This is a ripoff that is too obvious even for the Bush administration to ignore, and it is time for Congress to stand up on our hind legs and force this administration to take action. The people in Snohomish County deserve their hundreds of millions of dollars back, and we are going to see to it that they get it.

AARP AND THE DRUG BILL

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, AARP owes every senior an explanation. Its leader trumpeted a Republican prescription drug bill passed in the dead of night last year. It would have been dead on arrival if the administration had told the truth, but they did not.

But the seniors, including my 94-year-old mother, are really smart. So AARP, when they sent out 26,000 packets of information, only 400 signed up.

My mother and her buddies are pretty darn smart. They know the difference between a real deal and a raw deal. The administration gave seniors a raw deal, and AARP leadership helped.

Senator KERRY will give seniors a real deal with real benefits for prescription drugs.

□ 1100

Democrats are ready to do what is right, beginning with telling the truth.

It is time AARP repudiated the reckless endorsement of a Republican bill that is bad medicine for seniors. It is time for AARP to take the medicine every mother teaches her child: tell the truth and take responsibility when you do something stupid.

BUSH TAX CUTS CAUSE LARGEST DEFICIT IN NATION'S HISTORY

(Mr. ROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, in my home State of Arkansas, nearly 75,000 people are out of work today. Unemployment has increased by 19 percent in the last 3½ years.

However, our Nation's Treasury Secretary John Snow is visiting Arkansas today to talk about how President Bush's tax policy reforms are actually creating jobs in Arkansas. All the President's tax cuts for the wealthy have given us is the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, tax cuts that our children will be forced to pay.

For Secretary Snow to come to Arkansas today and tell Arkansans the administration's economic plan is creating jobs shows a blatant disregard for what Arkansas families are really facing. Working families do not need more rhetoric; they need jobs, they need affordable health care, they need a real Medicare prescription drug plan and, yes, they need lower gasoline prices, all things this administration has failed to do.

ALLOWING SENIORS ACCESS TO DRUG REIMPORTATION

(Mr. SANDLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, the new drug discount card is nothing more than the old bait and switch. The Republican leadership continues to try to trick our seniors into thinking they are getting a Medicare prescription drug benefit, while in reality offering nothing more than an 18-month sham program that fails to offer any significant savings to seniors. Not surprisingly, this temporary program prioritizes the pharmaceutical companies' profit over the health care expenses of our Nation's seniors.

While the administration has claimed that these cards will have savings ranging from 10 percent to 25 percent, there is no guarantee of this; and there is absolutely no control over the prices charged.

Additionally, the drug companies determine what drugs to discount and how much seniors pay. And while seniors are locked into a drug card for a full year, the drug companies are at liberty to change what discounts they offer from week to week. As a matter of fact, some have already changed their drug prices so that it does not cut into their bottom line.

The truth is that a better solution with real benefits is available. With drug costs increasing at 3.5 times the rate of inflation, we owe it to our Nation's seniors to finally allow them access to drug reimportation.

It is time to do the right thing and offer real savings to our seniors. We cannot afford not to do so.

2006 BUDGET CUTS

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week we learned from an internal Bush administration budget memo detailing their planned cuts.

According to the budget document, education, transportation, Social Security, the Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, and the Small Business Administration are all in line for drastic cuts in their budgets. Head Start, for example, a $177 million cut. The National Institutes of Health would be slashed by more than $600 million. The administration is planning cuts for 2006; and all the while, they are asking for an additional $25 billion to rebuild and secure Iraq. The additional $25 billion for Iraq is on top of the $165 billion the American taxpayers have already allocated and paid.

These reconstruction funds are building schools, roads, and encouraging business development in Iraq; and all the while, we are making corresponding cuts here at home. I understand that we need to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan, but not at the expense of what we do here in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush in 2000 declared his opposition to nation-building, who knew it was America he was talking about.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMING SENIORS ABOUT MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, as many know, for deeply held philosophical reasons, I opposed the creation of a prescription drug entitlement in Medicare. But I never opposed helping low-income seniors or using the private sector to give seniors more buying power to save money on their prescription drugs, which is exactly what became available this week with the new Medicare drug discount card and the $600 credit for low-income seniors. In fact, I hosted five Medicare discount drug fairs across my district, speaking to more than 1,000 of my constituents.

While many have made speeches on this floor and across the country creating anxiety about this new bill, I found it instructive to spend time with seniors. Despite my opposition to a drug entitlement, I felt I had a moral obligation to explain to seniors, particularly low-income seniors, what is available as of this week in the new Medicare drug discount card benefit.

I urge all of my colleagues, regardless of your view of this legislation, to view what is available in this law and to discharge your duty to your constituents to make knowledge available of the new drug discount card and the low-income assistance for seniors.

BACK TO WORK INCENTIVE ACT OF 2003

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 656, I call up the bill (H.R. 444) to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to establish a Personal Reemployment Accounts grant program to assist Americans in returning to work, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to House Resolution 656, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 444 is as follows:

H.R. 444

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the ''Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003''.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO SUPPORT PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.

Subtitle B of title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2811 et seq.) is amended by inserting after chapter 5 the following new chapter:

"CHAPTER 5A—PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS

"SEC. 135A. PURPOSES.

"The purposes of this chapter are to provide for the establishment of personal reemployment accounts for certain individuals identified as likely to exhaust their unemployment compensation in order to—

"(1) accelerate the reemployment of such individuals;

"(2) promote the retention in employment of such individuals; and

"(3) provide such individuals with enhanced flexibility, choice, and control in obtaining intensive reemployment, training, and supportive services.

"SEC. 135B. DEFINITION.

"In this chapter, the term 'State' means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands.

"SEC. 135C. GRANTS TO STATES.

"(a) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall—

"(1) reserve 2/10 of 1 percent of the amount appropriated under section 137(d) for use under section 135I; and

"(2) use the remainder of the amount appropriated under section 137(d) to make allotments in accordance with subsection (b).

"(b) ALLOTMENT AMONG STATES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—From the amount made available under subsection (a)(2), the Secretary shall allot to each State an amount that is proportionate to the relative number of unemployed individuals in the State as compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in all States in order to provide assistance for eligible individuals in accordance with this chapter.

"(2) SMALL STATE MINIMUM ALLOTMENT.—The Secretary shall ensure that—

"(A) each State (other than the United States Virgin Islands) shall receive an allotment under paragraph (1) that is not less than 3/10 of 1 percent of the amount made available under subsection (a)(2) for the fiscal year; and

"(B) the United States Virgin Islands shall receive an allotment under paragraph (1) that is not less than 1/10 of 1 percent of the amount made available under subsection (a)(2) for the fiscal year.

"(c) AVAILABILITY.—Notwithstanding section 189(g)(1), amounts made available under subsection (a) to carry out this chapter shall be available for obligation and expenditure beginning on the date of the enactment of the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003.

"SEC. 135D. WITHIN STATE ALLOCATION.

"(a) ALLOCATION.—Of the amount allotted to a State under section 135C—

"(1) not more than 2 percent of the amount may be reserved by the Governor of the State to enhance the system of worker profiling described in section 303(j) of the Social Security Act and to establish and operate a data management system, as necessary, and carry out other appropriate activities to implement this chapter;

"(2) 5 percent of the amount shall be allocated by the State to local areas in accordance with the formula described in subsection (b) for start-up costs and other operating costs related to the provision of assistance under this chapter; and

"(3) the remainder of the amount shall be provided to local areas for the establishment of personal reemployment accounts described in section 135E for eligible individuals in such local areas.

"(b) FORMULA.—A State shall allocate funds to local areas in the State under subsection (a)(2) in an amount that is proportionate to the relative number of unemployed individuals in the local area as compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in the State.

"(c) AVAILABILITY.—Notwithstanding section 189(g)(2), amounts allotted to a State under section 135C, and amounts subsequently provided to a local area under this section, shall be available for obligation and expenditure only for the 3-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003.

"SEC. 135E. PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.

"(a) ACCOUNTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Funds provided to a local area under section 135D shall be used to provide eligible individuals with personal reemployment accounts to be used in accordance with section 135F. An eligible individual may receive only one personal reemployment account.

"(2) AMOUNT.—The State shall establish the amount of a personal reemployment account, which shall be uniform throughout the State, and shall not exceed $3,000.

"(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State shall establish eligibility criteria for individuals for personal reemployment accounts in accordance with this subsection.

"(2) MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA REQUIREMENTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), an individual shall be eligible to receive assistance under this chapter if, beginning after the date of enactment of the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003, the individual—

"(i) is identified by the State pursuant to section 303(j)(1) of the Social Security Act as likely to exhaust regular unemployment compensation and in need of job search assistance to make a successful transition to new employment;

"(ii) is receiving regular unemployment compensation under any State or Federal unemployment compensation program administered by the State; and

"(iii) is eligible for not less than 20 weeks for the regular unemployment compensation described in clause (ii).

"(B) ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY CRITERIA.—A State may establish criteria that is in addition to the criteria described in subparagraph (A) for the eligibility of individuals to receive assistance under this chapter. A State may also establish criteria for priority in the provision of assistance to such eligible individuals under this chapter.

"(3) TRANSITION RULE.—

"(A) PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED AS LIKELY TO EXHAUST UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—At the option of the State, and subject to clause (ii), an individual may be eligible to receive assistance under this chapter if the individual—

"(I) during the 90-day period ending on the date of the enactment of the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003, was identified by the State pursuant to section 303(j)(1) of the Social Security Act as likely to exhaust regular unemployment compensation and in need of job search assistance to make a successful transition to new employment; and

"(II) otherwise meets the requirements of clauses (ii) and (iii) of paragraph (2)(A).

"(ii) ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY CRITERIA.—A State may establish criteria that is in addition to the criteria described in clause (i) for the eligibility of individuals to receive assistance under this chapter. A State may also establish criteria for priority in the provision of assistance to such eligible individuals under this chapter.

"(B) PREVIOUSLY EXHAUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—At the option of the State, an individual may be eligible to receive assistance under this chapter if the individual—

"(i) during the 90-day period ending on the date of the enactment of the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003, exhausted all rights to any unemployment compensation; and

"(ii)(I) is enrolled in training and needs additional support to complete such training, with a priority of service to be provided to such individuals who are training for shortage occupations or high-growth industries; or

"(II) is separated from employment in an industry or occupation that has experienced declining employment, or no longer provides any employment, in the local labor market during the two-year period ending on the date of the determination of eligibility of the individual under this subparagraph.

"(4) NO INDIVIDUAL ENTITLEMENT.—Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to entitle any individual to receive a personal reemployment account.

"(c) LOCAL ADMINISTRATION.—

"(1) INFORMATION AND ATTESTATION.—Prior to the establishment of a personal reemployment account for an eligible individual under this chapter, the one-stop delivery system shall ensure that the individual—

"(A) is informed of the requirements applicable to the personal reemployment account, including the allowable uses of funds from the account, the limitations on access to services described under section 135F(a)(3)(C) and a description of such services, and the conditions for receiving a reemployment bonus;

"(B) has the option to develop a personal reemployment plan which will identify the employment goals and appropriate combination of services selected by the individual to achieve the employment goals; and

"(C) signs an attestation that the individual will comply with the requirements relating to the personal reemployment accounts under this chapter and will reimburse the account or, if the account has been terminated, the program under this chapter, for any amounts expended from the account that are not allowable.

