Mr. Speaker, let me close by also pointing out that 18 State legislatures have passed medical savings accounts legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. Mr. Speaker, 68 million Americans already have access. We need to bring the rest of them in.

□ 1045

DO NOT KILL THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I am not here to speak about medical savings accounts, but I do have to respond to the gentleman from Florida.

Saying that Democrats who voted 2 or 3 years ago for medical savings accounts, in effect, support the medical savings account proposal today is like saying NEWT GINGRICH supports the Democratic agenda because he voted for one small piece of it.

I supported the Democratic health care plan 3 years ago, in which medical savings accounts were a very small piece of a very big puzzle, in which also there was guaranteed health care for all citizens as opposed to the present proposal, which is incremental, deals only with small numbers of the population, and medical savings accounts are the one piece that will sink the package that people do agree on. So there is a total difference.

Let us talk about something else that I have great concern about what the Gingrich leadership is doing because, Mr. Speaker, I ask you this: We just saw the basketball finals, the NBA finals. If you are heading into the playoffs, you have a tough schedule ahead of you, you are 2 to 2 in the series, would you pull Michael Jordan at that point? Of course, you would not.

Then why is it if we have an agency, a department, that has generated 80 billion dollars' worth of export contracts for the United States and created jobs, why would we then try to bench the Department of Commerce? And yet that is exactly what the Republican leadership intends to do in reform week that is coming up in the next few weeks.

That is right, they want to take apart the U.S. Department of Commerce, which, under Secretary Ron Brown and now Secretary Mickey Kantor, for the first time is really performing a valuable mission. What is the mission? To create jobs. To create jobs in America.

That is why I am coming to the floor today, to urge my colleagues now to rise up and to say, no we do not want to kill the Department of Commerce; we do not think we ought to, in the interest of saying we broke up an agency or a department, that we should move all these different departments around and shift boxes on the flow chart and thus take away the central element, the ability to coordinate our economic recovery efforts.

Because I think it is important to look at what the Department of Commerce does. First of all, the Department of Commerce works in partnership with local businesses and governments to provide much-needed infrastructure. I think everyone here has seen the benefits of an economic development administration enterprise, whether a grant for water and sewer or for a feasibility study.

I know in my own State of West Virginia, for instance, we have seen millions of dollars come in from EDA grants that has generated millions and millions of dollars worth of jobs in industrial parks and businesses. Because remember what EDA does, EDA only funds, in most cases, where it is a job-creating venture, where you create jobs as a result of it. We have seen $15 billion of EDA investment over 30 years, not only create infrastructure but to create jobs.

There is more that the Department of Commerce does. The National Weather Service. I think everybody has seen that firsthand and the need for that. That is economic development, too, because the farmer knows to protect his or her crops, the businessperson knows to get their equipment up on pallets because there is going to be flooding. The more advanced notice they get, the better they can plan their deliveries, plan their shipments. That is the National Weather Service.

There is more that the Department of Commerce does. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which provides grants to educational, health care, public safety, and social service agencies. All crucial activities. How about the International Trade Administration that many of our small businesses use? That is the one way that they get into the export market. Exports create jobs. The ITA in West Virginia as well as across the country is creating those jobs.

I talked to one small businessperson in my home just this last week who said that 40 percent of their business now comes through ITA-generated export opportunities. What do they want to do? They want to break this up and move it around. It makes no sense.

The Foreign Commercial Service, those are our hustlers out in every embassy. We do not have enough of them, but they want to move them someplace else. Makes no sense. The Department of Commerce has generated since 1992 more than $80 billion in foreign contracts for American businesses. That is Secretary Ron Brown going out with CEO's of major Fortune 500 companies and others as well nailing down those contracts and Secretary Mickey Kantor now doing the same thing.

We have the Advanced Technology Program, 220 public-private partnerships, joining more than $1.5 billion of Federal and private funds.

Mr. Speaker, I am urging businesses across the country now to let their Members of Congress know this is not a good idea. You do not pull Michael Jordan in the middle of the game, and you do not pull the Department of Commerce in a time when we are facing increased, not decreased, increased international competition.

I hope the CEO's of those Fortune 500 companies will stand up and say, yes, we do happen to think the Department of Commerce is important, and I hope all those who understand the importance of the Department of Commerce realize the next few weeks are crucial to saving this agency.

THE FBI FILE SCANDAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1996, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to talk about a topic which is not new in the press, but I think I would like to talk about it in a little different way. I want to talk about how we are looking at the file scandal that affects our Government.

Many in the press and in this Congress have focused their attention on the actions of the White House staff with regard to the FBI files. They are correct to ask why the White House was rooting through most of this confidential and secretive information about hundreds of private citizens and whether the President's staff was digging for dirt on political opponents.

However, I believe that the media and the Congress are failing to adequately question the role for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this matter. The FBI has been given tremendous responsibility by this Congress to investigate criminals and guarantee the security of our country. There is no excuse for the FBI to allow the White House staff to request highly confidential files without even asking the White House why they needed them. The FBI handling of this matter appears to me to be very irresponsible and negligent. This Congress needs to seriously question the FBI's role in this whole matter and how the agency would allow this breach of confidentiality.

Mr. Speaker, it really is not any wonder that so many Americans have lost faith with their Government when the most powerful investigative agency can be used to snoop around in the private lives of American people for no apparent reason. And I refer to a recent editorial in the Wall Street Journal which talks about an FBI agent who was, until 2 months ago, the top FBI agent working in the White House, and when he raised questions about the White House personnel security office and its director, Craig Livingstone, this FBI agent was transferred out by his superiors. I think that is a question that needs to be answered by this Congress.

