The extension of MFN to other Eastern European nations has already occurred, and it is time for us to extend MFN to Romania as well.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAUGHLIN. Mr. Speaker, following 3 years generations of Communist regime, Romania for the last 5 years has struggled to implement a deliberate program of converting to a free market system. Its new democratic government realizes that critical to reaching that goal is the privatization of its industry through passage of new laws, broadened investment policies, and proliferation of international economic partnerships. U.S. businesses can and should be significant in this economic transformation now in progress.

The result of Romania privatization is the systematic updating and upgrading of all its productive means, from the farm yards to the steel mills; and each industrial change presents opportunity for American engineering, technology, and management to become ingrained in that new system. Most-favored-nation status for Romania flashes to American business that final unmistakable signal of governmental encouragement for participation in and development of this burgeoning new market for United States products.

Additionally, Romania realizes that its new found industrial emphasis will require significant infrastructural modernization and a number of new facilities. These projects will demand large infusions of outside professional and technical services, materials, equipment, and technology, as well as realistic financing innovations. Until now, American efforts in these areas have been overshadowed by European and Asian companies; however, that is beginning to change. Most-favored-nation status is the final step in demonstrating deep American interest in Romania.

Today, a consortium of United States firms named Motorways U.S.A., which includes several Texas enterprises, is in direct negotiations with the Government of Romania for design, construction, operation and maintenance of its first toll road facility. Romania has enthusiastically welcomed this initially attempt by United States companies to provide by partnership dramatically different approaches for solving its most pressing needs.

This willingness to venture out and to rely on what, by Romanian standards, are novel and innovative free market techniques as impetus for its new market economy, exemplifies that certain willingness and dedication which will make Romania a long-term trading partner with the United States. This has been key in convincing me that now is the time to give Romania permanent most-favored-nation status and urge you to join me in doing so. A vote for this resolution is a vote for American jobs, favorable balance of trade, and increased American economic presence in Central and Eastern Europe.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 3161 which would confer permanent most favored-nation [MFN] status on the country of Romania. A vote on this critical piece of legislation now would seriously hamper any efforts by the prodemocratic forces in Romania to continue to reform the Government and improve Romania's human rights record.

Among all of the former Communist bloc countries in Eastern Europe, Romania has made the fewest advances toward greater liberty and openness since the transition period began. The Hungarian minority, for example, suffers immensely from limited freedoms and constant discrimination. Today, a new education law has been implemented which prohibits the teaching of most subjects in minority languages. In addition, an ethnic Hungarian citizen, Paul Cseresznyes, has been in prison for 6 consecutive years on political grounds with no hope of release in the near future.

The preservation of basic human rights, which we take for granted here in the United States, has not received due respect in Romania. Freedom of speech is constrained as journalists work under the ever-present shadow of harassment by the Romanian intelligence service. And, during the recent local elections, objective observers expressed some concern about the administrative competence of election officials.

Much of the blame for this delay can be laid at the feet of the regime currently in power. In voting for permanent MFN status today, we, as a leader of the Western World, are also ratifying the Romanian Government's actions to date. We cannot allow ourselves to be oblivious to the broader message that approval of H.R. 3161 sends. A decision is best made only after Romania's presidential and parliamentary elections in December, when it reaffirms its commitment to democratic reform. Romania should be given credit for beginning the transformation to an open society in the wake of its Communist past, but permanent MFN status from this country is not the best means of doing so.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CRANE] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3161.

The question was taken.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5, rule I, and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3161.

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

There was no objection.

FEDERAL OIL AND GAS ROYALTY SIMPLIFICATION AND FAIRNESS ACT OF 1996

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1975) to improve the management of royalties from Federal and Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leases, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1975

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Simplification and Fairness Act of 1996''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

Section 3 of the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act of 1982 (30 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (7) to read as follows:

''(7) 'lessee' means any person to whom the United States issues an oil and gas lease or any person to whom operating rights in a lease have been assigned;''; and

(2) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (15), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (16) and inserting a semicolon, and by adding at the end the following:

''(17) 'adjustment' means an amendment to a previously filed report on an obligation, and any additional payment or credit, if any, applicable thereto, to rectify an underpayment or overpayment on an obligation;

''(18) 'administrative proceeding' means any Department of the Interior agency process in which a demand, decision or order issued by the Secretary or a delegated State is subject to appeal or has been appealed;

''(19) 'assessment' means any fee or charge levied or imposed by the Secretary or a delegated State other than—

''(A) the principal amount of any royalty, minimum royalty, rental bonus, net profit share or proceed of sale;

''(B) any interest; or

''(C) any civil or criminal penalty;

''(20) 'commence' means—

''(A) with respect to a judicial proceeding, the service of a complaint, petition, counterclaim, cross claim, or other pleading seeking affirmative relief or seeking credit or recoupment: *Provided*, That if the Secretary commences a judicial proceeding against a designee, the Secretary shall give notice of that commencement to the lessee who designated the designee, but the Secretary is not required to give notice to other lessees who may be liable pursuant to section 102(a) of this Act, for the obligation that is the subject of the judicial proceeding; or

''(B) with respect to a demand, the receipt by the Secretary or a delegated State or a lessee or its designee (with written notice to the lessee who designated the designee) of the demand;

''(21) 'credit' means the application of an overpayment (in whole or in part) against an obligation which has become due to discharge, cancel or reduce the obligation;

''(22) 'delegated State' means a State which, pursuant to an agreement or agreements under section 205 of this Act, performs authorities, duties, responsibilities, or activities of the Secretary;

''(23) 'demand' means—

''(A) an order to pay issued by the Secretary or the applicable delegated State to a lessee or its designee (with written notice to the lessee who designated the designee) that has a reasonable basis to conclude that the obligation in the amount of the demand is due and owing; or

''(B) a separate written request by a lessee or its designee which asserts an obligation due the lessee or its designee that provides a reasonable basis to conclude that the obligation in the amount of the demand is due and owing, but does not mean any royalty or production report, or any information contained therein, required by the Secretary or a delegated State;

''(24) 'designee' means the person designated by a lessee pursuant to section 102(a) of this Act, with such written designation effective on the date such designation is received by the Secretary and remaining in effect until the Secretary receives notice in writing that the designation is modified or terminated;

''(25) 'obligation' means—

''(A) any duty of the Secretary or, if applicable, a delegated State—