purpose was to increase its emphasis on preserving and enhancing our natural resources, moving away from the old land idling purposes of the early 1980s.

My bill would further this effort by encouraging volunteer nonprofit organizations to use the tools of the Conservation Reserve Program to preserve and enhance the upkeep of environmentally sensitive lands in rural communities that might otherwise be neglected. Such organizations would be responsible for complying with all other aspects of the new Conservation Reserve Program and my proposed legislation makes no changes to the eligibility of land allowed to be entered into the CRP.

I am hopeful that my colleagues can join me in moving this legislation forward and allow rural communities to better preserve wildlife and water quality in rural areas.

THE IRS

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, in April of 1996, a deadly tornado struck Fort Smith, Arkansas, causing widespread destruction, yet almost a full 2 years after this tragedy, the citizens of this town are yet again facing another terror. That is right, the IRS.

IRS agents are auditing these families for not correctly reporting their casualty losses that they incurred. These folks have not been targeted by the IRS because they bilked or cheated the U.S. Government out of money by claiming fraudulent tax deductions or utilizing illegal tax shelters. These people are being audited because the IRS just does not agree with how they reported their houses were ripped from their foundations and their lives torn apart.

The reprehensible actions prompted a survivor whose house was destroyed to say that ''While the death and destruction is behind us, the tornado, the IRS, is never going away.'' She said this, of course, under an agreement of anonymity, because she fears that her comments will spur further retaliation from the IRS.

Outrageous, Mr. Speaker. It is time to take the fear and the terror out of the hearts of Americans. The time to overhaul the IRS is long overdue.

PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues a disturbing story from yesterday's Washington Post. Jacqueline Lee of Bethesda fell off a 40-foot cliff in the Shenandoah Mountains while hiking in the summer of 1996, was taken by helicopter to a Virginia hospital with fractures of her skull, arm and pelvis. Her HMO refused to pay the hospital, saying it failed to obtain ''preauthorization.''

This decision by Jacqueline's HMO defies common sense, yet we all know that she is not alone. More and more Americans are finding themselves up against a wall that keeps them from getting the health care services that they need.

This is wrong. When you are suffering from an accident or illness, you need to focus and have all your energies involved in getting well. You should not have to battle with your insurance company for the coverage that you deserve.

This body needs to act on commonsense managed care reform. I urge the Republican leadership of this House to stop blocking reform, schedule a vote on managed care reform today.

THE TAX CODE

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, while Republicans are working to sunset the tax code and consign it to the ash heap of history, the President has announced that to do so would be irresponsible.

Leaving the President's relationship with young interns aside, I think it is time for the President to come clean about another very disturbing matter: Just what is the President's relationship with the IRS?

I am sure that the President would say that there is no improper relationship with the IRS, but the facts suggest otherwise. After all, why would the President defend the current tax code, all 7 million words of it? Why else would the President think that overhauling the tax code would be an irresponsible scheme? Does the President really believe that a flat tax would not be simpler, more fair, more transparent than the current tax code?

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the President to tell us the truth about his improper relationship to the agency that presides over the most corrupt, most unfair, most outrageous tax code in American history.

THE E-RATE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Congress has agreed that it is imperative to allow our schools access to the Internet. That is why an E-Rate was established under the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This provided a discount between 20 to 90 percent, depending on the need of individual school districts and libraries, to purchase information services.

In my district, Portland schools alone would save $3 to $4 million a year in equipment and hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for operations. Across the country, schools and libraries can expect to save over $2 billion a year. Clearly, the E-Rate will make a difference in society's efforts to prepare our children for the future. Unfortunately, it is not clear that the FCC shares our commitment, having provided only one-third of what will be required by the FCC's own estimates.

The FCC will fortunately reconsider its position in 6 months. It is time for Members of Congress to show their support for this critical program. I urge my colleagues to join me in a letter to the FCC in support of the E-Rate.

MORE ON MANAGED CARE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask those of you this morning how many of you felt pain, the pain of having a youngster break his leg, and your managed care insurance indicated that it does not meet the deductible; or the pain of having an older parent whose treatment is not able to be gotten in the jurisdiction in which you live, and you have to transport them across State lines, the United States of America, and being denied by your HMO that service for that elderly parent that you so care and love for.

I tell you it is interesting that in a House that should believe in the Bill of Rights, the Republican leadership does not want us to pass the Patient Bill of Rights, giving rights to those of you who pay every day for your health insurance, who time after time after time get denied by some bureaucrat when your doctor says you need the care.

