

NOT VOTING—13

Barton	Lofgren	Paul
Carson	Maloney (NY)	Rush
Fossella	Miller, George	Taylor (MS)
Gekas	Mollohan	
Livingston	Ortiz	

□ 1405

So the Senate concurrent resolution was concurred in.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I was unavoidably detained and was not here for rollcall vote No. 18, S. Con. Res. 7, honoring the life and legacy of King Hussein. I would like to enter for the RECORD, that should I have been present for the floor vote I would have voted "yes" on agreeing to this resolution.

PROVIDING FOR ADJOURNMENT OF HOUSE FROM FEBRUARY 12, 1999, TO FEBRUARY 23, 1999, AND RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT OF SENATE FROM FEBRUARY 11, 1999, FEBRUARY 12, 1999, FEBRUARY 13, 1999, OR FEBRUARY 14, 1999, TO FEBRUARY 22, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 27) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 27

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Friday, February 12, 1999, it stand adjourned until 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 1999, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on Thursday, February 11, 1999, Friday, February 12, 1999, Saturday, February 13, 1999, or Sunday, February 14, 1999, pursuant to a motion made by the Majority Leader, or his designee, pursuant to this concurrent resolution, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, February 22, 1999, or such time on that day as may be specified by the Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reassemble pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House and the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the House and the Senate, respectively, to reassemble whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 50) and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 50

Resolved that the following named Members are hereby elected to serve on standing committees as follows:

Committee on House Administration: Mr. FATTAH, Pennsylvania; and Mr. DAVIS, Florida.

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

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL HISPANIC RECOGNITION PROGRAM

(Mr. GARY MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate 18 outstanding high school seniors in my district who are finalists in the National Hispanic Recognition Program.

These students are among 3,600 high school seniors in the Nation selected by the College Board for this honor. They come from the cities of Chino, Ontario, Pomona, Upland, Brea, Yorba Linda, Anaheim, Rowland Heights, and my home city of Diamond Bar. I know that their families and their respective communities are proud of their academic accomplishments and their hard work.

As a representative of the 41st Congressional District in California, I can say we are also proud of them and wish them the best in their college careers.

Mr. Speaker, I include their names for the RECORD. I am sure this is not the last time we will hear from these bright young students.

The scholar finalists are: Arturo Nuno, Naomi Esquibel, Yolanda Robles, Tony Saucedo, Michelle Rodriguez, Henry Artiga, DeAnn Del Rio, Michelle Allis, Erin Freyermuth, Marissa Guerrero, Maria Sequeira, Meredith Garcia, Natalie Alvarado, Michael Espinoza, and Juan Jauregui.

Honorable mention finalists include: Oscar Teran, Gabriel Bustos, and Nick Yanez.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE FOR THE 106TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, pursuant to Rule XI, clause 2(a) of the Rules of the House, a copy of the Rules of the Committee on Agriculture, which were adopted at the organizational meeting of the Committee on this day.

Appendix A of the Committee Rules will include excerpts from the Rules of the House relevant to the operation of the Committee. Appendix B will include relevant excerpts from the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. In the interests of minimizing printing costs, Appendices A and B are omitted from this submission.

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) *Applicability of House Rules.*—(1) The Rules of the House of Representatives shall govern the procedure of the committee and its subcommittees, and the Rules of the Committee on Agriculture so far as applicable shall be interpreted in accordance with the Rules of the House of Representatives, except that a motion to recess from day to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, are non-debatable privileged motions in the committee and its subcommittees. (See Appendix A for the applicable Rules of the House of Representatives.)

(2) As provided in clause 1(a)(2) of House rule XI, each subcommittee is part of the committee and is subject to the authority and direction of the committee and its rules so far as applicable. (See also committee rules III, IV, V, VI, VII and X, *infra*.)

(b) *Authority to Conduct Investigations.*—The committee and its subcommittees, after consultation with the chairman of the committee, may conduct such investigations and studies as they may consider necessary or appropriate in the exercise of their responsibilities under rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives and in accordance with clause 2(m) of House rule XI.

(c) *Authority to Print.*—The committee is authorized by the Rules of the House of Representatives to have printed and bound testimony and other data presented at hearings held by the committee and its subcommittees. All costs of stenographic services and transcripts in connection with any meeting or hearing of the committee and its subcommittees shall be paid from applicable accounts of the House described in clause (i)(1) of House rule X in accordance with clause 1(c) of House rule XI. (See also paragraphs (d), (e) and (f) of committee rule VIII.)

(d) *Vice Chairman.*—The Member of the majority party on the committee or subcommittee designated by the chairman of the full committee shall be the vice chairman of the committee or subcommittee in accordance with clause 2(d) of House rule XI.

(e) *Presiding Member.*—If the chairman of the committee or subcommittee is not present at any committee or subcommittee meeting or hearing, the vice chairman shall preside. If the chairman and vice chairman of the committee or subcommittee are not present at a committee or subcommittee meeting or hearing the ranking Member of the majority party who is present shall preside in accordance with clause 2(d), House rule XI.

(f) *Activities Report.*—(1) the committee shall submit to the House, not later than January 2 of each odd-numbered year, a report on the activities of the committee

under rules X and XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives during the Congress ending on January 3 of such year. (See also committee rule VIII(h)(2).)

(2) Such report shall include separate sections summarizing the legislative and oversight activities of the committee during that Congress.

(3) The oversight section of such report shall include a summary of the oversight plans submitted by the committee pursuant to clause 2(d) of House rule X, a summary of the actions taken and recommendations made with respect to each such plan, and a summary of any additional oversight activities undertaken by the committee, and any recommendations made or actions taken with respect thereto.

(g) *Publication of Rules.*—The committee's rules shall be published in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the committee is elected in each odd-numbered year as provided in clause 2(a) of House rule XI.

(h) *Joint Committee Reports of Investigation or Study.*—A report of an investigation or study conducted jointly by more than one committee may be filed jointly, provided that each of the committees complies independently with all requirements for approval and filing of the report.

II. COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETINGS—REGULAR, ADDITIONAL AND SPECIAL

(a) *Regular Meetings.*—(1) Regular meetings of the committee, in accordance with clause 2(b) of House rule XI, shall be held on the first Wednesday of every month to transact its business unless such day is a holiday, or Congress is in recess or is adjourned, in which case the chairman shall determine the regular meeting day of the committee, if any, for that month. The chairman shall provide each member of the committee, as far in advance of the day of the regular meeting as practicable, a written agenda of such meeting. Items may be placed on the agenda by the chairman or a majority of the committee. If the chairman believes that there will not be any bill, resolution or other matter considered before the full committee and there is no other business to be transacted at a regular meeting, the meeting may be cancelled or it may be deferred until such time as, in the judgment of the chairman, there may be matters which require the committee's consideration. This paragraph shall not apply to meetings of any subcommittee. (See paragraph (f) of committee rule X for provisions that apply to meetings of subcommittees.)

(b) *Additional Meetings.*—The chairman may call and convene, as he or she considers necessary, after consultation with the ranking minority member of the committee, additional meetings of the committee for the consideration of any bill or resolution pending before the committee or for the conduct of other committee business. The committee shall meet for such additional meetings pursuant to a notice from the chairman.

(c) *Special Meetings.*—If at least three members of the committee desire that a special meeting of the committee be called by the chairman, those members may file in the offices of the committee their written request to the chairman for such special meeting. Such request shall specify the measure or matters to be considered. Immediately upon the filing of the request, the majority staff director (serving as the clerk of the committee for such purpose) shall notify the chairman of the filing of the request. If, within 3 calendar days after the filing of the request, the chairman does not call the requested special meeting to be held within 7 calendar days after the filing of the request, a majority of the members of the committee may file in the offices of the committee their

written notice that a special meeting of the committee will be held, specifying the date and hour thereof, and the measures or matter to be considered at that special meeting in accordance with clause 2(c)(2) of House rule XI. The committee shall meet on that date and hour. Immediately upon the filing of the notice, the majority staff director (serving as the clerk) of the committee shall notify all members of the committee that such meeting will be held and inform them of its date and hour and the measure or matter to be considered, and only the measure or matter specified in that notice may be considered at that special meeting.

III. OPEN MEETINGS AND HEARINGS; BROADCASTING

(a) *Open Meetings and Hearings.*—Each meeting for the transaction of business, including the markup of legislation, and each hearing by the committee or a subcommittee shall be open to the public unless closed in accordance with clause 2(g) of House rule XI. (See Appendix A.)

(b) *Broadcasting and Photography.*—Whenever a committee or subcommittee meeting for the transaction of business, including the markup of legislation, or a hearing is open to the public, that meeting or hearing shall be open to coverage by television, radio, and still photography in accordance with clause 4 of House rule XI. (See Appendix A.) When such radio coverage is conducted in the committee or subcommittee, written notice to that effect shall be placed on the desk of each Member. The chairman of the committee or subcommittee, shall not limit the number of television or still cameras permitted in a hearing or meeting room to fewer than two representatives from each medium (except for legitimate space or safety considerations, in which case pool coverage shall be authorized).

(c) *Closed Meetings—Attendees.*—No person other than members of the committee or subcommittee and such congressional staff and departmental representatives as the committee or subcommittee may authorize shall be present at any business or markup session that has been closed to the public as provided in clause 2(g)(1) of House rule XI.

(d) *Addressing the Committee.*—A committee member may address the committee or a subcommittee on any bill, motion, or other matter under consideration. (See committee rule VII (e) relating to questioning a witness at a hearing.) The time a member may address the committee or subcommittee for any such purpose shall be limited to five minutes, except that this time limit may be waived by unanimous consent. A Member shall also be limited in his or her remarks to the subject matter under consideration, unless the Member receives unanimous consent to extend his or her remarks beyond such subject.

(e) *Meetings to Begin Promptly.*—Subject to the presence of a quorum, each meeting or hearing of the committee and its subcommittees shall begin promptly at the time so stipulated in the public announcement of the meeting or hearing.

(f) *Prohibition on Proxy Voting.*—No vote by any Member of the committee or subcommittee with respect to any measure or matter may be cast by proxy.

(g) *Location of Persons at Meetings.*—No person other than the committee or subcommittee members and committee or subcommittee staff may be seated in the rostrum area during a meeting of the committee or subcommittee unless by unanimous consent of committee or subcommittee.

(h) *Consideration of Amendments and Motions.*—A Member, upon request, shall be recognized by the chairman to address the committee or subcommittee at a meeting for a

period limited to five minutes on behalf of an amendment or motion offered by the Member or another Member, or upon any other matter under consideration, unless the Member receives unanimous consent to extend the time limit. Every amendment or motion made in committee or subcommittee shall, upon the demand of any Member present, be reduced to writing, and a copy thereof shall be made available to all Members present. Such amendment or motion shall not be pending before the committee or subcommittee or voted on until the requirements of this paragraph have been met.

(i) *Demanding Record Vote.*—A record vote of the committee or subcommittee on a question or action shall be ordered on a demand by one-fifth of the Members present.

(j) *Submission of Motions or Amendments In Advance of Business Meetings.*—The committee and subcommittee chairman may request and committee and subcommittee members should, insofar as practicable, cooperate in providing copies of proposed amendments or motions to the chairman and the ranking minority member of the committee or the subcommittee 24 hours before a committee or subcommittee business meeting.

(k) *Points of Order.*—No point of order against the hearing or meeting procedures of the committee or subcommittee shall be entertained unless it is made in a timely fashion.

(l) *Limitation on Committee Sittings.*—The committee or subcommittees may not sit during a joint session of the House and Senate or during a recess when a joint meeting of the House and Senate is in progress.

IV. QUORUMS

(a) *Working Quorum.*—One-third of the members of the committee or a subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for taking any action, other than as noted in paragraphs (b) and (c).

(b) *Majority Quorum.*—A majority of the members of the committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for:

(1) the reporting of a bill, resolution or other measure. (See clause 2(h)(1) of House rule XI, and committee rule VIII);

(2) the closing of a meeting or hearing to the public pursuant to clauses 2(g) and 2(k)(5) of the Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives; and

(3) the authorizing of a subpoena as provided in clause 2(m)(3), of House rule XI. (See also committee rule VI.)

