STOP THOSE WHO WOULD SAVE CASTRO

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, they cannot have it both ways on Castro. Here, Business Week quotes a fellow named Andreas who is a businessman who is lobbying for Castro. It says the embargo has been a total failure; it ought to be ended.

Then you have got Time Magazine saying the purpose of Castro's visit to New York was very specific: He is desperate to end the embargo. With no more subsidies from the Soviet Union, the economy has ground to a halt. Normalized trade with a huge market 90 miles north would make all the difference for Castro. If the embargo is not working, why is Castro so desperate to get rid of it?

We have got two groups lobbying for Castro. We have the capitalists who want to take advantage of the slave economy and exploit Cuban workers, and we have the ideologues, like a couple of our colleagues, who drooled all over Castro to give him gifts when he went to New York. They are in concert now. They are in coalition.

But we will press forward with Helms-Burton. The American people cannot stand Castro. They know what he is doing to the Cuban people. We are going to succeed, in stopping him. We are going to succeed in passing Helms-Burton and preventing this coalition of capitalists and ideologues from saving him.

WHAT IS THE TRAIN WRECK?

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam Speaker, we are coming to the close of this congressional session, but it is the toughest part. You see, the Republicans have passed the Gingrich budget which makes deep cuts in Medicare, imposes new taxes on working families and, frankly, President Clinton and many of the congressional Democrats have said we find this unacceptable.

So how will Speaker GINGRICH force through these changes? What he suggested we do is, frankly, to have the so-called train wreck, in other words, we do not appropriate money for Federal agencies so they have to turn out the lights, and even worse, we would basically not extend the debt ceiling of the United States as is necessary.

What is the debt ceiling? It is basically the full faith and credit of this Government behind our financial obligations. Now, there is a coalition of 130 Republicans led by a Michigan Republican Member of this House who has come up with suggestions to the Treasury Department printed in this morning's Washington Times about how they can get by even if we do not extend the debt ceiling. Do you know what they suggest, these Republicans? They suggest that we do not send the refunds to people for their income tax returns next year. That is one of their bright ideas.

The second one is, do not put money in the Social Security trust fund. That is the height of irresponsibility.

A BALANCED BUDGET AND THE DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I would suggest to the previous speaker, learn the facts and that would enhance everybody's conclusion of what is best for this country.

I am usually not critical on a partisan basis. But looking at what some of the Democrats have suggested, looking at what Secretary Rubin looks into that television camera and tells the American people is less than the honest truth.

I think it is important, No. 1, that we end up with a balanced budget in this country. I think it is important that we use the single, sole leverage that we have, and that is holding back the vote on yet again increasing the debt ceiling of the United States of America. We have increased this debt ceiling 77 times since 1940. It has become a matter of tradition. I say it is enough.

I say let us do what was done in 1985 and 1986 during Gramm-Rudman. Let us do what was done to President Bush in 1990. Let us use the debt ceiling vote as leverage.

I would ask everybody to attend the Joint Committee on Policy meeting tomorrow at 10 a.m.

CONGRATULATIONS TO WORLD CHAMPION ATLANTA BRAVES

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, on Saturday night in Atlanta, Justice was served—served a high fastball he parked in the right field seats.

That was all the help Tom Glavine would need. With one of the greatest pitching performances of all time, the Atlanta Braves won the World Series—they are world champions.

Since day one, the Braves were on a mission—a quest. They dug deep within themselves to find the courage, the raw courage, to win the NL East—to beat the Rockies, the Reds, and, finally, the Cleveland Indians—the second best team in baseball.

The old saying—great pitching beats great hitting—held true. The Braves' pitchers were too much for the Indians. But another old saying did not hold true. Nice guys do not always finish last. Congratulations to the World Champion Atlanta Braves. Go Braves, go Braves, go Braves.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO REINFORCE OUR COMMON BOND

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

Mr. ROTH. Madam Speaker, yesterday we almost witnessed the divorce of a nation. Our great friend and neighbor to the north, Canada, just narrowly avoided splitting in two over linguistic and cultural differences. Canada may yet split up, and linguistic tensions there were not erased by the razor-thin victory of unity yesterday.

Canada's example is a cautionary tale for the United States. We are the most diverse nation in the world. We have over 190 languages here. They have only two.

Within 5 years, one out of every seven Americans will not speak English. We have to make English our official language so we can keep that commonality, so we can keep one Nation, one language, one people. It is important, as important as never before.

So I am asking the Members here to sign onto the bill, H.R. 739, so we can keep our commonality. I have introduced this legislation that seeks to reinforce the common bond that holds our country together, the English language.

We encourage people to study other languages and speak another language at home, but when you vote, when you work with the Government, it has to be done in the English language so we can keep that commonality.

TAXPAYER-FUNDED POLITICAL ADVOCACY

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

Mr. LARGENT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support a much needed lobbying reform measure which would put an end to what has come to be known in Washington as Welfare for Lobbyists. I am quite certain that if taxpayers knew that their hard earned money is being spent to subsidize the political activity of certain Federal grant recipients, they would be as outraged as I am over this practice.

As Members of Congress, we have been entrusted by the citizens of this country to oversee how Federal tax dollars are spent. If we continue to allow the incestuous practice of taxpayer-subsidized political activity, we will have betrayed this trust.

