

things, that the year 2000 problem is a serious problem and the cost of rectifying it will indeed be rather high.

Now, the Federal Government, and we have heard about this and read about it almost on a daily basis, has become rather proficient in getting its agencies and its departments to comply with the inevitable reprogramming that is required to fix this bug. But not without some effort. Both the Senate and the House have truly taken the lead on this pressing issue. Under the gentle prodding of Senators MOYNIHAN, BENNETT and DODD as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), the President appointed a Y2K Council to get the government, the U.S. Government, the Federal Government, focused on this issue. They have done well enough that many citizens do not fear the end of the year despite the rhetoric of many doomsayers. That said, to paraphrase Robert Frost, we have many miles yet to go before we sleep.

Up until today, States, territories and local authorities have been left to their own devices in terms of fixing the year 2000 problem. While most of the Federal Government's critical services may be Y2K compliant by January 1, 2000, many of the States and local jurisdictions will not be. This includes Guam and other territories. In Guam, for example, the local Office of the Public Auditor recently released a study outlining the territorial Y2K problem. While some of the government of Guam's departments are Y2K compliant ahead of schedule, many are not. Guam's Department of Public Works and Department of Public Health and Social Services, both lifeblood agencies for both Guam's public infrastructure and poor and handicapped, do not have enough money or are behind in scheduling and performing Y2K conversions. The story is the same throughout the country in many cities, counties, towns and territories: time is running out or the money has already run out.

The bill which I have introduced today will establish a program that will allow States and territories to apply for funding to initiate Y2K conversions of State computer systems which distribute Federal money for vital welfare programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, better known as WIC; child support enforcement, child care and child welfare, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, better known as TANF. Through the application of Y2K technical assistance funds for these programs, we can ensure that the lifeblood of many of the poorest Americans will not be disrupted by the turn of the calendar.

This vital legislation, which I have introduced today, is the House companion bill to the Moynihan-Bennett-Dodd bill, S. 174 as introduced in the Senate. We have modified the original Senate vehicle to ensure that the territories and the District of Columbia will not

be excluded from this important program, an apparent and accidental oversight of the Senate version. I will not tell my colleagues how many oversights we have experienced similar to those, but certainly those of us from the territories are always cognizant of the fact that many legislative items do not address our needs until we take specific action to take care of that. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan and fiscally responsible and necessary legislation. I would like to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTIAN-CHRISTENSEN), the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for lending their support as the representatives from non-State areas of the United States. Finally, I want to especially thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and Senators MOYNIHAN, BENNETT and DODD for taking the lead on educating all Americans on the Y2K problem as well as legislating wise solutions to ameliorate its potentially harmful effects. This is good legislation. I think it deserves careful scrutiny in order to assist local governments that deal primarily with Federal programs to make sure that there are no glitches in the system as we celebrate the end of 1999.

Again I want to reiterate, I want to express my personal gratitude to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and all the Members of Congress who went on the congressional delegation to the Pacific areas to try to deal with some of the problems, to understand some of the problems experienced by Guam, the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, and the Republic of the Marshalls, which was kind of a State visit. These islands represent a marvelous part of the world, a part of the world that is frequently romanticized and sometimes misunderstood. These are real people with real-life stories and compelling stories to tell. All of them have made an enormous contribution to the United States in one way or another and are deserving of the respect and dignity of human beings and U.S. citizens everywhere.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon) laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
Washington, DC, March 4, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 5(a) of Public Law 105-255, I hereby appoint the following individual to the Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering, and Technology Development:

Dr. Jill Shapiro, Ph.D. of Tiburon, CA.
Yours Very Truly,
RICHARD A. GEPHARDT.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Government Reform:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 3, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As you may know, I have been appointed to serve on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence by Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri.

I respectfully request a leave of absence from the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight for the duration of my service on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. In accordance with the rules of the Democratic Caucus, I will retain my seniority on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight during this period.

Sincerely,

GARY A. CONDIT,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. CHENOWETH (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today, on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PASTOR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SANDERS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HAYES) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SHIMKUS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NETHERCUTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHAFFER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GILMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 12 minutes