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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 10, 1998.

I hereby designate the Honorable JO ANN EMERSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundegran, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed a bill of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1668. An act to encourage the disclosure to Congress of certain classified and related information.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKY) for 5 minutes.

THE PROJECTED BUDGET SURPLUS

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address an issue which is

of great importance to me: the nearly balanced Federal budget and what to do with the projected budget surpluses. First, let me say that I am extremely pleased at projections which show that the budget is nearly balanced. The most recent figures from the Congressional Budget Office say that by the year end, the Federal budget will not only come into balance but will actually produce an \$8 billion surplus.

While we have certainly made tremendous progress from 1992, when the deficit hit a record high of \$290 billion, more work needs to be done. Even if the deficit does disappear on paper, the budget will not really be balanced since the true size of the deficit is masked by borrowing from the Federal trust funds.

It is estimated that for fiscal year 1998, trust fund surpluses from programs such as Social Security and the Highway Trust Fund will make the deficit appear \$155 billion less than it actually is. Therefore, I believe we must redouble our efforts to make sure that the budget is really balanced without borrowing from the trust funds. If a surplus does occur, I am committed to working for the following three goals:

First, we should take steps to provide for the long-term fiscal health of Social Security, Medicare and other Federal retirement programs without, I would repeat that, without increasing the payroll tax. Under current CBO projections, Medicare is scheduled to run out of funds by the year 2010 while Social Security will start to lose money in the year 2012 and be unfunded by the year 2029.

These glum predictions are not the result of gross mismanagement or because anyone is guilty of stealing money from the programs. Rather, these programs are in trouble because the average American is living longer and because health care costs are rising so fast. Therefore, it is our responsibility to make the tough choices nec-

essary to ensure that these programs can support not only us, but more importantly, our children and the generations that come after them.

Secondly, I believe it is absolutely imperative that we begin paying down the massive Federal debt. Since 1980, the gross Federal debt has grown more than five times in size to nearly \$5.5 trillion. Today, the debt is two-thirds the size of our Nation's gross domestic product and interest payments on the debt consume 15 cents of every dollar in Federal spending. Think about how much better off we would be if this money did not have to be spent on interest payments. At today's average interest rate of 6.7 percent for every \$1 billion in debt we retire, we would save \$55 million each and every year in interest payments.

Most economists say that by reducing the debt and thereby shrinking interest payments, we would reduce interest rates, increase savings rates, keep the tax burden down, and make more money available in both the public and private sectors to continue to fuel economic growth. It will not happen in the next 10 years, 20 years or even 30 years. But if we begin paying off the debt now, eventually we will reduce it to a manageable level so it does not eat up such a large portion of our national output.

Finally, we should be investing more in this country's economic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, inland waterways, sewage treatment plants and airports in order to make American workers and businesses more productive and profitable.

There is little doubt that investing in economic infrastructure has positive benefits for all Americans. Improving roads, updating sewer systems, modernizing airports and making sure our communications system is ready for the 21st century enhances our international competitiveness and helps American workers remain the most productive in the world.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Despite the obvious benefits, many infrastructure projects are not today receiving adequate funds or are simply being ignored. For instance, a 1995 Department of Transportation study found that nearly one-third of the roads in this country are in poor or mediocre condition.

The Department of Defense estimates that it will be at least 12 years before adequate housing can be built for every soldier in the U.S. armed forces.

And in 1996, the Federal Aviation Administration said it would need at least \$33 billion over the next 5 years to meet its capital improvement needs. Yet last year the Federal Government spent only \$1.46 billion for airport development projects.

Madam Speaker, we have a moral responsibility to provide a solid and fiscally secure future for the generations that will follow us.

THE 2000 CENSUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I rise to discuss the current status of the 2000 census.

Most Americans do not realize the size and scope of the decennial census. It is the largest peacetime mobilization of the Federal Government in history. The Census Bureau will hire and train about 500,000 Americans to carry out and conduct the 2000 census.

Under our system of government, we do not consider engaging in such a huge operation that spends billions of dollars without involving the United States Congress. Unfortunately, that is exactly what this administration has decided to do, ignore the Congress.

Most Americans do not know what the dispute over the 2000 census is all about. So let me take a moment to try and explain.

For 200 years we have conducted the census by trying to count all Americans. The fancy term for this is full enumeration. Of course, it is a difficult undertaking to count all Americans, but that is what we have been doing for 200 years. The administration does not want to do that anymore.

They no longer want to attempt to count all Americans. Instead, with the help of experts, they have designed the largest statistical experiment in U.S. history. I do not want to bore everyone with the details, but let me try and give my colleagues a basic outline of this grand experiment.

There are 60,000, 60,000 separate census tracts in the United States, each contains approximately 4,000 people. Under this new, untested theory, the administration wants to count 90 percent of the people in each of the 60,000 census tracts. And then they will use 60,000 simultaneous polls to estimate the other 10 percent in each of the census tracts. That is just step one.