(c) *Quorum for Taking Testimony.*—Two members of the committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony and receiving evidence.

(d) *Unanimous Consent Agreement on Voting.*—Whenever a record vote is ordered on a question other than a motion to recess or adjourn and debate has concluded thereon, the committee or subcommittee by unanimous consent may postpone further proceedings on such question to a designated time.

V. RECORDS

(a) *Maintenance of Records.*—The committee shall keep a complete record of all committee and subcommittee action which shall include:

(1) in the case of any meeting or hearing transcripts, a substantially verbatim account of remarks actually made during the proceedings, subject only to technical, grammatical and typographical corrections authorized by the person making the remarks involved, and

(2) written minutes shall include a record of all committee and subcommittee action and a record of all votes on any question and a tally on all record votes. The result of each such record vote shall be made available by the committee for inspection by the public at reasonable times in the offices of the committee and by telephone request. Information so available for public inspection shall

include a description of the amendment, motion, order or other proposition and the name of each member voting for and each member voting against such amendment, motion, order, or proposition, and the names of those members present but not voting.

(b) *Access to and Correction of Records.*—Any public witness, or person authorized by such witness, during committee office hours in the committee offices and within two weeks of the close of hearings, may obtain a transcript copy of that public witness's testimony and make such technical, grammatical and typographical corrections as authorized by the person making the remarks involved as will not alter the nature of testimony given. There shall be prompt return of such corrected copy of the transcript to the committee. Members of the committee or subcommittee shall receive copies of transcripts for their prompt review and correction and prompt return to the committee. The committee or subcommittee may order the printing of a hearing record without the corrections of any Member or witness if it determines that such Member or witness has been afforded a reasonable time in which to make such corrections and further delay would seriously impede the consideration of the legislative action that is subject of the hearing. The record of a hearing shall be closed 10 calendar days after the last oral testimony, unless the committee or subcommittee determines otherwise. Any person requesting to file a statement for the record of a hearing must so request before the hearing concludes and must file the statement before the record is closed unless the committee or subcommittee determines otherwise. The committee or subcommittee may reject any statement in light of its length or its tendency to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person.

(c) *Property of the House.*—All committee and subcommittee hearings, records, data, charts, and files shall be kept separate and distinct from the congressional office records of the Members serving as chairman and such records shall be the property of the House and all Members of the House shall have access thereto. The majority staff director shall promptly notify the chairman and the ranking minority member of any request for access to such records.

(d) *Availability of Archived Records.*—The records of the committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with House rule VII. The chairman shall notify the ranking minority member of the committee of the need for a committee order pursuant to clause 3(b)(3) or clause 4(b) of such House rule, to withhold a record otherwise available.

(e) *Special Rules for Certain Records and Proceedings.*—A stenographic record of a business meeting of the committee or subcommittee shall be kept and thereafter may be published if the chairman of the committee, after consultation with the ranking minority member, determines there is need for such a record. The proceedings of the committee or subcommittee in a closed meeting, evidence or testimony in such meeting, shall not be divulged unless otherwise determined by a majority of the committee or subcommittee.

(f) *Electronic Availability of Committee Publications.*—To the maximum extent feasible, the committee shall make its publications available in electronic form.

VI. POWER TO SIT AND ACT; SUBPOENA POWER.

(a) *Authority to Sit and Act.*—For the purpose of carrying out any of its function and duties under House rules X and XI, the committee and each of its subcommittees is au-

thorized (subject to paragraph (b)(1) of this rule)—

(1) to sit and act at such times and places within the United States whether the House is in session, has recessed, or has adjourned and to hold such hearings, and

(2) to require, by subpoena or otherwise, the attendance and testimony of such witnesses and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memoranda, papers and documents, as it deems necessary. The chairman of the committee or subcommittee, or any member designated by the chairman, may administer oaths to any witness.

(b) *Issuance of Subpoenas.*—(1) A subpoena may be authorized and issued by the committee or subcommittee under paragraph (a)(2) in the conduct of any investigation or series of investigations or activities, only when authorized by a majority of the members voting, a majority being present, as provided in clause 2(m)(3)(A) of House rule XI. Such authorized subpoenas shall be signed by the chairman of the committee or by any member designated by the committee. As soon as practicable after a subpoena is issued under this rule, the chairman shall notify all members of the committee of such action.

(2) Notice of a meeting to consider a motion to authorize and issue a subpoena should be given to all members of the committee by 5 p.m. of the day preceding such meeting.

(3) Compliance with any subpoena issued by the committee or subcommittee under paragraph (a)(2) may be enforced only as authorized or directed by the House.

(4) A subpoena *duces tecum* may specify terms of return other than at meeting or hearing of the committee or subcommittee authorizing the subpoena.

(c) *Expenses of Subpoenaed Witnesses.*—Each witness who has been subpoenaed, upon the completion of his or her testimony before the committee or any subcommittee, may report to the offices of the committee, and there sign appropriate vouchers for travel allowances and attendance fees to which he or she is entitled. If hearings are held in cities other than Washington DC, the subpoenaed witness may contact the majority staff director of the committee, or his or her representative, before leaving the hearing room.

VII. HEARING PROCEDURES.

(a) *Power to Hear.*—For the purpose of carrying out any of its functions and duties under House rule X and XI, the committee and its subcommittees are authorized to sit and hold hearings at any time or place within the United States whether the House is in session, has recessed, or has adjourned. (See paragraph (a) of committee rule VI and paragraph (f) of committee rule X for provisions relating to subcommittee hearings and meetings.)