"(2) PERIODIC INTERVIEWS.—If a recipient exhausts his or her rights to any unemployment compensation, and the recipient has a remaining balance in his or her personal reemployment account, the one-stop delivery system shall conduct periodic interviews with the recipient to assist the recipient in meeting his or her individual employment goals.

"SEC. 135F. USE OF FUNDS.

"(a) ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements contained in paragraphs (2) and (3), a recipient may use amounts in a personal reemployment account to purchase one or more of the following:

"(A) Intensive services, including those types of services specified in section 134(d)(3)(C).

"(B) Training services, including those types of services specified in section 134(d)(4)(D).

"(C) Supportive services, except for needs-related payments.

"(D) Assistance to purchase or lease an automobile, if such assistance is necessary to allow the recipient to accept a bona fide offer of employment for which there is a reasonable expectation of long-term duration.

"(2) DELIVERY OF SERVICES.—The following requirements relating to delivery of services shall apply to the program under this chapter:

"(A) Recipients may use funds from the personal reemployment account to purchase

the services described in paragraph (1) through the one-stop delivery system on a fee-for-service basis, or through other providers, consistent with safeguards described in the State plan under section 135G.

''(B) The one-stop delivery system may pay costs for such services directly on behalf of the recipient, through a voucher system, or by reimbursement to the recipient upon receipt of appropriate cost documentation, consistent with safeguards described in the State plan under section 135G.

''(C) Each one-stop delivery system shall make available to recipients information on training providers specified in section 134(d)(4)(F)(ii), information available to the one-stop delivery system on providers of the intensive and supportive services described in paragraph (1), and information relating to occupations in demand in the local area.

''(3) LIMITATIONS.—The following limitations shall apply with respect to personal reemployment accounts under this chapter:

''(A)(i) Amounts in a personal reemployment account may be used for up to one year from the date of the establishment of the account.

''(ii) No personal reemployment account may be established beginning 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003.

''(B) Each recipient shall submit cost documentation as required by the one-stop delivery system.

''(C) For the 1-year period following the establishment of the account, recipients may not receive intensive, supportive, or training services funded under this title except on a fee-for-services basis as specified in paragraph (2)(A).

''(D) Amounts in a personal reemployment account shall be nontransferable.

''(b) INCOME SUPPORT.—A State may authorize recipients determined eligible under section 135E(b)(3)(B) to withdraw amounts from the personal reemployment account on a weekly basis for purposes of income support in amounts up to the average weekly amount of unemployment compensation that the individual received prior to his or her exhaustion of rights to unemployment compensation if the individual is engaged in job search, intensive services, or training that is expected to lead to employment.

''(c) REEMPLOYMENT BONUS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2)—

''(A) if a recipient determined eligible under section 135E(b)(2) obtains full-time employment before the end of the 13th week of unemployment for which unemployment compensation is paid, the balance of his or her personal reemployment account shall be provided directly to the recipient in cash; and

''(B) if a recipient determined eligible under section 135E(b)(3) obtains full-time employment before the end of the 13th week after the date on which the account is established, the balance of his or her personal reemployment account shall be provided directly to the recipient in cash.

''(2) LIMITATIONS.—The following limitations shall apply with respect to a recipient described in paragraph (1):

''(A) 60 percent of the remaining personal reemployment account balance shall be paid to the recipient at the time of reemployment.

''(B) 40 percent of the remaining personal reemployment account balance shall be paid to the recipient not later than 6 months after the date of reemployment.

''(3) EXCEPTION REGARDING SUBSEQUENT UNEMPLOYMENT.—If a recipient described in paragraph (1) subsequently becomes unemployed due to a lack of work after receiving the portion of the reemployment bonus specified under paragraph (2)(A), the individual may use the amount remaining in the personal reemployment account for the purposes described in subsection (a) but may not be eligible for additional cash payments under this subsection.

''SEC. 135G. STATE PLAN.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In order for a State to receive an allotment under section 135C, the Governor of the State shall submit to the Secretary a plan that includes a description of how the State intends to carry out the personal reemployment accounts authorized under this chapter, including—

''(1) the criteria and methods to be used for determining eligibility for the personal reemployment accounts, including whether the State intends to include the optional categories described in section 135E(b)(3), and the additional criteria and priority for service that the State intends to apply, if any, pursuant to section 135E(b)(2)(B);

''(2) the methods or procedures, developed in consultation with local boards and chief elected officials, to be used to provide eligible individuals information relating to services and providers, and safeguards, developed in consultation with such boards and officials, to ensure that funds from the personal reemployment accounts are used for purposes authorized under this chapter and are not used for services or providers that are wholly unreasonable or egregious;

''(3) how the State will coordinate the activities carried out under this chapter with the employment and training activities carried out under section 134 and other activities carried out through the one-stop delivery system in the State.

''(b) PLAN SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL.—A State plan submitted to the Secretary under subsection (a) by a Governor shall be considered to be approved by the Secretary at the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the Secretary receives the plan, unless the Secretary makes a written determination during such period that the plan is incomplete or otherwise inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter.

''SEC. 135H. PROGRAM INFORMATION.

''The Secretary may require from States the collection and reporting on such financial, performance, and other program-related information as the Secretary determines is appropriate to carry out this chapter, including the evaluation described in section 135I.

''SEC. 135I. EVALUATION.

''(a) EVALUATION.—From the amount made available under section 135C(a)(1), the Secretary, pursuant to the authority provided under section 172, shall, directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with appropriate entities, conduct an evaluation of the activities carried out under this chapter.

''(b) CONDUCT OF EVALUATION.—The evaluation shall examine the effectiveness of such activities in achieving the purposes described in section 135A and such other purposes as the Secretary determines are appropriate.

''(c) REPORT.—The report to Congress under section 172(e) relating to the results of the evaluations required under section 172 shall include the recommendation of the Secretary with respect to the use of personal reemployment accounts as a mechanism to assist individuals in obtaining and retaining employment.''.

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION.

Section 117(d) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2832(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(B)(i)(I), by striking ''sections 128 and 133'' and inserting ''sections 128, 133, and 135D''; and

(2) in paragraph (4), by inserting '', activities authorized under section 135F'' after ''section 134''.

SEC. 4. DELIVERY OF SERVICES.

Section 134(c)(1) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2864(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) shall provide access to personal reemployment accounts in accordance to section 135E.''.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION.

Section 137 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2872) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated $3,600,000,000 for fiscal year 2003 to carry out chapter 5A.

''(2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under paragraph (1) to carry out section 135I are authorized to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 6. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

The table of contents for the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is amended by inserting after the items relating to chapter 5 of subtitle B of title I the following new items:

''CHAPTER 5A—PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS

''Sec. 135A. Purposes.
''Sec. 135B. Definitions.
''Sec. 135C. Grants to States.
''Sec. 135D. Within State allocation.
''Sec. 135E. Personal reemployment accounts.
''Sec. 135F. Use of funds.
''Sec. 135G. State plan.
''Sec. 135H. Program information.
''Sec. 135I. Evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of H.R. 4444 is adopted.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of H.R. 4444 is as follows:

H.R. 4444

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Worker Reemployment Accounts Act of 2004''.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO SUPPORT PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.

Section 171 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.—

''(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'State' means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands.

''(2) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.—In addition to the demonstration projects under subsection (b), the Secretary may establish and implement a national demonstration project designed to analyze and provide data on workforce training programs that accelerate the reemployment of unemployed individuals, promote the retention in employment of such individuals, and provide such individuals with enhanced flexibility, choice, and control in obtaining intensive reemployment, training, and supportive services.

''(3) GRANTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the demonstration project, the Secretary shall make grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to provide personal reemployment accounts to eligible individuals. In awarding grants under this subsection the Secretary shall take into consideration awarding grants to eligible entities from diverse geographic areas, including rural areas.

''(B) DURATION.—The Secretary shall make the grants for periods of not less than 2 years and may renew the grant for each of the succeeding 3 years.

''(4) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a State; or

''(B) a local board or consortium of local boards.

''(5) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the grant funds to provide, through a local area or areas, eligible individuals with personal reemployment accounts. An eligible individual may receive only 1 personal reemployment account.

''(B) GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND AMOUNT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The eligible entity shall establish the amount of a personal reemployment account for each eligible individual participating, which shall be uniform throughout the area represented by the eligible entity, and shall not exceed $3,000.

''(ii) OPTION FOR STATES.—If the eligible entity is a State, the eligible entity may choose to use the grant statewide, if practicable, or only in specified local areas within a State.

''(C) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity shall establish eligibility criteria for individuals for personal reemployment accounts in accordance with this subparagraph.

''(ii) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA REQUIREMENTS.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subclause (II), an individual shall be eligible to receive a personal reemployment account under a grant awarded under this subsection if, beginning after the date of enactment of this subsection, the individual—

''(aa) is identified by the State pursuant to section 303(j)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 503(j)(1)) as likely to exhaust regular unemployment compensation and in need of job search assistance to make a successful transition to new employment, or the individual's unemployment can be attributed in substantial part to unfair competition from Federal Prison Industries, Incorporated;

''(bb) is receiving regular unemployment compensation under any Federal or State unemployment compensation program administered by the State; and

''(cc) is eligible for not less than 20 weeks of regular unemployment compensation described in item (bb).

''(II) ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY CRITERIA.—An eligible entity may establish criteria that are in addition to the criteria described in subclause (I) for the eligibility of individuals to receive a personal reemployment account under this subsection. An eligible entity may also establish criteria for priority in the provision of a personal reemployment account to such eligible individuals under a grant awarded under this subsection.

''(iii) TRANSITION RULE.—

''(I) PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED AS LIKELY TO EXHAUST UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—At the option of the eligible entity, and subject to item (bb), an individual may be eligible to receive a personal reemployment account under this subsection if the individual—

''(AA) during the 13-week period ending the week prior to the date of the enactment of the subsection, was identified by the State pursuant to section 303(j)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 503(j)(1)) as likely to exhaust regular unemployment compensation and in need of job search assistance to make a successful transition to new employment; and

''(BB) otherwise meets the requirements of clause (ii)(I)(bb) and (cc).

''(bb) ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY CRITERIA.—An eligible entity may establish criteria that is in addition to the criteria described in item (aa) for the eligibility of individuals to receive a personal reemployment account under this subsection. An eligible entity may also establish criteria for priority in the provision of such accounts to such eligible individuals under this subsection.

''(II) PREVIOUSLY EXHAUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.—At the option of the eligible entity, an individual may be eligible to receive a personal reemployment account under a grant awarded under this subsection if the individual—

''(aa) during the 26-week period ending the week prior to the date of the enactment of this subsection, exhausted all rights to any unemployment compensation; and

''(bb)(AA) is enrolled in training and needs additional support to complete such training, with a priority of service to be provided to such individuals who are training for shortage occupations or high-growth industries; or

''(BB) is separated from employment in an industry or occupation that has experienced declining employment, or no longer provides any employment, in the local labor market during the 2-year period ending on the date of the determination of eligibility of the individual under this subparagraph.