In addition, we are now learning that these files may have contained IRS information about the individuals, and if we go back to the post-Watergate era, we know that this Congress passed laws to protect that from happening again. There are, indeed, some Members left in this Congress from the post-Watergate era and certainly to them the actions which they took to try to protect the rights of the American people from having their very sensitive and secret tax files made available for political reasons needs to be investigated.

The chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means has suggested that felonies may have occurred in the handling of these files at the White House, and I think we have every right to look into that. We know that there is no good reason that anyone at the White House has any need to be involved and looking through the files, the IRS files, of people who may need entrance or clearance to visit the White House. No one, I would repeat, no one, is authorized to look at taxpayers' files and they should not at the White House think they have that right.

Now, I believe that Attorney General Reno, and I commend her for seeking someone outside of her department to investigate themselves in this matter, but that is a pretty shrewd move politically also, because Ms. Reno knows that once Mr. Starr is authorized to look into this matter, that that will probably prevent this Congress from holding hearings, this Congress from calling Mr. Livingstone up here and answering to us what his actions were about.

Initially, I think that Ms. Reno's efforts to broaden the inquiry were well received, but I am not sure that the American people or that any of us ought to sleep very comfortably knowing that we are going to be frozen out of the process of looking into this matter.

WE MUST FIND A WAY TO REDUCE THE POLARIZATION AND RACIAL CONFLICT IN OUR SOCIETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, this House was so shocked by church burnings in recent weeks that it last week passed a bill to add to Federal law enforcement authority, and I want to commend the gentleman from Illinois, Chairman HYDE, and the gentleman from Michigan, ranking member CONYERS, of the Committee on the Judiciary, for the leadership they took and also Chairman CONYERS for the Congressional Black Caucus hearing that shed additional light on this matter, including the need for prevention.

In my years as a youngster in the civil rights movement, I never saw this kind of systematic racist church burning. This House's response does it honor. A few high-profile prosecutions are now in order, but, Mr. Speaker, I have come to the floor because I want something more.

Martin Luther King would have wanted us to use his life amidst the polarization and balkanization that has contributed to these burnings. I come to the floor to call the House's attention to two events and to two people, both youngsters, who deserve the notice of this House. One is Billy Shawn Baxley, a 17-year-old white youngster who has confessed to burning a church; and the other is Keshia Thomas, an 18-year-old black girl who saved a pro-Klan white man at an anti-Klan rally a few days ago. Both are reported in the papers, and I know nothing more than what the papers tell me, but the Nation ought to know more.

In the small rural community of East Howellsville, NC, Billy Shawn Baxley, 17 years old, burned the church across the road from him, and he confessed on television. People in the community said, well, he did not know what he was doing, he is only a kid. The State's attorney said he was not willing to concede that race was not involved. The youngster could have burned a McDonald's; he burned a church. But the response of the two churches involved is what deserves special notice, and I want to tell it unvarnished by reading from the New York Times.

> He confessed to it in a televised interview. On Thursday night the teenager and about 12 members of his white church, Zion Tabernacle Baptist Church, joined about eight members of the Pleasant Hill congregation for bible study at the church that Mr. Baxley is accused of setting ablaze. After an hour of singing and scripture, the group stood in front of the pews, held hands and prayed. Mr. Baxley wiped a tear from his eye after prayer, and several members of both congregations hugged him and said they forgave him.

This is a story out of these tragic racial burnings that deserves the mention and the notice of Americans throughout this country. It is in the tradition of Martin Luther King. It reminds us that after the prosecutions are over, we are still one people, and we have to find a way to reduce the polarization and the racial conflict in this society.

□ 1100

Then perhaps you saw this picture; this young woman was interviewed on television last night. Keshia Thomas was a protester against the Ku Klux Klan at a Klan rally. There a white man who had a Confederate flag on his jacket and who appeared to support the Klansmen came forward. The crowd lunged at him and started to beat him. It looked as though they might beat him to death.

This is 18-year-old girl did what Martin Luther King told us must be done, except she was not here when he lived or when he died. Her instinctive decency was such that she threw herself on the racist white men and fended off those who were beating him. Finally, taking blows herself, they moved back and then she got up with him and led him away.

She was no admirer of this man, but she was a decent human being. She said, and I quote her, ''Just because you beat somebody doesn't mean you are going change his mind.'' She has not had time to develop a very deep philosophy, but what she is is a decent black girl who happens to be a decent American.

These two youngsters, the 17-year-old who could not hold the crime in himself and confessed on television and the 18-year-old black girl who could not bear to see a man beat to death because of his views, these are the heroes of this ordeal. These are the people who have learned from it.

STEAL AMERICAN TECHNOLOGIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRABACHER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the remarks that we just heard from my colleague from Washington, DC. I thought they were articulate. I thought they were from the heart. I think they speak to every American that we should be standing together for those principles of decency and honor and love that should be the basis of the relationship between free people. Let us hope that there will not be racists that need to be protected and that we do not have to protect ourselves from church burnings and crowds because that will be exorcised from the hearts of every American. That should not be there in the first place. I thought those remarks were something to touch the hearts of all of us and help that process and make for all of us a better country.

Today we need to stand together as never before as Americans, whether it is black or white or yellow or whatever race or ethnic background, because America is under attack as never before. We went through the cold war and we stood together. Now we are facing a world of economic competition. Our national well-being and the rights of the American people are under attack in a more insidious way.

There will be a bill that will reach this floor shortly after the 4th of July called H.R. 3460. It is the Moorhead-Schroeder Act. I like to call it the Steal American Technologies Act because it will, if passed, result in the greatest rip-off of American technology in the history of this country and leave our people with a declining standard of living. They will never know what hit them because the fundamental rules that have provided us our technological superiority over our economic adversaries and, yes, over our military adversaries is being changed to the detriment of the United States.

Again, most Americans will not understand what hit them. Even today it