(b) *Announcement.*—The chairman of the committee shall after consultation with the ranking minority member of the committee, make a public announcement of the date, place and subject matter of any committee hearing at least one week before the commencement of the hearing. The chairman of a subcommittee shall schedule a hearing only after consultation with the chairman of the committee and after consultation with the ranking minority member of the subcommittee, and the chairmen of the other subcommittees after such consultation with the committee chairman, and shall request the majority staff director to make a public announcement of the date, place, and subject matter of such hearing at least one week before the hearing. If the chairman of the committee or the subcommittee, with concurrence of the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee, determines there is good cause to begin the hearing

sooner, or if the committee or subcommittee so determines by majority vote, a quorum being present for the transaction of business, the chairman of the committee or subcommittee, as appropriate, shall request the majority staff director to make such public announcement at the earliest possible date. The clerk of the committee shall promptly notify the Daily Digest Clerk of the Congressional Record, and shall promptly enter the appropriate information into the committee scheduling service of the House Information Systems as soon as possible after such public announcement is made.

(c) *Scheduling of Witnesses.*—Except as otherwise provided in this rule, the scheduling of witnesses and determination of the time allowed for the presentation of testimony at hearings shall be at the discretion of the chairman of the committee or subcommittee, unless a majority of the committee or subcommittee determines otherwise.

(d) *Written Statement; Oral Testimony.*—(1) Each witness who is to appear before the committee or a subcommittee, shall insofar as practicable file with the majority staff director of the committee, at least 2 working days before day of his or her appearance, a written statement of proposed testimony. Witnesses shall provide sufficient copies of their statement for distribution to committee or subcommittee members, staff, and the news media. Insofar as practicable, the committee or subcommittee staff shall distribute such written statements to all members of the committee or subcommittee as soon as they are received as well as any official reports from departments and agencies on such subject matter. All witnesses may be limited in their oral presentations to brief summaries of their statements within the time allotted to them, at the discretion of the chairman of the committee or subcommittee, in light of the nature of the testimony and the length of time available.

(2) As noted in paragraph (a) of committee rule VI, the chairman of the committee or one of its subcommittees, or any Member designated by the chairman, may administer an oath to any witness.

(3) To the greatest extent practicable, each witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity shall include with the written statement of proposed testimony a curriculum vitae and disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of any Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two preceding fiscal years.

(e) *Questioning of Witnesses.*—Committee or subcommittee members may question witnesses only when they have been recognized by the chairman of the committee or subcommittee for that purpose. Each Member so recognized shall be limited to questioning a witness for 5 minutes until such time as each Member of the committee or subcommittee who so desires has had an opportunity to question the witness for 5 minutes; and thereafter the chairman of the committee or subcommittee may limit the time of a further round of questioning after giving due consideration to the importance of the subject matter and the length of time available. All questions put to witnesses shall be germane to the measure or matter under consideration. Unless a majority of the committee or subcommittee determines otherwise, no person shall interrogate witnesses other than committee and subcommittee members.

(f) *Extended Questioning for Designated Members.*—Notwithstanding paragraph (e), the chairman and ranking minority member may designate an equal number of members from each party to question a witness for a period not longer than 60 minutes.

(g) *Witnesses for the Minority.*—When any hearing is conducted by the committee or

any subcommittee upon any measure or matter, the minority party members on the committee or subcommittee shall be entitled, upon request to the chairman by a majority of those minority members before the completion of such hearing, to call witnesses selected by the minority to testify with respect to that measure or matter during at least 1 day of hearing thereon as provided in clause 2(j)(1) of House rule XI.

(h) *Summary of Subject Matter.*—Upon announcement of a hearing, to the extent practicable, the committee shall make available immediately to all members of the committee a concise summary of the subject matter (including legislative reports and other material) under consideration. In addition, upon announcement of a hearing and subsequently as they are received, the chairman of the committee or subcommittee shall, to the extent practicable, make available to the members of the committee any official reports from departments and agencies on such matter. (See committee rule X(f).)

(i) *Participation of Committee Members in Subcommittees.*—All members of the committee may attend any subcommittee hearing in accordance with clause 2(g)(2) of House rule XI, but a Member who is not a member of the subcommittee may not vote on any matter before the subcommittee nor offer any amendments or motions and shall not be counted for purposes of establishing a quorum for the subcommittee and may not question witnesses without the unanimous consent of the subcommittee.

(j) *Open Hearings.*—Each hearing conducted by the committee or subcommittee shall be open to the public, including radio, television and still photography coverage, except as provided in clause 4 of House rule XI (see also committee rule III (b)). In any event, no Member of the House may be excluded from nonparticipatory attendance at any hearing unless the House by majority vote shall authorize the committee or subcommittee, for purposes of a particular series of hearings on a particular bill or resolution or on a particular subject of investigation, to close its hearings to Members by means of the above procedure.

(k) *Investigative Hearings and Reports.*—(1)(i) The chairman of the committee or subcommittee at an investigative hearing shall announce in an opening statement the subject of the investigation. A copy of the committee rules (and the applicable provisions of clause 2 of House rule XI, regarding investigative hearing procedures, an excerpt of which appears in Appendix A thereto) shall be made available to each witness. Witnesses at investigative hearings may be accompanied by their own counsel for the purpose of advising them concerning their constitutional rights. The chairman of the committee or subcommittee may punish breaches of order and decorum, and of professional ethics on the part of counsel, by censure and exclusion from the hearings; but only the full committee may cite the offender to the House for contempt.

(ii) Whenever it is asserted that the evidence or testimony at an investigative hearing may tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person, such testimony or evidence shall be presented in executive session, notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (j) of this rule, if by a majority of those present, there being in attendance the requisite number required under the rules of the committee to be present for the purpose of taking testimony, the committee or subcommittee determines that such evidence or testimony may tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person, the committee or subcommittee shall afford a person an opportunity voluntarily to appear as a witness; and the committee or subcommittee shall receive and

shall dispose of requests from such person to subpoena additional witnesses.

(iii) No evidence or testimony taken in executive session may be released or used in public sessions without the consent of the committee or subcommittee. In the discretion of the committee or subcommittee, witnesses may submit brief and pertinent statements in writing for inclusion in the record, the committee or subcommittee is the sole judge of the pertinency of testimony and evidence adduced at its hearings. A witness may obtain a transcript copy of his or her testimony given at a public session or, if given at an executive session, when authorized by the committee or subcommittee. (See paragraph (c) of committee rule V.)