''(iv) NO INDIVIDUAL ENTITLEMENT.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to entitle any individual to receive a personal reemployment account.

''(D) LIMITATIONS.—

''(i) INFORMATION AND ATTESTATION.—Prior to the establishment of a personal reemployment account for an eligible individual, the eligible entity receiving a grant, through the one-stop delivery system in the participating local area or areas, shall ensure that the individual—

''(I) is informed of the requirements applicable to the personal reemployment account, including the allowable uses of funds from the account, the limitations on access to services described in paragraph (7)(A)(iii) and a description of such services, and the conditions for receiving a reemployment bonus;

''(II) has the option to develop a personal reemployment plan which will identify the employment goals and appropriate combination of services selected by the individual to achieve the employment goals; and

''(III) signs an attestation that the individual has been given the option to develop a personal reemployment plan in accordance with subclause (II), will comply with the requirements under this subsection relating to the personal reemployment accounts, and will reimburse the account or, if the account has been terminated, the grant awarded under this subsection, for any amounts expended from the account that are not allowable.

''(ii) PERIODIC INTERVIEWS.—If a recipient exhausts his or her rights to any unemployment compensation, and the recipient has a remaining balance in his or her personal reemployment account, the one-stop delivery system shall conduct periodic interviews with the recipient to assist the recipient in meeting his or her individual employment goals.

''(iii) USE OF PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.—The eligible entity receiving a grant shall ensure that eligible individuals receiving a personal reemployment account use the account in accordance with paragraph (7).

''(6) APPLICATION FOR GRANTS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including—

''(A) if the eligible entity is a State—

''(i) assurance that the application was developed in conjunction with the local board or boards and chief elected officials where the personal reemployment accounts shall be made available; and

''(ii) a description of the methods and procedures for providing funds to local areas where the personal reemployment accounts shall be made available; and

''(B) a description of the criteria and methods to be used for determining eligibility for the personal reemployment account, including whether the eligible entity intends to include the optional categories described in paragraph (5)(C)(iii), and the additional criteria and priority for service that the eligible entity intends to apply, if any, pursuant to paragraph (5)(C)(ii)(II);

''(C) a description of the methods or procedures to be used to provide eligible individuals information relating to services and providers;

''(D) a description of safeguards to ensure that funds from the personal reemployment accounts are used for purposes authorized under this subsection and to ensure the quality and integrity of services and providers, consistent with the purpose of providing eligible individuals with enhanced flexibility, choice, and control in obtaining intensive reemployment, training, and supportive services;

''(E) a description of how the eligible entity will coordinate the activities carried out under this subsection with the employment and training activities carried out under section 134 and other activities carried out by local boards through the one-stop delivery system in the State or local area; and

''(F) an assurance that the eligible entity will comply with any evaluation and reporting requirements the Secretary may require.

''(7) USE OF PERSONAL REEMPLOYMENT ACCOUNTS.—

''(A) ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements contained in clauses (ii) and (iii), a recipient of a personal reemployment account may use amounts in a personal reemployment account to purchase 1 or more of the following:

''(I) Intensive services, including those type of services specified in section 134(d)(3)(C).

''(II) Training services, including those types of services specified in section 134(d)(4)(D).

''(III) Supportive services, except for needs related payments.

''(ii) DELIVERY OF SERVICES.—The following requirements relating to delivery of services shall apply to the grants under this subsection:

''(I) Recipients may use funds from the personal reemployment account to purchase the services described in clause (i) through the one-stop delivery system on a fee-for-service basis, or through other providers, consistent with the safeguards described in paragraph (6)(D).

''(II) The eligible entity, through the one-stop delivery system in the participating local area, may pay costs for such services directly on behalf of the recipient, through a voucher system, or by reimbursement to the recipient upon receipt of appropriate cost documentation.

''(III) Each eligible entity, through the one-stop delivery system in the participating local area, shall make available to recipients information on training providers specified in section 134(d)(4)(F)(ii), information available to the one-stop delivery system on providers of the intensive and supportive services described in clause (i), and information relating to occupations in demand in the local area.

''(iii) LIMITATIONS.—The following limitations shall apply with respect to personal reemployment accounts under this subsection:

''(I) Amounts in a personal reemployment account may be used for up to 1 year from the date of the establishment of the account.

''(II) Each recipient shall submit cost documentation as required by the one-stop delivery system.

''(III) For the 1-year period following the establishment of the account, recipients may not receive intensive, supportive, or training services funded under this title except on a fee-for-services basis as specified in clause (ii)(I).

''(IV) Amounts in a personal reemployment account shall be nontransferable.

''(B) REEMPLOYMENT BONUS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii)—

''(I) if a recipient determined eligible under paragraph (5)(C)(ii) obtains full-time employment before the 13th week of unemployment for which unemployment compensation is paid, the balance of his or her personal reemployment account shall be provided directly to the recipient in cash; and

''(II) if a recipient determined eligible under paragraph (5)(C)(iii) obtains full-time employment before the end of the 13th week after the date on which the account is established, the balance of his or her personal reemployment account shall be provided directly to the recipient in cash.

''(ii) LIMITATIONS.—The following limitations shall apply with respect to a recipient described in clause (i):

''(I) 60 percent of the remaining personal reemployment account balance shall be paid to the recipient at the time of employment.

''(II) 40 percent of the remaining personal reemployment account shall be paid to the recipient after 26 weeks of employment retention.

''(iii) EXCEPTION REGARDING SUBSEQUENT EMPLOYMENT.—If a recipient described in clause (i) subsequently becomes unemployed due to a lack of work after receiving the portion of the reemployment bonus specified under clause (ii)(I), the individual may use the amount remaining in the personal reemployment account for the purposes described in subparagraph (A) but may not be eligible for additional cash payments under this subparagraph.

''(8) PROGRAM INFORMATION AND EVALUATION.—

''(A) INFORMATION.—The Secretary may require from eligible entities the collection and reporting on such financial, performance, and other program-related information as the Secretary determines is appropriate to carry out this subsection, including the evaluation described in subparagraph (B).

''(B) EVALUATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, pursuant to the authority provided under section 172, shall, directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreement with appropriate entities, conduct an evaluation of the activities carried out under any grants awarded under this subsection.

''(ii) REPORT.—The report to Congress under section 172(e) relating to the results of the evaluations required under section 172 shall include the recommendation of the Secretary with respect to the use of personal reemployment account as a mechanism to assist individuals in obtaining and retaining employment.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and included extraneous material on H.R. 444.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the economic news over the last 8 months has been very encouraging. Republicans and President Bush have focused on creating jobs and opportunity, helping working Americans by providing tax relief, improving worker training and education to help Americans without work get back on their feet, and enhancing the competitiveness of employers both at home and abroad to ensure they continue to hire more and more American workers.

As recent data from the Labor Department shows, the U.S. is creating thousands of new jobs every month. The pro-growth agenda has created 1.1 million net new jobs over the last 8 months, and 625,000 jobs, net new jobs, I should say, in March and April alone. Moreover, the national unemployment rate declined to 5.6 percent in April, lower than the average unemployment rate during the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

While this is welcome news for working Americans, we remain committed to ensuring that every displaced worker has the opportunity to find meaningful employment and access to job-training services that will help them find good-paying jobs. As President Bush has said, one worker out of work is one too many, and we have a responsibility to help working families in times when they need it most.

Job training and worker education is more important to this effort in today's changing economy now more than ever before. Every member of our society, including those who are most vulnerable and the hardest to employ, want to achieve independence and self-sufficiency. No American wants endless reliance on our government, and I think the President recognizes that and providing personal reemployment accounts represents one more way we are helping the unemployed by specifically tailoring job training and employment services to meet their unique needs.

Giving displaced workers the resources they need and continuing this economic expansion is critically important. That brings us to why we are here today: to highlight a new and innovative approach to helping the unemployed get back on their feet. The bill before us, the Worker Reemployment Accounts Act, allows demonstration funding under the Workforce Investment Act to be used by States and local workforce investment boards for a pilot project to offer personal reemployment accounts of up to $3,000.

With the funds from these accounts, unemployed workers may purchase a variety of different services to help them find a new job and to reenter the workforce, including job training, child care, transportation, housing assistance, relocation services, career counseling, computer classes, just to name a few. And all of these are accessible through the One-Stop Career Center system where unemployed workers already seek job training assistance.

A key component of this plan allows workers who become reemployed within 13 weeks to keep the balance of their account as a cash reemployment bonus. In addition, these reemployment accounts empower individual recipients to make choices appropriate for their own circumstances. Recipients will be able to create reemployment accounts that help them navigate all of the options that are available, such as career counseling or job training for a new profession. In providing choice and flexibility, I think we get people back to work into steady, good-paying jobs sooner.

For those who are struggling to get back on their feet, we in Congress, I think, have a responsibility to look for additional solutions to help them when they need it most. The intent of this bill is clear: this new benefit supplements and enhances the services that are already available for those who are most likely to face obstacles in finding and keeping new employment, whether it be unemployment benefits or the employment training programs offered through the Workforce Investment Act.

The bill before us is a pilot project, a scaled-back version of a more comprehensive proposal that the Committee on Education and the Workforce approved last year. Our goal here is to put this program to a test, see how it works in practice, and determine whether it truly gives unemployed workers an option, a workable option to help them improve their job search. The lessons learned through this pilot project will give Congress more information on how best to serve those who are looking for work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) for their work on this measure and last year's bill as well. During hearings that we had last year, we heard from State leaders at a field hearing in Nevada about the practical benefits of these reemployment accounts in helping the unemployed. We also heard from Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, who said that the accounts ''will empower individuals by giving them more flexibility, personal choice, and

control over their job search and career.''

Over the past 2 years, we have taken numerous steps to help unemployed workers, and we are also in the process of reauthorizing the Federal job-training programs under the Workforce Investment Act. Millions of jobless workers should not have to wait for job-training reform, and Congress has an obligation this year to improve those job-training opportunities for American workers. Unfortunately, it appears, though, that some in the other body want to block major job-training legislation that would help strengthen training and retraining opportunities for American workers. I think if given the opportunity, we look forward to completing work on that legislation this year.

But Congress must act now to provide new, innovative options to help workers as quickly as possible, and the choice and flexibility available through personal reemployment accounts will help more Americans get back on their feet and find good jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 444, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill completely misses the mark. American workers need job creation. American workers also need extended unemployment benefits. This sour economy has lost 2 million jobs since President Bush took office. This bill does nothing to address these issues, the most pressing facing our workforce today. Instead, H.R. 444 creates an untested and risky job-training voucher scheme.

This voucher scheme cuts off workers from regular job-training benefits when they accept a PRA. This legislation also demeans workers by assuming that those receiving unemployment benefits need a financial lure to go back to work.

