult to be heard above the roar, but also because just watching and listening to the water is the best of conversations.

The watershed includes habitat for bighorn sheep, deer, elk, peregrine falcons, flammulated owls, and mountain lions. It also provides popular hiking, fishing, and hunting terrain relatively near some of Colorado's larger cities.

I introduce this legislation not only with a belief in the importance of protecting the North St. Vrain, but also with a firm conviction that the hundreds of Coloradans who have worked on its protection have crafted a sound and effective consensus. This is a good bill, a clear and simple proposal, which has strong support among the people in the area.

SPEECH BY HEATHER HIGGINS

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 20, 1995

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, this speech by Heather Higgins was delivered at the Progress and Freedom Foundation's Conference on Democracy in Virtual America, held on January 10, 1995. Heather Higgins is a senior fellow at the Progress and Freedom Foundation and the executive director of the Council on Culture and Community in New York. I commend it to my colleagues.

Regarding the balanced budget amendment, I would commend to all of you a piece that Milton Friedman had in the Wall Street Journal earlier this week, pointing out that not all balanced budget amendments are equal, that some are singularly pernicious, if they do not have the necessary constraints attached.

I would hope that we would have a balanced budget, and a balanced budget amend-

ment, if it is so written, should be part of a shift in the underlying philosophical premise—one of several that I expect we will see—to accompany this change in thinking, this third wave.

We are rediscovering the understanding that it is not ethical to expect some future generation to pay for you, that the moral thing to do is to pay your own way as you go. And so, within that context, I expect that we will be balancing our budget.

There are other ethical and philosophical shifts which I think will accompany that. Another thing that I think you'll see increasingly discussed in line with this is a flat tax proposal. The reason being that I think that you're going to see a redefinition of what constitutes fairness. Fairness will no longer be taking more money from some people that you do from others because they have more, but fairness will be that all dollars are taxed the same, and it is up to you to decide how much you're doing to earn, and therefore, how much you're going to pay.

That goes hand in hand with another idea: judge programs by their results, not by their intentions. The intentions of a progressive tax, for example, are well-intended, but the results are not necessarily, in terms of revenue, what one would hope.

Similarly, in terms of most of our welfare programs, we have judged people by the policy of good intentions, and the politics of good intentions. In part, I think it is because the left has always assumed that with sufficient will, anything can be changed. And so, it becomes a question of having enough will, enough good intention. And that's part of the reason that people who don't share that will and that intention are castigated and vilified so thoroughly. They are clearly obstructing the progress that is inevitable.

A third area where you could see real change in the underlying philosophy, and I certainly hope that we will, is that you will see that all Americans are treated first as Americans, not as members of groups, not as members of economic classes or particular races or genders. But we have to go back to the idea that we are all Americans, and that this is a land of possibility. And it is stupid to have higher taxes on one group than on another, because ultimately, we are not a static society.

And we need to return to that notion that we are all equal as citizens.

That all falls within the context of a reemphasis on the civil society. I think that you're going to find that reemphasis taking place, in large part, because the understanding is going to come about that capitalism can never have a human face. No economic system can. No government can. Only human beings can have human faces. And that radically will shift how we structure our activities and our organizations.

So, for example, I think that one of the most exciting facets of this change to a third wave is the Jeffersonian vision which required a small community to function when he was writing, now becomes technically possible in a much larger society.

You also will find, for example, within that vision, a shift away from the ideas of entitlements and rights, which are not, and never have been rights at all, to an idea of moral obligation, which is a much higher calling. And I think that that is where your human face will start to come in.

And you will find, too, that compassion will be properly defined as an individual activity, not as a societal or governmental activity which, by definition, becomes a contradiction in terms, and as far from compassion as one can possibly get.