(2) A proposed investigative or oversight report shall be considered as read if it has been available to the members of the committee for at least 24 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays except when the House is in session on such day) in advance of their consideration.

VIII. THE REPORTING OF BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

(a) *Filing of Reports.*—The chairman shall report or cause to be reported promptly to the House any bill, resolution, or other measure approved by the committee and shall take or cause to be taken all necessary steps to bring such bill, resolution, or other measure to a vote. No bill, resolution, or measure shall be reported from the committee unless a majority of the committee is actually present. A committee report on any bill, resolution, or other measure approved by the committee shall be filed within 7 calendar days (not counting days on which the House is not in session) after the day on which there has been filed with the majority staff director of the committee a written request, signed by a majority of the committee, for the reporting of that bill or resolution. The majority staff director of the committee shall notify the chairman immediately when such a request is filed.

(b) *Content of Reports.*—Each committee report on any bill or resolution approved by the committee shall include as separately identified sections:

(1) a statement of the intent or purpose of the bill or resolution;

(2) a statement describing the need for such bill or resolution;

(3) a statement of committee and subcommittee consideration of the measure including a summary of amendments and motions offered and the actions taken thereon;

(4) the results of the each record vote on any amendment in the committee and subcommittee and on the motion to report the measure or matter, including the names of those Members and the total voting for and the names of those Members and the total voting against such amendment or motion (See clause 3(b) of House rule XIII);

(5) the oversight findings and recommendations of the committee with respect to the subject matter of the bill or resolution as required pursuant to clause 3(c)(1) of House rule XIII and clause 2(b)(1) of House rule X;

(6) the detailed statement described in section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 if the bill or resolution provides new budget authority (other than continuing appropriations), new spending authority described in section 401(c)(2) of such Act, new credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures, except that the estimates with respect to new budget authority shall include, when practicable, a comparison of the total estimated funding level for the relevant program (or programs) to the appropriate levels under current law;

(7) the estimate of costs and comparison of such estimates, if any, prepared by the Di-

rector of the Congressional Budget Office in connection with such bill or resolution pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 if submitted in timely fashion to the committee;

(8) any oversight findings and recommendations made by the Committee on Government Reform under clause 4(c)(2) of House rule X to the extent such were available during the committee's deliberations on the bill or resolution;

(9) a statement citing the specific powers granted to the Congress in the Constitution to enact the law proposed by the bill or joint resolution;

(10) an estimate of the costs that would be incurred in carrying out such bill or joint resolution in the fiscal year in which it is reported and for its authorized duration or for each of the 5 fiscal years following the fiscal year of reporting, whichever period is less (see Rule XIII, clause 3(d)(2), (3) and (h)(2), (3)), together with—

(i) a comparison of these estimates with those made and submitted to the committee by any Government agency when practicable, and

(ii) a comparison of the total estimated funding level for the relevant program (or programs) with appropriate levels under current law (The provisions of this clause do not apply if a cost estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 has been timely submitted prior to the filing of the report and included in the report);

(11) the changes in existing law (if any) shown in accordance with clause 3 of House rule XIII;

(12) the determination required pursuant to section 5(b) of Public Law 92-463, if the legislation reported establishes or authorizes the establishment of an advisory committee; and

(13) the information on Federal and intergovernmental mandates required by section 423(c) and (d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as added by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-4).

(c) *Supplemental, Minority, or Additional Views.*—If, at the time of approval of any measure or matter by the committee, any Member of the committee gives notice of intention to file supplemental, minority, or additional views, that Member shall be entitled to not less than 2 subsequent calendar days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays except when the House is in session on such date) in which to file such views, in writing and signed by that Member, with the majority staff director of the committee. When time guaranteed by this paragraph has expired (or if sooner, when all separate views have been received), the committee may arrange to file its report with the Clerk of the House not later than 1 hour after the expiration of such time. All such views (in accordance with House rule XI, clause 2(1) and House rule XIII, clause 3(a)(1)), as filed by one or more members of the committee, shall be included within and made a part of the report filed by the committee with respect to that bill or resolution.

(d) *Printing of Reports.*—The report of the committee on the measure or matter noted in paragraph (a) above shall be printed in a single volume, which shall:

(1) include all supplemental, minority or additional views that have been submitted by the time of the filing of the report; and

(2) bear on its cover a recital that any such supplemental, minority, or additional views (and any material submitted under House rule XII, clause 3(a)(1)) are included as part of the report.

(e) *Immediate Printing; Supplemental Reports.*—Nothing in this rule shall preclude—

(1) the immediate filing or printing of a committee report unless timely request for the opportunity to file supplemental, minority, or additional views has been made as provided by paragraph (c), or

(2) the filing by the committee of any supplemental report on any bill or resolution that may be required for the correction of any technical error in a previous report made by the committee on that bill or resolution.

(f) *Availability of Printed Hearing Records.*—If hearings have been held on any reported bill or resolution, the committee shall make every reasonable effort to have the record of such hearings printed and available for distribution to the Members of the House prior to the consideration of such bill or resolution by the House. Each printed hearing of the committee or any of its subcommittees shall include a record of the attendance of the Members.

(g) *Committee Prints.*—All committee or subcommittee prints or other committee or subcommittee documents, other than reports or prints of bills, that are prepared for public distribution shall be approved by the chairman of the committee or the committee prior to public distribution.

(h) *Post Adjournment Filing of Committee Reports.*—(1) After an adjournment of the last regular session of a Congress sine die, an investigative or oversight report approved by the committee may be filed with the Clerk at any time, provided that if a member gives notice at the time of approval of intention to file supplemental, minority, or additional views, that member shall be entitled to not less than 7 calendar days in which to submit such views for inclusion with the report.

(2) After an adjournment of the last regular session of a Congress sine die, the chairman of the committee may file at any time with the Clerk the committee's activity report for that Congress pursuant to clause 1(d)(1) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives without the approval of the committee, provided that a copy of the report has been available to each member of the committee for at least 7 calendar days and the report includes any supplemental, minority, or additional views submitted by a member of the committee.