I am not sure about other congressional districts, but unemployed workers in Flint, Michigan, my hometown, and other areas of Michigan do not need an incentive to find work. They are in desperate search of work right now. They do not need an incentive to be able to afford their mortgage or to provide for their family. They need jobs.

□ 1115

I am surprised there are those in this body that think that American workers need a financial incentive to find a job. The real story behind this bill is that it simply fails to address the most pressing needs of the American worker. It is a sham.

Let us look at the real problems facing the American worker. Two million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the Bush administration, 8.2 million individuals are unemployed, 1.5 million workers have exhausted their unemployment benefits, wages have barely kept up with inflation, and this bill does nothing to address these problems.

Substantive help for American workers lies in an initiative to create jobs and to extend unemployment insurance. Yet this Republican Congress and the Bush administration has continually failed to address these needs. The last extension of UI benefits ran out late last year. Despite some meager job growth in the past few months, we remain two million jobs in the hole since the beginning of the Bush administration. The Republican answer to these problems is a pilot project for job training vouchers.

This bill brings no new resources to help American workers. Instead, it would steal funding from other proven job training programs. How could this respond to the needs of the American workers?

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to oppose this bill. We need real-world solutions to real-world problems, not unfunded, untested legislation which will not address the true needs of the American worker.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE), a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, it seems that in these debates we so often get sidetracked into discussions of ideology, and I think it is important we focus on the bill before us. I certainly have great respect for those on the minority side and understand and appreciate some of their concerns.

I think it is important that we point out that this is a pilot bill. This is not something that is going to directly impact all workers everywhere in the country. And the reason I think this is important to point out is that, as the chairman mentioned, there will be several different programs that people can allocate their money into. And let us see if Congress cannot find out exactly where people want to put their money.

So if 50 percent of the money goes to child care, and 10 percent goes to enhancing computer skills, and 40 percent goes into career counseling, pretty soon Congress is going to get a picture as to what is really important to workers and where those resources need to be allocated. This certainly represents an innovative approach to providing assistance to unemployment workers.

As the chairman mentioned, we live in a different world. I think the average worker today may have as many as four or five different jobs. And this is not necessarily because the economy is bad, it is simply because the economy is changing consistently. So almost everyone at one time or another is going to be between jobs or without a job.

I think this approach offers some unique opportunities. It certainly offers great flexibility, and this is the critical part in job training. It may have to do with computer skills, it may be earning a license to be a realtor, a financial planner, or 1 year at a community college, which I think is a tremendous option for a great many people. We feel also that child care, transportation, career counseling, relocation services, housing assistance are viable alternatives as well.

The last thing I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, is simply the fact that there are some incentives here for people to not only get a job but to have some money, some seed money to get started on their new career. For instance, as an example, a person had a $3,000 grant and $2,000 of it was spent, maybe some of it on community college, some for child care, and there was $1,000 remaining. This would leave $600 at employment that person could use to get back on their feet and $400 to be used after 6 months of employment.

So we think that this is certainly an interesting and flexible approach. I urge support of this bill, H.R. 444.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the ranking member of the committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his handling of this bill for the minority on the floor and his work on it in the committee.

And the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) is quite right. We should oppose this bill. I have to say that I think my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are simply describing a bill that is not before us, because they talk about this as being supplemental and providing flexibility to the unemployed worker.

Now, clearly, we would like to do that, because we have 8 million unemployed individuals in this country. We have 90,000 people who are exhausting their unemployment benefits a week in this country who still have not been unable to find employment, who are in desperate straits. So, clearly, there is a need for what they are describing.

But let us understand something. What they are describing in terms of flexibility is already available in the law under the WIA bill that we are in the process of reauthorizing. They can provide you child care stipends if it helps you take advantage of a computer training program or a program at the community college or a program of a collaborative in your community. They can provide you a transportation voucher to get to that program if that is what is necessary.

That is why we designed the law that way, because we know that the unemployed come to these programs, and their needs are varied. Some people have automobiles, and some people do not. Some people have access to transportation, and some people do not. Their child care came with the job, and now they have lost it. That is why we built in that flexibility in the current program.

What this says is if you go for the bait on the hook, which is a grant, that could be up to $3,000, you are then prohibited from participating in those programs unless you take the $3,000 or the $500 or the $700. Because at $3,000 you are only going to take care of 16,000 people. We have 90,000 people who are losing their unemployment benefits a week. But if you take the $500, you then have to pay for the programs that are currently available to you in your community under the WIA act for free.

What is the deal here, folks? You are no better off. It is not supplemental. You have just lost your eligibility to what may be very good, comprehensive training programs.

In my community, industry is coming to community colleges and to the work incentive force all of the time to say we would like to structure a program in the community to provide us X number of people in biotechnology and high technology and refining business, whatever it is. That is the needs in our community.

You take this $500 voucher, you lose the eligibility to go to those programs. This is neither flexible nor supplemental. It takes away what people now have available to them. And if you took this $50 million, which obviously, given the President's memo on 2006, is going to be cut from other job training programs, if you added $50 million, you could provide much more child care to those individuals who need that to participate in retraining and to get ready for the next employment opportunity or need transportation costs covered so they can get to the community college or they can get to the training program or to the licensure program, whatever it is they choose. That is all available in law today.

The Republicans have said this is Career Week. This is Career Week in the United States House of Representatives. The only career we keep dealing with is legislation that doesn't do anything. We are making a career out of providing answers that do not answer the questions that workers are asking. We have got to stop this.

We ought to get on with the WIA bill. We ought to get it reauthorized. We ought to make sure that the funding is there so that all of the flexibility that is in that law can be utilized by the 8 million American workers who are looking for jobs in this economy and have been unable to find them.

So I would hope that my colleagues would join the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) and vote against this legislation, understanding that this is harmful and, in fact, it will subtract from the total job training package that this government is making available to those unemployed and to their families.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we probably would not be here today if the other body would actually go to conference on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. But I think all of us realize that they have been unwilling to go to conference, and we believe that we have got every responsibility known to man to help those people who are unemployed and need help.

Secondly, let me say that, once again, we are getting into a debate about the perfect becoming the enemy of the good. What this bill does is set up a pilot project that allows unemployed workers who qualify the option of this $3,000 reemployment bonus. The real key here is that they, the unemployed workers, get to decide what kind of training they need, what kind of education they might need, what kind of services they may need to help them get back on their feet and into good work. They get to decide, not some bureaucrat in some office somewhere. They get to decide.

And this option of allowing them that flexibility, I think, is worth trying. That is what we are asking for today: Let us try this. Let us see what happens. Let us see if this additional flexibility for unemployed workers does, in fact, help them get the training, retraining they may need to find a good job.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) the author of this bill.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 444 for multiple reasons.

First of all, we are facing an ever-changing economy both nationally and internationally. Could you imagine just a few years ago going go to the gas station and you would not have help or an attendant, you would have a piece of technology taking your credit card, you enter it into the gas pump, or go to the grocery store where people are being replaced by technology? Can you imagine going to rental car agency and it all being done electronically? So we are facing quite a change in the world and here in the U.S.

Nevada, as my colleagues know, is one of the fastest-growing states in the country but is also the entertainment and resort capital of the world. There was a day when we depended solely on the gaming economy. Not only gaming today is number one, we are the top shopping destination and restaurant destination in the world because we have had to change and change dramatically.

The National Chamber of Commerce has said that 40 percent of the jobs in the future do not exist today. They have also said that 75 percent of the workers as we know them today must change their skills and their technology.

Then we look at what happened after 9/11. September 11 changed the world. The community of Nevada was literally out of business for 90 days. But because of the resilient business community, because of labor working in concert with our resort industry, we are coming back stronger than ever.

The Nevada impacts are such that we are now the bellwether for the economy across the United States. The economy is turning around as Nevada has turned around. People are getting back to work. In Nevada alone we have created close to 60,000 new jobs in the last year. We are in a 4.3 percent unemployment rate, a true bellweather for the economy as it is improving across the country.

And credit goes to labor and business working together. As our business communities change, as has our labor community, such as the Culinary Union working closely with business. But nationwide housing starts, all-time high; gross national product, all-time high; Wall Street, every day we are seeing improvements. Nationwide, 1.1 million new jobs since last August, 625,000 jobs in March and April alone.

But, more importantly, the greatness of society, the greatness of America is not based upon our checkbooks. It is what we do to help those folks that need help. H.R. 444 does just that. It provides a voluntary program, a voluntary program for States to choose if they want to be a part of this program. It is a demonstration project, but, more importantly, it is a new tool to train our workers in this new global environment.

The benefits, we have touched upon them this morning but I would like to cover them one more time.

Transportation. Many of these folks in Nevada have a hard time getting to the job for the interview.

Day care. Why not allow moms and dads to have some assistance? Many need a telephone, simply a telephone to help receive that call when the job is available.

And Nevada, being one of the fastest-growing States regarding the Hispanic population, we need help with language and language barriers.

There are those that will say that these tools exist today. I am sorry, but it is very complex, very confusing. This provides for a one-stop, easy access and a matter-of-fact choice. So the employee who needs help the most can make the decision and receive the balance if they are employed within the 13 weeks.

So, in summary, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important tool as we enter this new environment, provide a new tool for a new economy. It is flexible, it is voluntary, and it provides choice for the employee.

□ 1130

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of H.R. 444, and I appreciate Members' votes.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), a member of the committee.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for yielding me time, and I thank him for his work in opposition to this

bill. I think he has it exactly right, Mr. Speaker. These PRAs, as they are called, the personal reemployment accounts, are presented to us in the face of over 2 million jobs lost under this present Republican administration. One and a half million workers have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits. President Bush and the House Republicans refuse to extend those unemployment benefits despite these facts.

Even Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan thinks it is a good idea to extend those benefits. The money is already in the trust fund. It is the right thing to do morally. We have done it in the past, in the first Bush administration. We did it five times. It is the economically wise thing to do. For every dollar invested in unemployment benefits, $1.73 comes back into the economy because people that get it have needs. They have rent or mortgage payments to make. They have health care bills, car payments, education costs, groceries. That is what this economy needs right now to give those people a boost so they can survive while they are looking for a job.

But the administration and the Republicans in the House seem afraid that extending those benefits will be an admission of their failed economic policies, the fact that we have had two tax cuts for millionaires while we are fighting two wars, and regular Americans are the ones being asked to sacrifice. So these so-called PRAs are offered, actually they are reoffered as you have heard, as this is a bill that was already presented through the House and advisedly passed. It provides no employment, no unemployment benefits, no job creation. There is no new money to get people to work. In fact, it is going to be funded through cuts in existing programs. And because we are $500 billion in deficit, it is pretty clear that there is not going to be enough money there for the $3,000 that people are talking about. It is going to in fact be far less per person.

In brief, it is robbing from proven programs that are effective job-training programs for an experiment that is designed to fail. It is built on a false premise. We had Secretary Chao come before the committee and when asked why she would not extend unemployment insurance benefits, she said because the administration thought that was an incentive for people not to look for work. That is an insulting, false premise. Two million people are involuntarily unemployed during this term. For every three people looking, there is only one job. Many people that are getting a job are getting it at 21 percent less pay than the job that they lost.

