

have on homeowners, on mortgage interest rates, on student loans and on automobile loans could be devastating to your constituents and mine. I am just wondering when we will be able to see a clean debt ceiling bill come to the floor of this House.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman would yield further, I thank the gentleman for the question. I do know that the President and the Speaker have discussed this issue by phone and we will continue to work with the White House to determine the time frame for the debt limit extension.

It is also my belief that we can reach an agreement on a suitable downpayment for the balanced budget at that time.

As the gentleman will recall, the President was presented with a debt ceiling extension in November which he vetoed pursuant to the advice of the Secretary of the Treasury. The Secretary of the Treasury assured the President that he could manage affairs without that debt ceiling extension that the President vetoed at that time, and the Secretary of the Treasury has assured us that he can continue to do so until March 1. In the meantime, we are talking with the White House about the conditions under which we can send forward a debt ceiling increase that also is accompanied by a suitable downpayment on the balanced budget.

Mr. BONIOR. I just wish to advise my friend from Texas and his esteemed colleague on the other side of the aisle that we have filed a discharge petition, and we have Members who have signed it, to bring a clean debt ceiling to this floor. We invite responsible Members of the other side of the aisle who want to make sure that this does not happen to this country, that our credit rating is not besmirched, to join us so that we can bring this bill to the floor and we can get on with the business of this country without the threat hanging over our head that now looms there.

I thank my colleague.

Mr. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BONIOR. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan, the distinguished minority whip, permitting me to inquire of the distinguished majority leader.

Next Thursday, February 1, is the occasion of the annual National Prayer Breakfast, and traditionally we are accommodated so that we do not have votes in the House before, say, 10:30 or 11 o'clock, because most Members like to participate in this event, which is held off the Hill.

After inquiring of the distinguished majority leader's staff, I am advised that you have allocated for that in the schedule, and I just wanted to confirm that.

Mr. ARMEY. The gentleman is absolutely correct. We are scheduling no votes before, probably, 12 o'clock on

Thursday morning, and I guess I could encourage, and I am sure the gentleman would agree, that it is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to share that time together at the National Prayer Breakfast on Thursday morning. The schedule will surely accommodate that.

————— HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourns to meet at noon tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

————— ELECTION OF MEMBER TO COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I call up a privileged resolution (H. Res. 343) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 343

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and he is hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Ways and Means: Mr. Hayes of Louisiana.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

————— ELECTION OF MEMBER TO COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 344) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 344

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

To the Committee on Ways and Means: Michael McNulty of New York.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

————— RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a Member of the Committee on International Relations:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

New York, January 24, 1996.

The SPEAKER,

House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I hereby resign my position as a member of the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) effective upon ratification by the full House of my membership on the House Ways and Means Committee.

While I look forward to returning to my assignment on Ways and Means, I wish to thank Chairman Gilman, Ranking Member Hamilton, and all the HIRC members for the many courtesies extended to me during my service on that panel.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL R. McNULTY,
Member of Congress.

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

————— EXTENDING AUTHORITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RELATING TO DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2353) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend certain expiring authorities of the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to delivery of health and medical care, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, and to concur in the Senate amendments with amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Clerk read the Senate amendments and the House amendments to the Senate amendments, as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF EXPIRING AUTHORITIES.

(a) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE PRIORITY HEALTH CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.—(1) Effective June 29, 1995, section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking out "after June 30, 1995," and all that follows through "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "after December 31, 1996".

(2) Section 1712(a)(1)(D) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995," and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1996".

(b) DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE.—Section 1720A(e) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1997".

(c) PILOT PROGRAM FOR NONINSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVES TO NURSING HOME CARE.—Section 1720C(a) of such title is amended by striking out "September 30, 1995," and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1997".

(d) NEGOTIATED INTEREST RATES.—Section 3703(c)(4)(D) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1997".

(e) MORTGAGES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT IMPROVEMENTS.—Section 3710(d)(7) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1997".

(f) ENHANCED LOAN ASSET SALE AUTHORITY.—Section 3720(h)(2) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1996".