IX. OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

(a) *Oversight Plan.*—Not later than February 15 of the first session of a Congress, the chairman shall convene the committee in a meeting that is open to the public and with a quorum present to adopt its oversight plans for that Congress. Such plans shall be submitted simultaneously to the Committee on Government Reform and to the Committee on House Administration. In developing such plans the committee shall, to the maximum extent feasible—

(1) consult with other committees of the House that have jurisdiction over the same or related laws, programs, or agencies within its jurisdiction, with the objective of ensuring that such laws, programs, or agencies are reviewed in the same Congress and that there is a maximum of coordination between such committees in the conduct of such reviews; and such plans shall include an explanation of what steps have been and will be taken to ensure such coordination and cooperation;

(2) give priority consideration to including in its plans the review of those laws, programs, or agencies operating under permanent budget authority or permanent statutory authority;

(3) have a view toward ensuring that all significant laws, programs, or agencies with-

in its jurisdiction are subject to review at least once every 10 years. The committee and its appropriate subcommittees shall review and study, on a continuing basis, the impact or probable impact of tax policies affecting subjects within its jurisdiction as provided in clause 2(d) of House rule X. The committee shall include in the report filed pursuant to clause 1(d) of House rule XI a summary of the oversight plans submitted by the committee under clause 2(d) of House rule X, a summary of actions taken and recommendations made with respect to each such plan, and a summary of any additional oversight activities undertaken by the committee and any recommendations made or actions taken thereon.

(b) *Annual Appropriations.*—The committee shall, in its consideration of all bills and joint resolutions of a public character within its jurisdiction, ensure that appropriations for continuing programs and activities of the Federal Government and the District of Columbia government will be made annually to the maximum extent feasible and consistent with the nature, requirements, and objectives of the programs and activities involved. The committee shall review, from time to time, each continuing program within its jurisdiction for which appropriations are not made annually in order to ascertain whether such program could be modified so that appropriations therefore would be made annually.

(c) *Budget Act Compliance: Views and Estimates (See Appendix B).*—By February 25 each year and after the President submits a budget under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, the committee shall, submit to the Committee on the Budget (1) its views and estimates with respect to all matters to be set forth in the concurrent resolution on the budget for the ensuing fiscal year (under section 301 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974—see Appendix B) that are within its jurisdiction or functions; and (2) an estimate of the total amounts of new budget authority, and budget outlays resulting therefrom, to be provided or authorized in all bills and resolutions within its jurisdiction that it intends to be effective during that fiscal year.

(d) *Budget Act Compliance: Recommended Changes.*—Whenever the committee is directed in a concurrent resolution on the budget to determine and recommend changes in laws, bills, or resolutions under the reconciliation process, it shall promptly make such determination and recommendations, and report a reconciliation bill or resolution (or both) to the House or submit such recommendations to the Committee on the Budget, in accordance with the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (See Appendix B).

(e) *Conference Committees.*—Whenever in the legislative process it becomes necessary to appoint conferees, the chairman shall, after consultation with the ranking minority member, determine the number of conferees the chairman deems most suitable and then recommend to the Speaker as conferees, in keeping with the number to be appointed by the Speaker as provided in clause House rule I, clause 11, the names of those members of the committee of not less than a majority who generally supported the House position and who were primarily responsible for the legislation. The chairman shall, to the fullest extent feasible, include those members of the committee who were the principal proponents of the major provisions of the bill as it passed the House and such other committee members of the majority party as the chairman may designate in consultation with the members of the majority party. Such recommendations shall provide a ratio

of majority party members to minority party members no less favorable to the majority party than the ratio of majority party members to minority party members on the committee. In making recommendations of minority party members as conferees, the chairman shall consult with the ranking minority member of the committee.

X. SUBCOMMITTEES

(a) *Number and Composition.*—There shall be such subcommittees as specified in paragraph (c) of this rule. Each of such subcommittees shall be composed of the number of members set forth in paragraph (c) of this rule, including *ex officio* members.

The chairman may create additional subcommittees of an *ad hoc* nature as the chairman determines to be appropriate subject to any limitations provided for in the House rules.¹

(b) *Ratios.*—On each subcommittee, there shall be a ratio of majority party members to minority party members which shall be consistent with the ratio on the full committee. In calculating the ratio of majority party members to minority party members, there shall be included the *ex officio* members of the subcommittees and ratios below reflect that fact.

(c) *Jurisdiction.*—Each subcommittee shall have the following general jurisdiction and number of members:

OPERATIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE

Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry (21 Members, 11 majority, 10 minority).—Agency oversight, review and analysis, special investigations, pesticide regulation, nutrition, food stamps, hunger, consumer programs, and forestry.

COMMODITY SUBCOMMITTEES

General Farm Commodities, Resource Conservation, and Credit (21 Members, 11 majority, 10 minority).—Program and markets related to cotton, cottonseed, wheat, feed grains, soybeans, oilseeds, rice, dry beans, peas, lentils, the Commodity Credit Corporation, agricultural credit, natural resource conservation, small watershed program, rural development, rural electrification, energy, farm security, and family farming matters.

Livestock and Horticulture (23 Members, 12 majority, 11 minority).—Livestock, dairy, poultry, meat, seafood and seafood products, the inspection of those commodities, aquaculture, animal welfare, fruits and vegetables, marketing orders, and grazing.

Risk Management, Research, and Specialty Crops (34 members, 18 majority, 16 minority).—Commodity futures, crop insurance, peanuts, sugar, tobacco, honey and bees, research and education, and agricultural biotechnology matters.

(d) Referral of Legislation.—

(1)(a) In general.—All bills, resolutions, and other matters referred to the committee shall be referred to all subcommittees of appropriate jurisdiction within 2 weeks after being referred to the committee. After consultation with the ranking minority member, the chairman may determine that the committee will consider certain bills, resolutions, or other matters.

(b) Trade Matters.—Unless action is otherwise taken under subparagraph (3), bills, resolutions, and other matters referred to

¹ The chairman and ranking minority member of the committee serve as *ex officio* members of the subcommittees. (See paragraph (e) of this rule.)

the committee relating to foreign agriculture, foreign food or commodity assistance, and foreign trade and marketing issues will be considered by the committee.