Although the bill proposes $3,000, it is more likely that people will get far less. The one-stop centers that we have now are the centers that have the flexibility. They are serving the needs of people. In fact, they provide for the other things that were talked about, as the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) said. But what they want to do here is take a program that averages 5 to $6,000 in costs for job-training programs now available to individuals that have lost their jobs and substitute it for up to $3,000 which will fall far short in which they are supposed to pay for that 5 to $6,000 worth of job training and child care and transportation and housing assistance and relocation services and career counseling.

This must be a miracle $3,000 per person because it is shrinking as the needs are there. The present system, Mr. Speaker, is working. It is one that people have worked on in a bipartisan nature. This is what we need to do, not false programs, but deal with the real needs of the unemployed. Give them extended unemployment benefits and give them a chance to get a job.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Does the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) wish to control the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER)?

Mr. MCKEON. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) will control the time of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

There was no objection.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the vice-chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) for yielding me time. I thank the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) for his work on this.

The discussion I have just heard was about what this bill is not. I would like to talk for a second about what this bill is.

This is a creative opportunity at the election of the local WIA board and at the election of the applicant for the grant to take a creative approach to take someone from unemployment to employment.

Now, outside the Beltway there is a real world; and in the 22 years prior to my election to this Congress, I ran a company, a company substantially all of whose employees were second or third career which meant they might have come out of a job loss, a job transfer, or a temporary unemployment because of the birth of a child or illness or whatever. And I can tell you in this unique world that we live in there is not a one-size-fits-all formula in terms of the requirements necessary for reemployment.

To allow the option for a local board to create these personal reemployment accounts and the option for an individual to accept the waiver and apply for the funds does the following things: it takes a person who is otherwise employable but in need of specific targeted help, whether it is in specific training, whether it is in child care or whether it is in transportation, to do a tailor-made job to go into employment, and I employed people that way every day for 22 years before I came to Congress.

It is a creative way to approach the needs of some people in looking for employment.

Secondly, what is so important for us to consider today is the present-day environment. The number of unemployed has been reduced from its peak because the American economy is improving. Those that are unemployed in many cases may be those who are more in need of specialized training or help that otherwise might have been true a year ago or 6 months ago. It is only right to grant that flexibility. And as long as we cannot get an agreement to go to conference on the base bill that now lies in limbo, it is only appropriate we take the right initiative.

I want to end with this. There are two basic motivators in human nature. One is risk and the other is reward. This approach takes the reward approach and the incentive approach and even in the end has the encouragement for residual funds to remain with the grantee, if they are employed earlier than they otherwise might have been.

Any other approach is for people to fear flexibility, to fear choice, and to fear creativity. Those are not things we should fear. Just as we proved in welfare-to-work, with targeted funds, with flexibility, with child care, with training, we could take a life of dependency and turn it into a life of independency. I will subscribe to that every single time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Chairman Greenspan before the Committee on Education and the Workforce indicated that he supports the extension of unemployment benefits. And after he made that statement, of course, the President of the United States announced that he would reappoint Alan Greenspan, would extend his tenure. Well, if he does that, let us extend those unemployment benefits which Mr. Greenspan supports.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), for yielding me time. I rise in opposition to the bill.

I suppose if you are one of the 8 million unemployed Americans listening to this debate, Mr. Speaker, you wonder what this bill would mean to you. First, if you live in one of the many, many States that would not be part of this pilot program, it means nothing. Second, if you are in one of the States or counties that has the pilot program, you keep hearing about this $3,000, there is no $3,000. This bill was not funded in the President's budget.

If money would be scraped together for it, it would come out of something

else that helps unemployed people. It is up to $3,000. So someone listening to this, Mr. Speaker, should not assume that he or she is going to get a $3,000 voucher. But let us assume that you live in one of the pilot counties and the money is there to some extent. What does this mean? It means you are unemployed and you get a choice. You can either take all the services that the law presently provides like job training, like counseling, like transportation, like child care; or you can give up your right to receive those services for a year and take this check of up to $3,000 instead.

Now, if you have looked at the price of sending children to child care, $3,000 does not go very far. If you have looked at tuition at a career college or a community college, $3,000 does not go very far. If you have looked at the things that people need to do to get to work or find work, it does not go very far at all. So the premise of the bill seems to be that people are not taking jobs because it is better to stay on unemployment than it is to go get a job. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that anybody who thinks that has probably never been on unemployment.

The idea here is not that the $3,000 is going to be an incentive for people to go get a job. People are not taking jobs because the economy is not creating the jobs. For every three people looking for work in America today, there is one job. That is the problem that we ought to fix. We ought to extend unemployment benefits for those without a job. We ought to pass the transportation bill so that we put 300,000 Americans to work. We ought to adopt the Ryan proposal from yesterday that would create 100,000 new jobs for first responders to deal with our homeland security problems. That is the way to fix this problem. Not this bill.

I would urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the original author and I would describe as the father of the Workforce Investment Act. I applaud him on his good work.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 444, the Worker Reemployment Accounts Act, which offers new assistance for unemployed workers in the form of personal reemployment accounts that would help workers that need it the most return to work quickly.

I would like to thank my good friend from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) for his hard work and the things he has done in getting this legislation here, and also the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for his work and leadership in getting this bill to the floor.

With 1.1 million new jobs created in the last 8 months, and 625,000 jobs added in March and April, it is clear that our economy is strong and on the right track. The economic forecast for the manufacturing sector is also bright after adding jobs for 3 consecutive months. In fact, on Tuesday the Institute for Supply Management reported that its manufacturing employment index advanced in May for the seventh consecutive month and is now at the highest mark in 31 years. Moreover, the unemployment rate fell to 5.6 percent in April, lower than the average unemployment rate during the 70s, 80s and 90s.

As an example, my home State of California added more than 61,000 jobs from December 2003 to April 2004. Under the leadership of the President and Congress who are focusing our efforts to make America more globally competitive, our Nation's economy is strengthening and adding momentum every month. Despite these encouraging signs, we need to do more to help displaced workers get back on their feet. The Worker Reemployment Accounts Act is a step in the right direction and an innovative approach to helping workers find good paying jobs.

The bill authorizes funding for a pilot program that would help workers with personal reemployment accounts of up to $3,000 to purchase employment-related services to help them return to work. This is a flexible approach that empowers Americans to find good-paying jobs. Funds from these accounts can be used for job training, career counseling, relocation services, child care, and housing assistance among others.

One of the best elements of the plan is that any unspent balance in the account can be kept by workers who find work within 13 weeks. It is a great incentive.

The personal reemployment account will be administered through the one-stop career center system established under the Workforce Investment Act, where displaced workers already seek employment assistance. State and local workforce boards that want to participate will apply to the Secretary of Labor for competitive grants to offer personal reemployment accounts to unemployed workers.

An individual who receives an account must be receiving unemployment benefits, be identified by the State as likely to exhaust his or her benefits, and be eligible for at least 20 weeks of unemployment compensation. These accounts are a new benefit that would work in tandem with unemployment insurance as an additional vehicle for helping workers in their efforts to find good jobs. It would not create an entirely new and complicated system to administer, as some on the other side of the aisle are proposing.

Over the past 2 years, Republicans have taken numerous steps to help unemployed workers, and this is another way we are responding to needs of Americans who find themselves without work.

The U.S. economy is strong and getting stronger. By giving job seekers all the necessary resources they need to return to work, we will continue this economic resurgence to keep the U.S. jobs-creation engine running strong. The Worker Reemployment Accounts Act provides a unique approach to helping displaced workers return to good jobs and deserves every Member's support.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN).

□ 1145

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for his leadership on this issue and helping working people in our country; and, Mr. Speaker, let me say I wish that the comments of the last speaker, my colleague, were true in regards to the economy, but the facts speak to something quite different.

If we take a look at the jobs that have been created within the last several months, we find we have traded very good jobs, jobs in this country, for jobs that are paying much lower wages. When we look at the total record over the last 3 years, we find we have lost millions of jobs. When we look at the unemployment rate in this Nation, we find that many people have just given up hope, and that is why the unemployment rate may appear to be higher than it really is, but many people in this Nation who are looking for jobs cannot find jobs and have literally left the labor field altogether.

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in our economy, and the problem can first be summed by saying we do not have enough jobs. We need an economic program that will create more jobs for Americans.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, we have millions of Americans who cannot find employment, and they need help called unemployment insurance, which in every prior recession and downturn Democrats and Republicans have come together to extend unemployment benefits. We have a fund to do this. There are millions of dollars in that fund, but yet the majority refuses to allow us to vote on the unemployment compensation.

So the first issue is the issue of jobs, and we need an economic plan that will create jobs. Unfortunately, the administration has pursued a fiscally reckless economic plan that has added trillions of dollars to our national debt and is killing jobs rather than creating jobs because of government debt.

The record over the last 3 years, millions of fewer jobs here in this Nation. People are hurting, Mr. Speaker. We need to do something about it. Eight million Americans are unemployed today; 1.8 million of them have been without a job for 6 months or longer. We have record numbers of people who have exhausted their State unemployment benefits.

Since we allowed last year the expiration of the Federal unemployment insurance benefits, we have found 1.5

million workers have exhausted their State benefits without the benefit of the Federal unemployment insurance; yet, the Republican leadership has refused us a vote on this floor of an extension of the Federal unemployment insurance benefits. They know that a majority of the Members of this body would vote in favor of that legislation, and yet they deny us a vote on the extension of unemployment benefits. Nineteen billion dollars is sitting in the Federal unemployment trust account, $19 billion which is accumulated exactly for this purpose, to help the unemployed worker; and the majority of Republicans refuse to allow us a vote on extending those benefits to those who need it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a problem. We have a problem with the wrong economic program, and we have a problem of not helping those people that are unemployed.

This bill does nothing in that regard. We should be debating programs to create new job opportunities in America, and we should be extending unemployment benefits to those who do not have the employment. I regret that we are not doing that today.

I would urge my colleagues to listen to the motion to recommit, because that is the only opportunity we are going to have that will be offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) that at least will give us a chance to help us do something to help American workers.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) very much for the time, and it is a pleasure to work with him on the committee to protect the rights of workers and also to speak to the concern of unemployed Americans.

I rise to strongly oppose H.R. 444, the Worker Reemployment Accounts Act of 2004. I would like to begin with a reflection here.

Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, recently appeared in Washington to talk about unemployment and about unemployment insurance, and he said ''that when unemployment is created, through no fault of the workers' actions, then I think it is clearly to our advantage to find ways of creating support in our system, and as a consequence, in times like this, I have supported the issue of extension of unemployment insurance.'' That is Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Now, there is an urgency about this issue about unemployment, and I would submit that the solution that is being offered today by our friends in the majority is a false solution. We have the chairman of the Federal Reserve ready to recognize the urgency of unemployment insurance. It is obvious that we ought to be providing for an extension of unemployment insurance to meet the needs of those millions of Americans who are desperate today for Congress to take action. Why are they desperate? Well, let us look at what happened.