(g) AUTHORITY OF LENDERS OF AUTOMATICALLY GUARANTEED LOANS TO REVIEW APPRAISALS.—Section 3731(f)(3) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1997".

(h) AGREEMENTS FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.—Section 3735(c) of such title is amended by striking out "December 31, 1995" and inserting in lieu thereof "December 31, 1997".

(i) USE OF DATA ON COMPENSATION FOR CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS.—Effective March 31, 1995, section 7451(d)(3)(C)(iii) of such title is amended by striking out “April 1, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(j) HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—Section 7618 of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(k) ENHANCED-USE LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY.—Section 8169 of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(l) AUTHORITY FOR COMMUNITY-BASED RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR HOMELESS CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL VETERANS AND OTHER VETERANS.—Section 115(d) of the Veterans’ Benefits and Services Act of 1988 (38 U.S.C. 1712 note) is amended by striking out “September 30, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(m) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM OF COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY.—Section 7(a) of Public Law 102-54 (38 U.S.C. 1718 note) is amended by striking out “fiscal years 1991 through 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “the period beginning on October 1, 1991, and ending on December 31, 1997”.

(n) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN FURNISHING SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS VETERANS.—(1) Section 3(a) of the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-590; 106 Stat. 5136; 38 U.S.C. 7721 note) is amended by striking out “fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995,” and inserting in lieu thereof “fiscal years 1993 through 1997”.

(2) Section 12 of such Act (106 Stat. 5142) is amended by striking out “each of the fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “each of fiscal years 1993 through 1997”.

(o) HOMELESS VETERANS’ REINTEGRATION PROJECTS.—(1) Section 738(e)(1) of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11448(e)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(D) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1996”;

“(E) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1997.”

(2) Section 741 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 11450) is amended by striking out “October 1, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “October 1, 1997”.

(p) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in subsections (a)(1) and (i), the amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 1995.

(q) RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS.—The following actions are hereby ratified:

(1) The furnishing by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of care and services by virtue of section 1710(a)(1)(G) of title 38, United States Code, during the period beginning on July 1, 1995, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) The furnishing by the Secretary of services in noninstitutional settings by virtue of section 1720C of such title during the period beginning on October 1, 1995, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) The use by any director of a Department of Veterans Affairs health-care facility of data on rates of compensation paid to certified nurse anesthetists in a labor market area under section 7451(d)(3)(C) of such title during the period beginning on April 1, 1995, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(4) The furnishing by the Secretary of care for homeless chronically mentally ill and other veterans by virtue of section 115 of the Veterans’ Benefits and Services Act of 1988 (38 U.S.C. 1712 note) during the period beginning on October 1, 1995, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(5) The furnishing by the Secretary of work therapy and therapeutic transitional housing

by virtue of section 7 of Public Law 102-54 (38 U.S.C. 1718 note) during the period beginning on October 1, 1995, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(6) Grants made by the Secretary of furnish services to veterans under section 3 of the Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Services Programs Act of 1992 (38 U.S.C. 7721 note) during the period beginning on October 1, 1995, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

House amendments to the Senate amendments:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment to the text of the bill, insert the following:

TITLE I—EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORITY
SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITIES UNDER TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE PRIORITY HEALTH CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.—(1) Section 1710(e)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking out “after June 30, 1995,” and all that follows through “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “after December 31, 1996”.

(2) Section 1712(a)(1)(D) of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995,” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1996”.

(b) DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE.—Section 1720A(e) of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(c) PILOT PROGRAM FOR NONINSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVES TO NURSING HOME CARE.—Section 1720C(a) of such title is amended by striking out “September 30, 1995,” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(d) NEGOTIATED INTEREST RATES.—Section 3703(c)(4) of such title is amended by striking out subparagraph (D).

(e) MORTGAGES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT IMPROVEMENTS.—Section 3710(d) of such title is amended by striking out paragraph (7).

(f) ENHANCED LOAN ASSET SALE AUTHORITY.—Section 3720(h)(2) of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1996”.