We are in the middle of a budget battle. We are trying to reign in wasteful Government spending in the name of fiscal responsibility. How can we face our constituents and say that we have

met that responsibility, if we continue to line the pockets of lobbyists with 39 billion dollars' worth of public money?

These lobbyists are exploiting their status as nonprofit grant recipients. The time has come to say ''no more.'' Too many groups have spent too much money to promote the narrow self-interests of too few. Say ''no'' to this outrage by voting ''yes'' to the Istook-McIntosh-Ehrlich amendment. Vote to end Welfare for Lobbyists.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2492, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 239 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 239

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2492) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes. The bill shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). The gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], 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. DIAZ-BALART asked and was given permission to insert extraneous material into the RECORD.)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 239 is a closed rule, which is entirely appropriate in this circumstance in order to provide for the timely consideration of the legislative branch appropriations bill. The President vetoed the conference report on this bill on October 3, after it had easily passed both the House and Senate, and in his veto message, claimed he had no problem with the bill's content, merely its timing. Therefore, we do not need to relive the amending process, and rather than going through the process of a veto override attempt, we should pass this bill quickly so that we can move on to the remaining spending bills.

The rule provides for consideration of the bill in the House, with 1 hour of general debate, to be equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. Also, the rule provides one motion to recommit.

House Resolution 239 brings to the floor H.R. 2492, which is identical to the conference report on H.R. 1854, which passed the House on September 6 by an overwhelming vote of 305 to 101. This bill has strong bipartisan support, and even the President described the bill in his veto message as ''A disciplined bill, one that I would sign under different circumstances.'' The House will have shortly completed action on all the spending bills, and the President has now signed both the military construction and agriculture appropriations measures. When H.R. 2492 reaches the President's desk, hopefully the President will also sign this bill, this time.

One issue that arose at the Rules Committee has been debated in many settings, including during debate on the rule on the Transportation appropriations conference report last week—gift ban legislation. Many of us would like to see action on this issue as soon as possible, and in case any of you missed the announcement by the majority leader last week, our leadership is planning to have a lobbying reform bill and tough new gift restrictions on the House floor by November 16. According to the majority leader, the Senate language will serve as the starting point, and later this week, we will be holding a hearing at Rules on the issue. Many Members would like the opportunity to improve on the Senate language, and therefore merely attaching the Senate bill to an appropriations measure in the House is not the way to proceed now that we have a commitment to move gift reform as a separate piece of legislation. Although it was argued that the legislative branch appropriations bill was ''an appropriate vehicle,'' it is nonetheless not germane to attach the Senate gift ban to this bill. Let's give the topic of gift reform the opportunity to be fully debated in the context of its own legislation.

As a Member of Congress who serves on both of the Speaker-appointed committees, and in my role on the Committee on House Oversight, I am very proud of the reforms achieved in the legislative branch appropriations bill, based on the recommendations by House Oversight. We had some tough choices to make, but getting our own House in order and cutting our own budget was a necessary and important first step in the long and difficult road toward achieving a balanced Federal budget.

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall from the House's consideration of this bill in June, and again in September, H.R. 2492 incorporates House oversight plans to greatly reform the internal workings of the House of Representatives. This bill is below the subcommittee's 602(b) allocation and is over 8 percent below last year's spending level. Additionally, H.R. 2492 consolidates offices and paves the way for the privatization of some functions that may be less costly when performed by the private sector.

I would like to commend Chairman THOMAS, Chairman PACKARD, ranking member FAZIO, and of course Chairman LIVINGSTON, for their excellent work in bringing this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 239 is necessary to preserve the agreements reached in conference, and agreed to in the House and Senate, on legislative branch appropriations. I urge adoption of both the rule and the bill.

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

□ 1030

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 2492. I oppose this rule for one simple reason: The Republican majority has again denied the House the opportunity to use this bill as the vehicle to finally consider and pass real congressional reform.

The Republican majority has spent the last 10 months talking about the reforms the American people voted for last November. But talk is all we have gotten when it comes to enacting a gift ban and reforming lobby laws. I must ask, Mr. Speaker, is the Republican party all talk and no action? The majority leader has time and again promised action on these issues, but time and again the Republican majority has denied the full House the opportunity to take a vote on what the Republicans claim they were elected and sent to Washington to do.

My colleague, the gentlewoman from Utah [Mrs. WALDHOLTZ], has stated her intention to introduce new gift ban and lobby reform legislation and our chairman, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], has stated his intention to hold hearings on this matter. But, I must again ask why do we need to keep on talking about this issue when the opportunity to take action is right here and right now. Because this rule will not allow the House to consider this issue today that I will oppose ordering the previous question on this resolution and will seek to amend the rule to permit the House to consider gift ban and lobby reform legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard many promises from the Republican leadership that this important reform will be considered by November 16. But Mr. Speaker, since January promises have been made only to be broken. I do not question the sincerity of the pledges made by my chairman or my Rules Committee colleague, but again, I must ask why wait when we can act right now?

Mr. Speaker, when the Rules Committee considered this rule 2 weeks ago, I offered an amendment to the rule proposed by the Republican majority. My amendment would have allowed for the consideration of the gift ban and lobby reform legislation sponsored by my friend, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BRYANT]. At that meeting—2 weeks ago Mr. Speaker—