The economic record of this administration will show that over a period from January of 2001 to April 2004, there has, in fact, been a substantial increase in the unemployment rate from 4.2 percent in January 2001 to 5.6 percent in April of 2004. Let us look more closely at this.

What we have here is of great consequence to millions of Americans because in this period, from January 2001 to April 2004, we have seen long-term unemployment nearly triple. In other words, there are not only more people unemployed, but more people are unemployed for longer periods of time, which means a tremendous adverse economic impact on their families.

In January 2001, there were approximately 680,000 people in this country who were unemployed more than 26 weeks; but now, in April of 2004, under the economic policies of this administration, the unemployment rate for those who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks has gone to 1.8 million, nearly three times. This, of course, means that there is real desperation on the part of many American families to get some help.

Now, let us put this in a historical context. How do we take the economic policies of this administration with respect to job creation and with respect to the lack thereof and put it against all administrations over the last 70 years? This comparison is noteworthy because what we see here is that going all the way back to the time of Herbert Hoover, there has not been a worse condition where we have seen an actual decline in private sector jobs. In this whole arc of a 70-year period, we see in one administration after another, Democrat and Republican alike, this administration has failed to meet the tests that all other administrations, Democratic and Republican alike, have met; and, in fact, we have here an actual decline in private sector jobs, only in this administration.

So what should be the solution right now with so many people suffering? We have been told this by the Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Our unemployment system is very well structured, and it has worked the way I think we wanted it to work. Alan Greenspan again said that on March 11 of this year.

So we should be here talking today about an extension of unemployment benefits. Not only is it important in terms of recognizing the abysmal failure of an administration in dealing with the creation of jobs, but with knowing the suffering of working families who are not getting any relief whatsoever at a time when the fund, as the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) pointed out, keep building up and up. What are we going to do with all this money? Instead, we have a bill which apparently those who crafted it believe that left to their own devices the 8.2 million unemployed workers in America would prefer to simply remain jobless.

With that analysis and thus the theory that underlies, this bill is absolutely wrong. Unemployed Americans are unemployed not because they want to be, but because they cannot find jobs. Since the recession began 37 months ago, 2.2 million private sector jobs have disappeared, a 2 percent contraction in the job market. In every previous episode of recession and job decline since 1939, the number of jobs fully recovered to above the pre-recessionary peak within 31 months at the start of the recession. This time, however, it has not happened. In fact, if employment had grown by the 2.2 percent rate that occurred in the past three recessionary cycles, today's labor market would have 5.2 million more jobs. Instead, we can all point to lost jobs, and that is all we can point to and more lost jobs.

Well, the administration has responded to the situation by refusing to extend Federal unemployment benefits, an action that is already paid for by the unemployment trust fund; 1.5 million workers remain without a paycheck and without an unemployment check. The number of individuals who have exhausted their State unemployment benefits without finding work is at the highest level ever recorded.

This bill ought to be defeated. It is a nonsolution. It is time for Congress to act in bringing unemployment insurance extension to the floor of this House.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER), the author of this bill.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the top five false claims that we have heard today about H.R. 444 with some of the facts.

False claim number 5: a reemployment bonus cannot motivate workers to find jobs that do not exist. The truth: as Republicans, our tax and growth programs over the past year have created 1.1 million new jobs, 625,000 coming in March and April. These job opportunities are becoming more available, and we have to ensure that those chronically unemployed have the new tools and new skills to face this new economy.

False claim number 4: PRAs do not provide workers with greater flexibility. Rather, if workers choose a PRA, they would be prohibited from using WIA services for a full year. Mr. Speaker, the truth: reemployment accounts provide the unemployed with a means of developing an individual specific plan for regaining employment. The prohibition against WIA services is to prevent double dipping. I think that is appropriate.

False claim number 3: PRAs will be used as an excuse to not extend the

Temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program. The truth, Mr. Speaker: Republicans have consistently supported extending unemployment benefits. These PRAs are a supplemental approach to benefits and represent one more way that Republicans are using to help Americans find new jobs and get back to work quickly.

False claim number 2: reemployment accounts come at the expense of other WIA job training and employment programs. The truth, Mr. Speaker: while appropriators will ultimately determine the allocation of these dollars, the funding for PRAs will flow through the discretionary fund of demonstration projects, not the funds used for other services.

False claim number 1 on the top of the list: H.R. 444 would restrict, rather than expand, the amount of job training and other reemployment services. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have prioritized funding for job training. Reemployment accounts are a voluntary program that allows for personalized and streamlined reemployment services. No one is forced to use the account, and the purpose of the legislation is to provide the most effective use of funds for the unemployed.

□ 1200

Again, I encourage strong support for H.R. 444.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) that he ought to read the bill, because truth and facts are about what the language of the bill says.

If you read on line 16, page 15, ''For the 1-year period following the establishment of the account, recipients may not receive intensive, supportive, or training services funded under this title except for the fee-for-services basis.''

The gentleman obviously has not read the bill. That means that you either pay for it with the stipend the gentleman says he wants to give them, which provides them no additional new services, no flexibility. So do not stand up here and talk about facts or truth. Read the bill. Read the bill, and the gentleman will find out what he is doing is denying them the services that are already available to them today.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, this bill would establish a demonstration project that would ostensibly offer personal reemployment accounts to workers, providing up to $3,000 in assistance for the purpose of finding a job and paying for services that would help lead to employment.

Sounds good on the surface, but, as with every bill this administration puts forward that impacts workers, there is a catch. Employment services now offered through the One Stop Centers, at no cost to the unemployed worker, would have to be purchased, meaning that unemployed workers would now be charged for services that they can currently receive for free.

To give an idea of the difference, those who utilize One Stop job training programs right now receive an average of $5,000 to $6,000 in services, about double the maximum allowed under this bill. So we should not be fooled. The goal of this bill is not to provide additional reemployment services or job training funding for unemployed workers; rather, it is to pave the way for placing a Federal cap on these services.

In an economy with a million and a half workers who have already exhausted their unemployment benefits, reducing these services without providing any job creation program is not only bad economic policy it is outright dismissive of what these families are going through day after day, particularly women in transition, nearly half of whom are already finding Workforce Investment Act services, like local women's education and training programs, insufficient.

Mr. Speaker, the unemployed workers in this country do not need ''an incentive'' to look for work. Supporting a family without a job is incentive enough. What they need is a job. Congress should be expanding job training and job training access, not limiting them, as next year's budget does. We should be extending health and unemployment benefits to the unemployed, not letting them expire in the face of serious unemployment.

Historically, this country, Republican or Democrat administrations, have extended unemployment benefits in time of need. As a Nation, we have said we are going to help people on a temporary basis meet these unemployment challenges that they have. Not this administration. What do they say? They say, if we extend those benefits, people will not go out and look for a job. That is the opinion they have of working people in this Nation.

I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, walk in the shoes of the unemployed; understand what it means to live paycheck to paycheck. We do not have to worry about that in this body. There are folks in this country who worry about that every single day. The unemployed workers in this country deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

There was a discussion here about what would happen if workers chose to take a $3,000 personal reemployment account and their ability to access services at the Career One Stops. I just want to set the record straight.

While it is true that recipients would be prohibited from accessing intensive or training services through the One Stop career system for 1 year after the creation of the account, unless, unless the person with the account chooses to purchase services there, however, all individuals remain eligible for the core services provided by the Career One Stop. Such services include job search and placement assistance, including career counseling, where appropriate, and access to labor market information.

Now the idea here is that we allow individuals $3,000, giving them the right to choose the types of services that they think will help them get back on their feet and find a good job. They can purchase those services at the Career One Stop or they can go down the street and go to a community college if they want. But the core services that the Career One Stops provide for all individuals, these persons with the $3,000 personal reemployment accounts, would still be eligible for those core services.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) has 2½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, it is about time we address unemployment. Unfortunately, H.R. 444 is not the legislation that will truly put Americans back to work. It offers only a temporary solution for a limited pool of unemployed workers and is a poor solution to the ongoing unemployment problem of this Nation.

Rather than PRAs, personal reemployment accounts, we need across-the-board investments in the Workforce Investment Act, WIA, and the Unemployment Insurance, UI, programs. These are the existing programs that need help so a broader number of workers stabilize their lives and develop the necessary skills to secure new jobs. Proper funding of these programs would make the difference. Finding ways to give unemployed workers real jobs is the real solution to the national unemployment problem, not a bill that puts additional burdens on the States, threatening to undo the Federal unemployment system in the first place.

Let me also remind my colleagues that $1 billion invested in highways and transit creates 47,500 new jobs. If we really want to create jobs, we should be moving forward with the transportation bill. These jobs pay a living wage, give workers the opportunity to better their communities, while at the same time supporting their families.

H.R. 444 is not a real solution. The real solution would grant unemployment extensions when finding work takes longer than the length of the initial benefits, not a bill that forces workers to choose between receiving

WIA benefits or PRA benefits with no flexibility to go back to one when the other is exhausted.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 444 is false security.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT).

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for his leadership as chairman on the Committee on Education and the Workforce. He is doing a tremendous job. I also want to thank the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) for this important legislation that he has introduced. I am also a cosponsor.

Education and retraining are the keys to ensuring that the American worker is the most competitive in the world. Now, this is week three of 8 weeks that the House is dedicating to addressing issues to bring jobs back into America. These eight issues are all very important because they are costs that are outside the control of employers. They are costs that are driven by the Federal Government. We are going to lower those costs by undoing some of the work Congress has done over the last generation and freeing up employers to bring jobs back into America.

This week, we also have passed the Teacher Training Enhancement Act, the Teacher Shortage Response Act, the Priorities for Graduate Studies Act, and now we are addressing H.R. 444, the Worker Reemployment Accounts Act.

One of the things I notice about the complaints about this bill from the other side is that we want to tell people what to do. This bill gives them flexibility. They can go out and get job training. They can get child care. They can provide for transportation or career counseling. The opponents of this bill do not want to provide choices because they do not trust Americans. They want to tell people what to do with their benefits. On the Republican side, we say we trust people to make good choices if they are given some opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give an example of a mother of three, who was working at the Ratheon Corporation in Wichita, Kansas. She wanted to finish her degree, and she got laid off. She could not provide for her child care, so she had to bring her mother back in from out of town to live with her while she went back to Wichita State University and completed her degree. With this legislation, she would have been able to carry on her education while her children were taken care of; and her mother would not have had to quit her job and move into her daughter's house.

This bill gives people flexibility so they can go out and get the child care they need. It is a good piece of legislation. It is part of bringing jobs back to America, and I urge all my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition. What we should be doing today is voting to extend unemployment benefits. However, the Republican leadership will not let that amendment be offered, even though or maybe because they know it would pass.

Not only will the majority not assist workers who need jobs, but the authors of this bill assert that unemployed workers need financial incentive to get a job. Now, ask the workers whose jobs have been outsourced whether they need financial incentive to get a job. I am really shocked that the authors of this bill believe the American workers effectively need to be bribed to get a job.