(g) AUTHORITY OF LENDERS OF AUTOMATICALLY GUARANTEED LOANS TO REVIEW APPRAISALS.—Section 3731(f) of such title is amended by striking out paragraph (3).

(h) AGREEMENTS FOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.—Section 3735(c) of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(i) USE OF DATA ON COMPENSATION FOR CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS.—Section 7451(d)(3)(C)(iii) of such title is amended by striking out “April 1, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “January 1, 1998”.

(j) HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—Section 7618 of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(k) ENHANCED-USE LEASES OF REAL PROPERTY.—Section 8169 of such title is amended by striking out “December 31, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITIES UNDER OTHER PROVISIONS OF LAW.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR COMMUNITY-BASED RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR HOMELESS CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL VETERANS AND OTHER VETERANS.—Section 115(d) of the Veterans’ Benefits and Services Act of 1988 (38 U.S.C. 1712 note) is amended by striking out “September 30, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

(b) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM OF COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY.—Section 7(a) of

Public Law 102-54 (38 U.S.C. 1718 note) is amended by striking out “fiscal years 1991 through 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “the period beginning on October 1, 1991, and ending on December 31, 1997”.

(c) SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS VETERANS.—The Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Service Programs Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-590; 38 U.S.C. 7721 note) is amended—

(1) in section 2, by striking out “September 30, 1995,” and inserting in lieu thereof “September 30, 1997”;

(2) in section 3(a)—

(A) by inserting “(1)” before “Subject to”;

(B) by striking out “fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995,”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) The authority of the Secretary to make grants under this section expires on September 30, 1997.”; and

(3) in section 12, by striking out “each of the fiscal years 1993, 1994, and 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “each of fiscal years 1993 through 1997”.

(d) HOMELESS VETERANS’ REINTEGRATION PROJECTS.—(1) Section 738(e)(1) of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11448(e)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(D) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1996.”

(2) Section 741 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 11450) is amended by striking out “October 1, 1995” and inserting in lieu thereof “December 31, 1997”.

SEC. 103. RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS TAKEN DURING PERIOD OF EXPIRED AUTHORITY.

Any action taken by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs before the date of the enactment of this Act under a provision of law amended by this title was taken during the period beginning on the date on which the authority of the Secretary under that provision of law expired and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act shall be considered to have the same force and effect as if the amendment to that provision of law made by this title had been in effect at the time of that action.

TITLE II—OTHER PROVISIONS
SEC. 201. CODIFICATION OF HOUSING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND CHANGES IN THEIR FREQUENCY.

(a) CODIFICATION OF HOUSING RELATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) Chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 3735 the following new section:

“§ 3736. Reporting requirements

“The annual report required by section 529 of this title shall include a discussion of the activities under this chapter. Beginning with the report submitted at the close of fiscal year 1996, and every second year thereafter, this discussion shall include information regarding the following:

“(1) Loans made to veterans whose only qualifying service was in the Selected Reserve.

“(2) Interest rates and discount points which were negotiated between the lender and the veteran pursuant to section 3703(c)(4)(A)(i) of this title.

“(3) The determination of reasonable value by lenders pursuant to section 3731(f) of this title.

“(4) Loans that include funds for energy efficiency improvements pursuant to section 3710(a)(10) of this title.

“(5) Direct loans to Native American veterans made pursuant to subchapter V of this chapter.”

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3735 the following new item:

“3736. Reporting requirements.”.

(b) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The Veterans Home Loan Program Amendments of 1992 (Public Law 102-547; 106 Stat. 3633) is amended by striking out sections 2(c), 3(b), 8(d), 9(c), and 10(b).

SEC. 202. OTHER REPORT REQUIREMENTS.

(a) REPORT ON CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN PROGRAMS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress, not later than March 1, 1997, a report on the advantages and disadvantages of consolidating into one program the following three programs:

(1) The alcohol and drug abuse contract care program under section 1720A of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The program to provide community-based residential care to homeless chronically mentally ill veterans under section 115 of the Veterans' Benefits and Services Act of 1988 (38 U.S.C. 1712 note).