(2) The chairman, by a majority vote of the committee, may discharge a subcommittee from further consideration of any bill, resolution, or other matter referred to the subcommittee and have such bill, resolution or other matter considered by the committee, the committee having referred a bill, resolution, or other matter to a subcommittee in accordance with this rule may discharge such subcommittee from further consideration thereof at any time by a vote of the majority members of the committee for the committee's direct consideration or for reference to another subcommittee.

(3) Unless the committee, a quorum being present, decides otherwise by a majority vote, the chairman may refer bills, resolutions, legislation or other matters not specifically within the jurisdiction of a subcommittee, or that is within the jurisdiction of more than one subcommittee, jointly or exclusively as the chairman deems appropriate, including concurrently to the subcommittees with jurisdiction, sequentially to the subcommittees with jurisdiction (subject to any time limits deemed appropriate), divided by subject matter among the subcommittees with jurisdiction, or to an ad hoc subcommittee appointed by the chairman for the purpose of considering the matter and reporting to the committee thereon, or make such other provisions deemed appropriate.

(e) *Service on subcommittees.*—(1) The chairman and the ranking minority member shall serve as *ex officio* members of all subcommittees and shall have the right to vote on all matters before the subcommittees. The chairman and the ranking minority member may not be counted for the purpose of establishing a quorum.

(2) Any member of the committee who is not a member of the subcommittee may have the privilege of sitting and nonparticipatory attendance at subcommittee hearings in accordance with clause 2(g)(2) of House rule XI. Such member may not:

(i) vote on any matter;

(ii) be counted for the purpose of an establishing a quorum for any motion, vote, or other subcommittee action;

(iii) participate in questioning a witness under the 5-minute rule, unless permitted to do so by the subcommittee chairman or a majority of the subcommittee a quorum being present;

(iv) raise points of order; or

(v) offer amendments or motions.

(f) *Subcommittee Hearings and Meetings.*—(1) Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the committee on all matters referred to it or under its jurisdiction after consultation by the subcommittee chairmen with the committee chairman. (See committee rule VII.)

(2) After consultation with the committee chairman, subcommittee chairmen shall set dates for hearings and meetings of their subcommittees and shall request the majority staff director to make any announcement relating thereto. (See committee rule VII(b).) In setting the dates, the committee chairman and subcommittee chairman shall consult with other subcommittee chairmen and relevant committee and subcommittee ranking minority members in an effort to avoid simultaneously scheduling committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings to the extent practicable.

(3) Notice of all subcommittee meetings shall be provided to the chairman and the ranking minority member of the committee by the majority staff director.

(4) Subcommittees may hold meetings or hearings outside of the House if the chairman of the committee and other subcommittee chairmen and the ranking minority member of the subcommittee is consulted in advance to ensure that there is no scheduling problem. However, the majority of the committee may authorize such meeting or hearing.

(5) The provisions regarding notice and the agenda of committee meetings under committee rule II(a) and special or additional meetings under committee rule II(b) shall apply to subcommittee meetings.

(6) If a vacancy occurs in a subcommittee chairmanship, the chairman may set the dates for hearings and meetings of the subcommittee during the period of vacancy. The chairman may also appoint an acting subcommittee chairman until the vacancy is filled.

(g) *Subcommittee Action.*—(1) Any bill, resolution, recommendation, or other matter ordered reported to the committee by a subcommittee shall be promptly reported by the subcommittee chairman or any subcommittee member authorized to do so by the subcommittee.

(2) Upon receipt of such report, the majority staff director of the committee shall promptly advise all members of the committee of the subcommittee action.

(3) The committee shall not consider any matters reported by subcommittees until 2 calendar days have elapsed from the date of reporting, unless the chairman or a majority of the committee determines otherwise.

(h) *Subcommittee Investigations.*—No investigation shall be initiated by a subcommittee without the prior consultation with the chairman of the committee or a majority of the committee.

XI. COMMITTEE BUDGET, STAFF, AND TRAVEL

(a) *Committee Budget.*—The chairman, in consultation with the majority members of the committee, and the minority members of the committee, shall prepare a preliminary budget for each session of the Congress. Such budget shall include necessary amounts for staff personnel, travel, investigation, and other expenses of the committee and subcommittees. After consultation with the ranking minority member, the chairman shall include an amount budgeted to minority members for staff under their direction and supervision. Thereafter, the chairman shall combine such proposals into a consolidated committee budget, and shall take whatever action is necessary to have such budget duly authorized by the House.

(b) *Committee Staff.*—(1) The chairman shall appoint and determine the remuneration of, and may remove, the professional and clerical employees of the committee not assigned to the minority. The professional and clerical staff of the committee not assigned to the minority shall be under the general supervision and direction of the chairman, who shall establish and assign the duties and responsibilities of such staff members and delegate such authority as he or she determines appropriate. (See House rule X, clause 9).

(2) The ranking minority member of the committee shall appoint and determine the remuneration of, and may remove, the professional and clerical staff assigned to the minority within the budget approved for such purposes. The professional and clerical staff assigned to the minority shall be under the general supervision and direction of the ranking minority member of the committee who may delegate such authority as he or she determines appropriate.

(3) From the funds made available for the appointment of committee staff pursuant to any primary or additional expense resolu-

tion, the chairman shall ensure that each subcommittee is adequately funded and staffed to discharge its responsibilities and that the minority party is fairly treated in the appointment of such staff (See House rule X, clause 6(d)).

(c) *Committee Travel.*—(1) Consistent with the primary expense resolution and such additional expense resolution as may have been approved, the provisions of this rule shall govern official travel of committee members and committee staff regarding domestic and foreign travel (See House rule XI, clause 2(n) and House rule X, clause 8 (reprinted in Appendix A)). Official travel for any member or any committee staff member shall be paid only upon the prior authorization of the chairman. Official travel may be authorized by the chairman for any committee Member and any committee staff member in connection with the attendance of hearings conducted by the committee and its subcommittees and meetings, conferences, facility inspections, and investigations which involve activities or subject matter relevant to the general jurisdiction of the committee. Before such authorization is given there shall be submitted to the chairman in writing the following:

(i) The purpose of the official travel;

(ii) The dates during which the official travel is to be made and the date or dates of the event for which the official travel is being made;

(iii) The location of the event for which the official travel is to be made; and

(iv) The names of members and committee staff seeking authorization.