American workers are not looking for handouts. They are looking for jobs. And, even worse, this bill would effectively bar the recipients of this money from receiving actual job training. Contrary to, and I must respectfully differ from the chairman, contrary to what he says, they would not get actual job services. Sure, at a job center, if they find an open computer, they might be able to use it to prepare a resume, but they will not get the counseling they need. They will not get the training they need. This bill would deny workers the important training opportunities they need.

This Nation has lost more than 2 million jobs under this administration. We should be dealing with the unemployment needs of these workers. I ask my colleagues to oppose this risky scheme.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I think all of us realize that the American economy is changing, and I think it is changing at a more rapid pace than any of us would likely know. During a hearing several months ago, I found a number of statistics that I really found unusual. If we all think back for a moment to 1999, the American economy was in full bloom, the stock market was rising, employment levels were at all-time highs, yet in 1999 the American economy lost 35 million jobs. Yes, that is right. The American economy lost 35 million jobs. But, in 1999, the American economy also created 37 million new jobs, a net gain of 2 million jobs.

Now, let us move forward 3 years to 2002. And what happened in 2002? We had a recession, we had the effects of 9/11, we had a war going on in Afghanistan, and the American economy lost 35 million jobs in 2002. The American economy, though, in 2002, only created 33½ million new jobs.

This churning that we see in the American economy has always been there, but this churning we are now seeing is happening at a much faster pace than ever before; and, as a result, the need for job training, retraining, and educational services for American workers is at an all-time high.

During our hearing, when we had Alan Greenspan in front of our committee, he said this: ''We need to increase our efforts to ensure that as many of our citizens as possible have the opportunity to capture the benefits that flow from that engagement. For reasons that I shall elucidate shortly, one critical element in creating that opportunity is the provision of rigorous education and ongoing training to all members of our society. This proposal is not novel. It is, in fact, the strategy that we have followed successfully for most of the past century and a strategy that we now should embrace with renewed commitment.''

Education and training and ongoing education and training for the American workforce is absolutely critical, Mr. Speaker.

There has been a lot said here today about the nature of our economy and what is happening, but in a U.S. News and World Report that is out today, dated June 7, Mort Zuckerman, in his editorial, says this:

''The economy is well on a tear. New jobs are being generated in large numbers. Income is growing at twice the rate of last year. And the exhilaration is such that we will probably see 5 percent growth in the gross domestic product. The jobs reports of the past few months have changed market sentiment. Sixty-one percent of private industries surveyed have added workers. That is the highest in 4 years. Business confidence has surged to a 20-year high, and business spending is exploding, with even American manufacturing joining the party. Companies that once saved every nickel are laying out more and more money as capital equipment to meet growing orders in double-digit rates.''

He goes on to say later in the article, ''We are on a trajectory toward extraordinary growth in the second half of 2004 that will beget stronger job and income growth, stronger retail spending, and accelerating demand at a time when businesses have cut costs, raising profit margins to their highest level in years.

□ 1215

''Higher profits will beget more spending, which will beget more business expansion, which will beget more income for workers which should trigger yet another increase in demand.''

Do not look now, but the surging economy may be the real October Surprise. There is a real surge in our economy; and for Americans to take advantage of that surging economy, the kind of education and training that we allow under the Workforce Investment Act and provide for them should be helpful to them. These personal reemployment accounts are a pilot project to give them the choice about the kinds of services they need, the kinds of training or retraining they need to go out and take advantage of a surging economy to get a real job for the long term.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 444, the so-called the ''Back to Work Incentive Act.''

This bill is based on flawed assumptions and is an insult to the 1.8 million Americans—22 percent of the total unemployed—who have been out of work for more than 6 months. The Republicans believe that all long term unemployed Americans simply aren't looking for jobs because they are living comfortably on an average weekly unemployment benefit of $256—or about 37 percent of their former wages. That's ridiculous!

H.R. 444 takes $50 million of valuable funding from effective programs within the Workforce Investment Act to fund ineffective Personal Reemployment Accounts (PRAs). The purpose of these accounts is to provide an incentive payment of up to $3,000 to unemployed workers to encourage them to find employment faster. It does this despite all of the research, which shows that PRAs don't work. You would think living off $256 a week would be enough incentive to find work. However, these out-of-touch Republicans believe that $256 a week allows households to pay for their mortgages, groceries, utility bills and college educations for their children.

If President Bush and House Republicans are so fond of linking bonuses to job performance, then we should offer the President a bonus if he actually creates jobs. Since President Bush came to office, 2 million American jobs have been lost. The problem with this economy isn't lazy unemployed workers, it's ineffective economic policy management.

Even more puzzling about this legislation is that the provisions of this bill do not make sense. Supporters argue that PRAs help workers get jobs because the money provided can be used for job training and other services such as child care and career counseling. However, if a worker were to get the maximum PRA of $3,000 it would not be enough to pay for job training alone, which costs on average $5,000–6,000. That doesn't take into account all the other costs unemployed workers confront.

Instead of wasting the American people's money on unproven programs, this Congress should extend unemployment benefits to the over 1.5 million workers who have exhausted their benefits and expand the funding for the free job training already provided under the Workforce Investment Act. These programs provide needy families with immediate economic relief and the necessary skills to find new jobs.

It is time that President Bush and the Republican Congress stop blaming unemployed workers for the lack of jobs in this country. Instead, the Republicans should show some leadership and take responsibility for their poor economic management.

I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 444 and ask the Republican leadership to consider legislation to actually help unemployed workers and create jobs in the United States.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 444, The Back to Work Incentive Act. The bill does nothing to help the current labor market, and offering workers reemployment bonuses does nothing to help the future of our nations unemployed and won't help put more jobs into our nation's struggling economy.

This bill is a careless attempt to replace the extension of unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed. This bill will help less than 0.2% of the unemployed and will do nothing for millions of jobless workers, particularly those out of work for more than 26 weeks.

The Back to Work Incentive provides a $3,000 voucher for only about 15,000 eligible workers. These recipients will not be able to access free core services provided through the Workforce Investment Act and they will forfeit the opportunity to get up to $10,000 in other possible Workforce Investment Act services and benefits available without cost under existing programs.

This bill also does not address the pressing problems of lack of available jobs, the need for marketable skills, and sufficient training funds for today's unemployed workers.

Mr. Speaker, in April alone 320,000 of America's workers exhausted their unemployment benefits. The Administration must come up with solutions that will provide jobs for all, not just benefits that are temporary for some. H.R. 444 doesn't cut it and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the bill before this body, H.R. 444, the Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003. More than 8.3 million individuals are out of work, and by one estimate, there are three workers for every available job. At the same time, over 1.2 million unemployed Americans who have exhausted their federal unemployment benefits are looking to Congress for urgent relief.

This sad trend means even more to the African American community. As of January 2004, the national unemployment rate was 5.6%. The African American unemployment rate was nearly twice that at 10.5%. Unemployment in this community has soared by 26% since reversing the trend of the Clinton era when African American unemployment declined by 48%; from 14.1% in January 1993 to 7.3% in December 2000.

In the City of Houston, the unemployment rate has decreased steadily from 6.6% to 6.0% from November 2003 to April 2004. This kind of trend is partly indicative of the success of job training programs that give workers the ability to not only retain employment but to improve their earning potential. The bill before us today will have a negative effect on the people of my District and the Districts of all of my colleagues and should be defeated.

H.R. 444 fails to provide the nation's most vulnerable workers urgently needed assistance and undermines key provisions of the existing Workforce Investment Act.

The crux of this legislation calls for the luring of financially strapped unemployed workers out of more intensive job training with a 'buy out' that could be as little as $500 or less. Workers who are struggling must then decide whether to sign up for training or to accept additional financial support for their families.

However, if our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would really like to help these workers, they should work to extend unemployment benefits that will provide that urgently needed family support, with no draconian cap on job training services. H.R. 444 would require the unemployed to pay for otherwise free job counseling and training services and ban them from the system if they accept a Personal Re-employment Account (PRA).

H.R. 444 would undermine our workforce training and unemployment insurance systems. This bill not only ignores those families who need the help the most, it nullifies the accountability provisions contained in our job training programs. H.R. 444 would provide little if any oversight over program dollars spent on arbitrarily-chosen training providers. State certification requirements under the current WIA system would be all but removed with the PRA's—opening the door for financial abuse with no means to correct or even measures the potential abuses. Congress just revamped the job training system in 1998 to provide a comprehensive universal system of job assistance services, yet the Majority would circumvent their own system to create a new parallel program.

This bill also fails to provide relief quickly. The Congressional Budget Office says funds for this program would not even reach workers until next year—and one out of four eligible families would not be helped until fiscal year 2005. An unemployment insurance extension can provide help to workers in a matter of weeks, not months or years—and would create urgently needed short-term economic stimulus.

Rather than preparing for another extension of unemployment insurance that will be needed in the late spring, H.R. 444 seeks to utilize precious resources to provide assistance to the smallest fraction of the unemployed. This legislation is part of a strategy to undermine and cut funding to the unemployment and job-training systems and head-off another federal unemployment benefit extension that would provide assistance to those who desperately need it.

This legislation bars those who accept Personal Re-employment Accounts from receiving counseling and training services at a one-stop employment center for one year once the funds within the account are exhausted. Unemployed workers currently receive an average of $5,000 (and as high as $10,000) worth of training services under our current WIA system, and yet many of them are unable to find a sustainable job due to the jobless stagnation of the economy. H.R. 444 would cut millions of unemployed workers off from access to needed job training or re-training programs.

In addition, the infrastructure that would be required to administer the PRAs in the base bill would take several months, if not a year to set up, limiting what immediate help we can provide the unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, for the reasons stated above, I oppose this legislation and urge my colleagues to join me.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would welcome a constructive approach to help people who are struggling with the consequences of long-term unemployment. For nearly three years now, Oregon has had one of the highest unemployment rates in the entire country. Largely for circumstances beyond our control—the national and international economies, the manipulation of energy markets—Oregonians have suffered. Unfortunately, this bill falls short of providing meaningful help to the 65,000 Oregonians who have lost their jobs during the Bush presidency.

This bill caps the benefit at $3,000 per unemployed worker and provides no assurance that it will approach that much for most people. The one thing that is guaranteed is that recipients are cut off from other Federal programs for one year after they use their ''reemployment accounts.'' This is a poor bargain with no guarantee of success.

Congress can and should do better than create a cynical shell game of taking away funding from existing Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs and reusing them in a lesser, unestablished program. Congress should place its priorities behind what the President campaigned on and existing, productive programs: enhancing Pell Grants, fully funding the WIA, and using the $14 billion already in the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Congress has established programs that are useful, flexible and creative that can help our 8.2 million unemployed workers. This new draconian proposal is ill-advised and unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 656, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. KILDEE

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I am in its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Kildee moves to recommit the bill H.R. 444 to the Committee on Education and the Workforce with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be referred to as the ''Emergency Worker Assistance Act''.

SEC. 2. EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT SUPPORT.