(3) The demonstration program under section 7 of Public Law 102-54 (38 U.S.C. 1718 note).

(b) HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary shall submit to Congress, not later than March 31, 1997, a report setting forth the results of a study evaluating the operation of the health professional scholarship program under subchapter II of chapter 76 of title 38, United States Code. The study shall evaluate the efficacy of the program with respect to recruitment and retention of health care personnel for the Department of Veterans Affairs and shall compare the costs and benefits of the program with the costs and benefits of alternative methods of ensuring adequate recruitment and retention of such personnel.

(2) The Secretary shall carry out the study under this paragraph through a private contractor. The report under paragraph (1) shall include the report of the contractor and the comments, if any, of the Secretary on that report.

(c) ENHANCED USE LEASES.—The Secretary shall submit to Congress, not later than March 31, 1997, a report evaluating the operation of the program under subchapter V of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 203. CONTRACTS FOR UTILITIES, AUDIE L. MURPHY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.

(a) AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT.—Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into contracts for the provision of utilities (including steam and chilled water) to the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. Each such contract may—

(1) be for a period not to exceed 35 years;

(2) provide for the construction and operation of a production facility on or near property under the jurisdiction of the Secretary;

(3) require capital contributions by the parties involved for the construction of such a facility, such contribution to be in the form of cash, equipment, or other in-kind contribution; and

(4) provide for a predetermined formula to compute the cost of providing such utilities to the parties for the duration of the contract.

(b) FUNDS.—A contract may be entered into under subsection (a) only to the extent as provided for in advance in appropriations Acts.

(c) ADDITIONAL TERMS.—The Secretary may include in a contract under subsection (a) such additional provisions as the Secretary considers necessary to secure the provision of utilities and to protect the interests of the United States.

In lieu of the Senate amendment to the title of the bill, amend the title so as to read: "An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out

certain programs and activities, to require certain reports from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes."

Mr. STUMP (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the amendments be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not plan to object, and I yield to the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] for an explanation of his request.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 1995 the House passed H.R. 1536, H.R. 1575, H.R. 2289, and H.R. 2353. These bills extended a variety of VA authority for veterans health care and benefits. The other body combined the provisions of these 4 bills and substituted them in the bill S. 991 as an amendment to H.R. 2353 on January 5, 1996.

We now have been able to work out these compromises on those expiring authorities. This agreement is reflected in the amendments we are asking unanimous consent for now.

The amendment also authorized utility contracts for the Audie L. Murphy Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Chairman SIMPSON has given his commitment to address the remaining unresolved issues during the second session of the Congress.

We are seeking unanimous consent now because these must be enacted quickly. We hope the Senate will act on it tomorrow so that the expiration of these authorities will not adversely impact veterans depending on the VA for benefits and services. I hope all Members will support this amendment.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2353, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take one moment and thank my colleague and the ranking member on the other side, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], for his help in finalizing these bills.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I will be brief.

As the distinguished chairman has indicated, this bill was actually necessary. It was not passed in the first session, it was sent to the Senate. They did not act on it. This will help the veterans to be able to do some wonderful things.

Mr. Speaker, with that brief explanation, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNUAL REPORT OF DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, without objection, referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 308 of Public Law 97-449 (49 U.S.C. 308(a)), I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Department of Transportation, which covers fiscal year 1994.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 25, 1996.

□ 2000

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MONTGOMERY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

BALANCING THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GREENWOOD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, tonight I had longstanding plans to be with a very special group of my constituents from Bucks and Montgomery Counties. I was very much looking forward to being there. But tonight's business was far too important to miss.

What we have done tonight is literally make a down payment on balancing America's budget, a project that this side of the aisle has worked on very hard for all of this year. We have not met our commitments. We have not reached the accord that we had hoped to reach with the White House. But what we have done tonight in a bipartisan fashion, with the agreement of the President, is to agree to agree on those things where we do not have a difference of opinion, and we have done that. But our work is still cut out for us.

Mr. Speaker, we must reach accord, we must compromise, we must find a way to reform our entitlements, to reform our Medicare system, to save it