And step two only gets worse. The scope of this experiment is simply breathtaking. When you see a poll in the New York Times or CNN or USA Today, the pollsters normally talk to about 1,000 or so Americans. What this administration is talking about is doing 60,000 separate polls at the same time. It has never been tried before and the potential for mistakes and errors is quite large.

The Commerce Department's own Inspector General said in December, "We can conclude that although the 2000 census design is risky, the Bureau's fundamental problem is that it simply may not have enough time to plan and implement a design that achieves its dual goals of containing costs and increasing accuracy."

The Inspector General goes on to state, "Because this process is long, complex and operating under a tight schedule, there will be many opportunities for operational and statistical errors."

Madam Speaker, I include for the RECORD the report, as follows:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL,
Washington, DC, December 30, 1997.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
*Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: During the Committee's May 14, 1997, oversight hearing on the Department of Commerce, you requested our views on what needs to be accomplished by what dates in order to ensure a successful 2000 decennial census. You planned to use this information as a benchmark to track the progress of the census.

In response to your request, the enclosed paper discusses decennial census milestones and associated risks. This paper does not take into account the recent decision to include plans for conducting the decennial without the use of sampling. The Census Bureau is currently in the early stages of adjusting its scheduling and cost models to reflect that decision, and we will closely monitor and report on the bureau's progress in making these adjustments.

We conclude that although the 2000 census design is risky, the bureau's fundamental problem is that it simply may not have enough time to plan and implement a design that achieves its dual goals of containing cost and increasing accuracy. The problem is evidenced by the decennial Master Activity Schedule—the primary decennial program management tool. The schedule's tightness is due to changing design details, lagging progress in some critical activities, less than full implementation of strategies and procedures, and a continuing lack of agreement between the Administration and the Congress on the appropriate use of sampling.

A recurring theme of this paper is our conclusion that, as a result of its lack of time to complete various aspects of the design, the bureau will need to ask for additional funding, reprogram funds, or accept potential quality shortfalls. To minimize the need for such actions, the bureau should immediately (1) prioritize and assess the readiness of its major design components, (2) simplify the design, (3) realistically reassess costs, (4) communicate results both internally and externally, and (5) redirect the 1998 dress rehearsal accordingly.

We discussed our findings and recommendations with senior bureau managers

who generally concurred. They stated that some planned corrective actions had been delayed by the Fiscal Year 1998 continuing resolution and the recent legislation requiring both a sampling and a non-sampling 1998 Dress Rehearsal. However, the bureau has initiated a comprehensive design review to be completed in January 1998 that is intended to address our concerns. We look forward to assessing the adequacy of those corrective actions.

If you have any questions about this paper, your staff may contact either me at (202) 482-4661 or Jessica Rickenbach, our Congressional Liaison Officer, at (202) 482-3052.

Sincerely,

FRANCIS D. DEGEORGE,
Inspector General.

Enclosure.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL, DECEMBER 1997

2000 DECENNIAL CENSUS: KEY MILESTONES AND ASSOCIATED RISKS

INTRODUCTION

History of Decennial Census Design

The Census Bureau, in consultation with expert advisory panels, "reengineered" census-taking methods to meet the challenges of accurately and cost-effectively counting an increasingly hard-to-count population in 2000. An accurate census is crucial because the Constitution requires that it be used to apportion seats in the Congress. Additionally, census data are used for a host of other important activities, including federal and state redistricting, the implementation and enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, and the distribution of billions of dollars of federal and state funds each year. Because of its centrality to decisions that last 10 years, the bureau must address concerns about the content and method of conducting the census raised by its stakeholders—federal, state, and local governments and a myriad of advocacy groups whose constituents are affected by census results.

The 1990 census was long, expensive, and labor-intensive, a situation exacerbated by a lower-than-expected public response. Because of the low response, the bureau required additional appropriations from the Congress during the census to complete the count. Despite the census' higher cost, post-analysis concluded that the count was less accurate than that of the 1980 census. Particularly alarming to the Congress and other stakeholders was the increase over past censuses in the disproportionate undercount of minorities.

The Congress convened a panel of experts from the National Academy of Sciences to study these problems and recommend actions to address them. In 1994, the panel determined that traditional counting methods alone are no longer sufficient, and recommended that to contain cost and increase accuracy, the bureau use statistical sampling and estimation as an integral part of the 2000 census design. In addition, the panel recommended that the bureau rethink and reengineer the entire census process and operations. The bureau agreed with the panel's recommendations and decided to incorporate sampling and estimation, multiple response modes, updated computing tools, and an improved national address file into the design.

The dress rehearsal, scheduled to begin in the spring of 1998, offers the Census Bureau its first opportunity to test the interrelationships of the various decennial design components. The bureau plans to closely approximate all major decennial components and their supporting automated systems in the dress rehearsal. Only a complete dress rehearsal will allow the bureau and outside