Section 171 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2916) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT SUPPORT.—

''(1) GRANTS TO STATES.—From the amount appropriated under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall make grants to States to provide financial and employment support to individuals who have exhausted their State unemployment benefits and can no longer receive, after the week of December 20, 2003, Federal extended temporary unemployment compensation, and who continue to be unemployed as of the date of enactment of the Emergency Worker Assistance Act. The eligibility criteria and benefit amounts under this paragraph for such individuals shall be the same as for such individuals prior to December 20, 2003, under the Federal extended temporary unemployment compensation program.

''(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2004 and 2005 such sums as may be necessary to carry out this subsection.''.

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide continued unemployment support to ensure adequate emergency worker assistance and for other purposes.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KILDEE) is recognize for 5 minutes in support of his motion to recommit.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, my motion to recommit is simple: It authorizes the extension of unemployment benefits.

Mr. Speaker, 1.5 million workers have exhausted their initial unemployment benefits. These individuals have yet to find employment due to this very sour economy. Despite the need for these workers to provide for their families, this Congress has turned a deaf ear. We have continually failed to ensure the financial security of these workers and their families.

The question for this House is how can we pass legislation providing job-training vouchers when there are no jobs. We need to first ensure the financial security of those workers who have lost their jobs, and we have not done that. This amendment does that by authorizing the extension of unemployment benefits.

Mr. Speaker, we have a moral responsibility today. In Michigan and many other States around the country, job growth is nonexistent or anemic. Nationally, 8.2 million individuals are unemployed. The unemployment rate is 5.6 percent. It is quite evident that American workers want to work. The simple truth is that jobs do not exist. How long are we going to ignore the needs of the American workforce.

The underlying legislation is completely inadequate in addressing the problems facing the American worker. We cannot simply authorize a job-training voucher program. That does not meet the need. We have to act today, and we have to act now by extending unemployment benefits.

I want to remind Members that the House has considered nearly identical language to this motion to recommit during the debate on the Community Services Block Grant bill. I urge Members to support my motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for the Kildee motion to recommit H.R. 444. This motion does what is needed. The real problems that our country faces today are a lack of jobs and a lack of adequate unemployment benefits for unemployed workers who cannot find jobs. There are currently over 8 million workers who are unemployed. There are also an additional 4 million workers who are so discouraged about the job situation where they live that they are no longer looking for work, and there are another 4 million workers working part-time because they cannot find full-time work. What these workers need is income support until the economy fully recovers and produces enough jobs for them to support their families. These workers are not looking for a handout. They want to work, but where they live, there are no jobs.

Extended unemployment benefits give them the hand up that they need. Average benefits are only about $200 a week. This amount is hardly enough to incentivize them to stay home indefinitely, yet that is what some would have us believe.

Mr. Speaker, 85,000 workers a week are exhausting their unemployment benefits; long-term unemployment is at the highest level in decades. The Kildee motion simply provides a minimum level of human decency to these hard-working Americans. They paid into the unemployment system, and the unemployment trust fund has over $19 billion in it. Instead of pushing ineffective reemployment account voucher schemes, we should be providing unemployment support. Even Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, has supported such an extension. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In conclusion, I would say adoption of my motion to recommit would really begin to touch immediately the needs of those people who are unemployed, rather than this anemic approach offered in the bill itself. I urge that we support the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) rise in opposition to the motion to recommit?

Mr. BOEHNER. I do, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means that deals with this.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this motion to recommit. This Republican Congress provided additional assistance to the unemployed when it was needed. Through laws passed in 2002 and 2003, nearly 8 million laid-off workers received more than $23 billion in special Federal-extended unemployment benefits. Let me repeat that. Nearly 8 million people received $23 billion in additional help. We continued that temporary program twice last year when unemployment was rising and the economy was shedding jobs.

Fortunately, today that situation has dramatically improved. The economy recently has been growing at the fastest rate in 20 years. President Bush's tax relief worked to turn the economy around. That is why unemployment continues to fall. During the past 12 months, unemployment rates have dropped in every region of the country, including in 47 States. Today's unemployment rate is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Last month saw one of the steepest drops ever in the number of long-term unemployed. Nearly 1 million new jobs have been created this year alone, 138 million Americans are working now,

more than ever before in our Nation's history.

This suggests what we always knew, people want to work, not collect more unemployment benefits. Republicans are working hard to keep this tremendous economic and job growth going. This Democrat motion goes in the opposite direction. It will not help provide critical training for those seeking jobs.

Mr. Speaker, let us reject this motion to recommit.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) has pointed out, we have extended unemployment benefits on several occasions and have provided tens of billions of dollars in support for those extensions.

The motion to recommit, if Members believe this is going to provide unemployment extensions to people, they are kidding themselves. What the Kildee motion does is create a new program within the Workforce Investment Act to extend unemployment benefits. This is not the usual unemployment system that we have that works really well. Under this proposal, we create a new program that is not funded. There is no funding in this bill for the program that is being created, and all this is going to do is bring false hope to millions of Americans who are out there trying to seek work who are on unemployment.

But the worst part of the motion to recommit is that it totally eliminates the underlying bill. For those of us who believe personal reemployment accounts are a good idea and that projects ought to be initiated to allow people up to $3,000 to find the kind of training, retraining, and education they need in order to gain good employment, that entire bill is eliminated under the gentleman's motion to recommit.

I would urge my colleagues, let us not engage in a facade; let us not make empty promises to people who need our help and need our help badly. This is a new program. It is not funded. It will not extend unemployment benefits. Again, the worse part about it is it would eliminate the entire underlying bill and the personal reemployment accounts that we think will be helpful for American workers who are out of work. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the motion to recommit H.R. 444. We must support the workers who are desperately trying to find work before their benefits run out. Their families are the reason we must absolutely extend unemployment benefits, not pass legislation that will fundamentally change the Federal unemployment benefits system, like H.R. 444.

We need a real solution like extending unemployment benefits so families have the means to be healthy and safe when their jobs are no longer secure. How else will these families pay their heating bill, clothe their children, and feed their family?

These workers want work and seek work, and we must help them as they get back on their feet again. There is still too little job creation to write off the Federal Extended Benefits Program.

Mr. Speaker, today, 8.4 million people are out of work, 2.6 million private sector jobs have been lost since the beginning of the Bush Administration. Even worse, long-term unemployment is at the highest level in 10 years. As of April 2004, over 1 million people, in my home State of California, were unemployed.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle believe they are helping unemployed workers by creating these personal reemployment accounts. But my constituents are not writing me on a weekly basis asking for a brand new unemployment system. They simply want their unemployment benefits to continue until they find a job.

H.R. 444 is not the fix they are seeking. If my colleagues really listened to what the unemployed workers wanted they would grant families the security of benefits while they continue to seek work. That's why I urge my colleagues to support this motion to recommit H.R. 444 so we can address what workers really want.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clauses 8 and 9 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes, as ordered, on passing H.R. 444 and suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3866.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 199, nays 216, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 224]

YEAS—199

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Becerra
Bell
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Capps
Cardin
Cardoza
Carson (IN)
Case
Clay
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costello
Cramer
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Dooley (CA)
Doyle
Edwards
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Gephardt
Gonzalez
Goode
Gordon
Green (TX)
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hoeffel
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley (OR)
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
John
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kleczka
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Lucas (KY)
Majette
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Sandlin
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Strickland
Stupak
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Turner (TX)
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NAYS—216

Aderholt
Akin
Bachus
Baker
Ballenger
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Bereuter
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burns
Burr
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole
Collins
Cox
Crane
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Cunningham
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeLay
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
English
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Goodlatte
Goss
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Houghton
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Isakson
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas (OK)
Manzullo
McCotter
McCrery
McHugh
McInnis
McKeon
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Osborne
Ose
Otter
Oxley
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton

Schrock
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Tancredo
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Toomey
Turner (OH)
Upton
Vitter
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—19

Ballance
Brady (PA)
Burton (IN)
Capuano
Carson (OK)
Chandler
DeGette
DeMint
Deutsch
Emerson
Fossella
Gerlach
Johnson, Sam
Lynch
Quinn
Ruppersberger
Smith (MI)
Tauzin
Watson

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1252

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin, Mr. GILCHREST, and Mrs. CUBIN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia and Mr. GORDON changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 213, noes 203, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 225]

AYES—213

Aderholt
Akin
Bachus
Baker
Ballenger
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Bereuter
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Burgess
Burns
Burr
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Castle
Chabot
Chocola
Coble
Cole
Collins
Cox
Crane
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Cunningham
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeLay
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
English
Everett
Ferguson
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gingrey
Goode
Goodlatte
Goss
Granger
Graves
Green (WI)
Greenwood
Gutknecht
Hall
Harris
Hart
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Houghton
Hulshof
Hunter
Hyde
Isakson
Issa
Istook
Jenkins
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (IL)
Jones (NC)
Keller
Kelly
Kennedy (MN)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kline
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Latham
LaTourette
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas (OK)
Manzullo
McCotter
McCrery
McHugh
McInnis
McKeon
Mica
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy
Musgrave
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neugebauer
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nunes
Nussle
Osborne
Ose
Otter
Oxley
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Rehberg
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Ryun (KS)
Saxton
Schrock
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherwood
Shimkus
Shuster
Simmons
Simpson
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Sweeney
Taylor (NC)
Terry
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Toomey
Turner (OH)
Upton
Vitter
Walden (OR)
Walsh
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOES—203

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Alexander
Allen
Andrews
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Becerra
Bell
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brown (OH)
Brown, Corrine
Capps
Cardin
Cardoza
Carson (IN)
Case
Chandler
Clay
Clyburn
Conyers
Cooper
Costello
Cramer
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Dooley (CA)
Doyle
Edwards
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Gephardt
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green (TX)
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hoeffel
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley (OR)
Hostettler
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
John
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (RI)
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kleczka
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Lucas (KY)
Majette
Maloney
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mollohan
Moore
Moran (VA)
Murtha
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sabo
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanders
Sandlin
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sherman
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Strickland
Stupak
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Turner (TX)
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Wexler
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn

NOT VOTING—18

Ballance
Brady (PA)
Burton (IN)
Capuano
Carson (OK)
DeGette
DeMint
Deutsch
Emerson
Feeney
Fossella
Gerlach
Johnson, Sam
Lynch
Quinn
Smith (MI)
Tauzin
Watson

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised 2 minutes remain in this vote.

□ 1303

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 224, I was detained by constituents from my District. I would have voted "no" on H.R. 444.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 656, the texts of H.R. 4409 and H.R. 4411 will be appended to the engrossment of H.R. 444; and H.R. 4409 and H.R. 4411 are laid on the table.

(For texts of H.R. 4409 and H.R. 4411 see proceedings of the House of June 2, 2004, at page H3628 and H3638, respectively.)

ANABOLIC STEROID CONTROL ACT OF 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 3866, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3866, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 408, nays 3, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 226]

YEAS—408

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Baca
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Ballenger
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bass
Beauprez
Becerra
Bell
Bereuter
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Bradley (NH)
Brady (TX)
Brown (OH)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Burgess
Burns
Burr
Buyer
Calvert
Camp