

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am very delighted today that in an act of positive and effective bipartisanship the energy and water appropriations bill was passed by this body.

Now, many would ask what a technical bill like that has to do with the real nuts and bolts of the quality of life in this Nation. Well, first of all, it has to do with our highways and byways that are water directed. It has to do with protection of our communities against the tragedies of flooding. It has to do with the edification and beautification of our river banks and our bayous and, yes, it has to do with protecting us from the tragedies of the wrong type of disposal of nuclear waste, which in many instances is sometimes used for our medical care.

At the same time, this legislation was particularly special to a group of people in my community in the 18th Congressional District, and I would like to thank some community activists, ministers in and around the Sims Bayou area, particularly around Martin Luther King and Cullen Boulevards, James Brooks a community activist, and Reverend Kyles, along with many other ministers and community leaders who for a long time, and continue to at this time, fought to get some response to the terrible flooding that was going on in their community.

I remember distinctly in 1994, as a city council member, traveling streets by boat that heretofore had not seen any more water than a slight puddle in a yard because it had been watered too much. But unfortunately, in a very heavy rainstorm, many of their homes were flooded out. Now, what I should most compliment is how that community came together, with churches opening their doors and with people gathering clothes and food. They rose up in the time of tragedy and adversity.

Another problem that they faced, however, was, unlike areas that flood regularly, many of those homes did not have flood insurance so many of the people were left devastated. That was 1994. And since that time, we have seen three or more times that that same area has flooded.

With their energy, we took the bull by the horns, and just this past winter, in a terrible flood, we were out there walking those bayous with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Harris County engineering group for flood control, and other local citizens and officials, and we said that this is something that we need to do a lot about.

Those community leaders were undaunted by the task of trying to get Federal funding, more of course, working with local government cooperatively and giving comfort to their citizens who one more time this past winter had been flooded again. Even as I walked the bayou, I could see fences that had been knocked down not by wind but by storm waters.

Now, after working with them and the Army Corps of Engineers, rather

than go backward, we are very glad to have gone forward with the \$3.5 million added as the completion of what the Army Corps of Engineers asked for to reach the particular area of concern around Cullen and Airport and Martin Luther King Boulevards, in particular in the 18th Congressional District. This \$3.5 million will have us going forward and not backward.

But the tribute goes to those citizens who worked very hard. Many times we hear our constituency base ask, "I send money to Washington and it seems like it takes wings and goes off somewhere." Many times they complain about the spending that goes on in this body and elsewhere. The only spending that should go on, we hope, will be to enhance their quality of life.

I am delighted that these citizens maintained the course, and I will continue to work with them so that we can jump-start this project, so that it completes itself way before 2006. We will work with Harris County, we will work with the city of Houston, and we will work with these activists who have not sold their homes in desperation but they have continued to live there. And we will work with FEMA, who still has not been able to consider their claims. But most of all we will congratulate them on their hard work.

I would also at this time, Mr. Speaker, like to acknowledge another activist, but an activist in Christianity, in the Christian experience. Bishop N.H. Henderson, Sr. has served in the ministry for some 50 years, pastoring six churches. He now pastors Law Memorial in Houston.

He has shared his life with his wife, he has shared his life with his family, but most of all he has shared his life with his community. The community of Houston, particularly in the 18th Congressional District, owes Bishop N.H. Henderson, Sr. a great deal of gratitude for the 50 years that he has given to us, for the 77 years that he has lived, for the 60 years of his Christian experience, and for the 50 years of his gospel ministry.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to very quickly pay a special note of sympathy to the family of Judge Norman Black. We lost him this past week, a cheerful and thoughtful jurist, someone who gave of his life, but most of all treated all mankind and womankind with human dignity. My sympathy to his family and the community who mourn his death.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. COBLE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. COBLE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. UPTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. UPTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mrs. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. SMITH of Washington addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FOLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ON BALANCING THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a very important issue facing this Nation: It is the growing debt that faces this country. Today our debt stands at \$5.3 trillion, \$20,000 for every man, woman, and child in the United States of America.

To begin this discussion, I think it is very important that we understand the difference between balancing the budget, that is, reducing the deficit to zero, and paying off the debt. The deficit is the part we talk about out here, and it is important to understand that the deficit is the overdrawn checkbook. When Washington talks about balancing the Federal budget, what they are actually talking about is not over-drawing their checkbook anymore.

What has been going on since 1969 is, every year the Government collects taxes out of the American people's pockets and it puts it in their checkbook and then the Government writes out checks. But it writes out checks for more money than they have in their checkbook. We all know in our houses that would not work and it does not work out here.

So what it is they do when the checkbook is overdrawn, is they go and borrow the amount of money the checkbook is overdrawn. The result of that borrowing is what is shown in this chart. It is the growing debt facing this great Nation that we live in.

From 1960 to 1980 the debt did not grow by very much, but from 1980 forward they started overspending by a lot, and they started borrowing lots of money, and that is why the debt is growing as fast as it is. And we can see it in this chart. As a matter of fact, right now, today, we are at about this point on the chart. And it brings to light how important it is that we deal with not only the deficit but that we