(2) In the case of official travel of members and staff of a subcommittee to hearings, meetings, conferences, facility inspections and investigations involving activities or subject matter under the jurisdiction of such subcommittee to be paid for out of funds allocated to the committee, prior authorization must be obtained from the subcommittee chairman and the full committee chairman. Such prior authorization shall be given by the chairman only upon the representation by the applicable subcommittee chairman in writing setting forth those items enumerated in clause (1).

(3) Within 60 days of the conclusion of any official travel authorized under this rule, there shall be submitted to the committee chairman a written report covering the information gained as a result of the hearing, meeting, conference, facility inspection or investigation attended pursuant to such official travel.

(4) Local currencies owned by the United States shall be made available to the committee and its employees engaged in carrying out their official duties outside the United States, its territories or possessions. No appropriated funds shall be expended for the purpose of defraying expenses of members of the committee or its employees in any country where local currencies are available for this purpose; and the following conditions shall apply with respect to their use of such currencies;

(i) No Member or employee of the committee shall receive or expend local currencies for subsistence in any country at a rate in excess of the maximum per diem rate set forth in applicable Federal law; and

(ii) Each Member or employee of the committee shall make an itemized report to the chairman within 60 days following the completion of travel showing the dates each country was visited, the amount of per diem furnished, the cost of transportation furnished, and any funds expended for any other official purpose, and shall summarize in these categories the total foreign currencies and appropriated funds expended. All such

individual reports shall be filed by the chairman with the Committee on House Administration and shall be open to public inspection.

XII. AMENDMENT OF RULES

These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the committee. A proposed change in these rules shall not be considered by the committee as provided in clause 2 of House rule XI, unless written notice of the proposed change has been provided to each committee Member 2 legislative days in advance of the date on which the matter is to be considered. Any such change in the rules of the committee shall be published in the Congressional Record within 30 calendar days after its approval.

IN SUPPORT OF THE MANDATES INFORMATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with encouragement that this House just passed the Mandates Information Act, which will help to safeguard us from making unfunded mandates to the private sector.

Well, I am here today to do just that, to address an unfunded mandate that our constituents pay for every month in their phone bills, the E-rate program, sometimes known as the "Gore Tax," because it has garnered the Vice President's support.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the intent of the "Gore Tax" is to ensure that every school and library is connected to the Internet. But the FCC pays for this program by getting mandatory contributions from phone companies and others. If you look at your phone bill, you will see that mandatory contribution passed on to you, the consumer, as part of the Universal Service Charge.

Mandatory contributions. Mr. Speaker, let us be honest. If it looks like a tax, it quacks like a tax, it is a tax. We can say that our annual "mandatory contributions" to the government are due on April 15th, but we know different.

I have a chart here that shows how it works. First the FCC forces this mandatory contribution on long distance phone companies and others; second, those companies make their massive contributions to the Universal Service Corporation here. That is currently capped at \$2.25 billion each year, this mandatory contribution.

Only here, only in government, only at the Federal Government, could we actually come up with these oxymoronic statements, that this is a mandatory contribution.

But what the Vice President and other E-rate supporters do not want you to know is that this is a hidden tax. Consumers are forced to pay this charge through their monthly phone bills. This is where the hidden tax is found, and I would like to eliminate it.

Mr. Speaker, Americans today are taxed at the highest levels in history.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office recently reported that Federal tax revenues have reached a peacetime record level of 20.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is not just a hidden tax, it is also an unnecessary tax. I have some statistics here from the Congressional Research Service that came before the "Gore Tax" was created.

Now, remember this tax was put on, it was snuck through essentially in order to provide technological support and technology support for schools, in order to encourage them to get on to the Internet and to put computers in classrooms.

□ 1415

But before this tax was ever passed, according to the Congressional Research Service, the 1997 student-to-computer ratio in this country was 8-to-1. Also in 1997, 78 percent of all schools were connected to the Internet, remember, before this tax ever came into existence.

Mr. Speaker, the President has just asked for another \$766 million in his Department of Education's budget for education technology alone. That is three-quarters of \$1 billion, and I quote his own budget summary, "as a part of the President's proposal to connect all schools to the Internet and put a computer in every classroom." Mr. Speaker, this is the "Gore Tax," and what is this "Gore Tax" program? Is there not some duplication in a multibillion-dollar effort to put Internet in the schools?

In fact, there are over 20 Federal programs aimed toward this effort, not to mention hundreds of State and local private initiatives.

Last year, the Committee on Appropriations reported that the Department of Education cannot account for the money it now spends in education technology. They cannot explain where this money goes. In fact, the Committee on Appropriations said that it fears millions of dollars might go unspent each year.

Today, I am introducing the E-Rate Termination Act, and I would like to thank the 13 original cosponsors of this bill for recognizing the dire need for change. By eliminating this hidden tax, we can focus on honest and realistic ways to address our schools' and libraries' technological needs, and I ask for my colleagues' support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON 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 Indiana (Mr. MCINTOSH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCINTOSH 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 Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BLUMENAUER 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 Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. EMERSON 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 California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING MEDICARE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURR of North Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a little bit about what the Republican agenda is this year. We have been saying BEST military. B for balancing in the budget, paying down the debt, responsible spending; E for excellence in education; S for saving Social Security; T for lowering taxes and having a strong military presence that we need in the world today.

I have with me a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) who has worked so long on protecting Medicare and working for lowering taxes, and also the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), one of our distinguished freshman Members, and we were just going to talk about some of the things we hope to accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS).

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

One of the focal points obviously at the beginning of this, the 106th Congress, is the Medicare Commission which is scheduled to make its report, if we can get 11 of the 17 members to agree on a plan, in early March. I would tell the gentleman that the things that have taken place recently, primarily on the executive side of Washington, have made it immensely more difficult for us to try to come together.

In the context of trying to get 11 of 17 people who are very knowledgeable,