Republicans, they say, wait a while, we will do it in increments, one by one by one. While you are staying there, not surviving, not getting the care you need and having the bureaucrat tell you what kind of hospitalization you need, what kinds of surgery you need, what kind of prescriptions you need.

It is time to pass the Patient Bill of Rights. I do not know what is wrong with the Republican leadership, but I would say to them that this body should support the Patient Bill of Rights.

ALBANIANS IN KOSOVA ARE TARGET OF GENOCIDE

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, systematic, brutal genocide has once again reared its ugly head. Ethnic Albanians in Kosova are being slaughtered. And after all this, an official at

the State Department referred to Albanian freedom fighters as terrorists. Shame, Mr. Speaker.

I hope I am wrong. I hope I am wrong. But it appears that the State Department is justifying the brutal killing behavior of a dictator called Milosevic and by doing so is legitimizing the slaughter of innocent men, women and children of Albanian descent.

Beware, Congress. This matter in Kosova can be the next Bosnia. I would also like to add that Albanian men, women and children are God's children as well.

One last reminder. England referred to George Washington years and years ago as a terrorist.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2883, GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS ACT TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS OF 1998

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 384 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 384

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2883) to amend provisions of law enacted by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 to improve Federal agency strategic plans and performance reports. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 2(l)(6) of rule XI are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADY). The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend, the gentleman from the State of Florida (Mr. STEARNS) to speak out of order.

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to proceed out of order for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

OLYMPIC COMMITTEE'S 5TH OLYMPIC DINNER

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the consideration of the Members. I want to call the Members' attention to an upcoming event, the United States Olympic Committee's fifth Olympic dinner.

As co-chair of this dinner, I can assure the membership this will be a great event. The President and Vice President usually attend, along with Members of the House and Senate. Dozens and dozens of Olympic athletes, many making their first appearance since performing in Nagano, will be there so that we all can honor them.

The day of the dinner, many of the Olympians will visit areas schools as part of the Champions in Life program, as athletes get a firsthand opportunity to instill the values of the Olympic movement in the minds and hearts of young people in this community.

The United States is one of the few countries in the world whose government does not support its Olympic athletes financially. Our athletes are supported by the American people, volunteers and contributors. The least we can do is endorse their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the dinner is April 29 and I hope all my colleagues will attend.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend, the gentelwoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that once again the Committee on Rules has reported a completely open rule. H. Res. 384 will provide for fair and thorough debate of House Resolution 2883, the Government Performance and Results Act Technical Amendments of 1997.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. For the purpose of amendment, the rule makes in order the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight amendment in the nature of a substitute as an original bill.

Under the rule, any germane amendment may be offered and any Member of this House who wishes to improve upon the bill may do so. However, priority recognition will be given to those Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

After the amendment process there will be another opportunity for those who oppose the bill to be heard through the motion to recommit with or without instructions. The rule provides only one waiver which pertains to a 3-day layover requirement for the committee reports.

Finally, to facilitate consideration of H.R. 2883, the rule allows the chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes and reduce voting time to 5 minutes as long as any postponed question follows a 15-minute vote.

Mr. Speaker, as the custodians of our Nation's purse strings, Congress has an incredible responsibility. We have been entrusted to safeguard the hard-earned money that the taxpayers send to Washington. It is our responsibility to see to it that those dollars are spent wisely and that the American people get the biggest bang for their buck, and that is what today's debate is all about.

With passage of the Government Performance and Results Act in 1993, we took an important first step toward fulfilling our responsibility. Very simply, the Results Act requires Federal departments and agencies to set measurable performance goals in an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Federal Government, a common sense request to achieve a very important goal.

However, it appears that many Federal agencies do not feel quite the same sense of responsibility to the taxpayers that Congress does. Many agencies were reluctant to develop the strategic plans required by the act. And finally, when they did submit their initial drafts, the results were disappointing at best.

For example, very few agencies linked their mission statements to the actual statutory authority under which they operate. This suggests that agencies do not set their goals and priorities based on what the agency has been designed and mandated to do.

Another troubling pattern among the agencies was their insufficient attention to fundamental problems, such as management weaknesses, reliability of data, or duplicative functions. These are essential issues that must be examined by any organization that hopes to be even remotely effective.

But even though these agencies earned failing grades for their plans and appeared to be way off course in terms of fulfilling their primary functions, they were still unwilling to exert the extra effort required to make the grade. Congress asked the agencies to go back and improve upon their plans, but under existing law the agencies do not have to submit any additional information for three more years.