they can call themselves a deficit hawk, I do not know how we will ever get the budget in order if we allow sacred cows to keep grazing in the budget year after year, hidden behind a screen, not being able to be exposed out in front, and I really think just holding this at last year's level, this freeze level, makes all the sense in the world.

Mr. Chairman, I only wish I thought of it. So I hope all of my colleagues vote for the gentleman's amendment.

□ 1515

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOSS) assumed the chair.

SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Ms. FURSE. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the amendment of the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK]. I think that the U.S. public wants us to cut where we can and spend wisely. It is their money. It is taxpayer money, and they want us to spend it wisely.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to talk about four security budgets that are being cut at the same time we are increasing the CIA budget. These four security budgets, I would suggest, are the budgets for law enforcement, local law enforcement; budgets for protection for children; for protection of seniors; and I would like to speak a little bit about the Coast Guard, because in my district, the security threat is on our streets. It is on the sea, where our fishermen go through dangerous waters. It is for our children, who are in dangerous homes or in schools that are dangerous. Then I also think our threat is for our seniors' health care.

Mr. Chairman, our law enforcement officers in the district I represent would be ecstatic, in fact they would be unbelieving, if somebody said we are going to increase your budget by about 4 percent. Their budgets are being cut. Yet, we have a problem of security on our streets.

In the State of Oregon, we are extremely concerned, because last year 38 children died in Oregon because of neglect or abuse. One of the reasons, it is my belief, that those children died, is that there was not a place for them to go from dangerous homes. There were not enough social workers to follow their care. Why not? Because we keep cutting those kinds of budgets. We should be protecting our children. Our children are the most important thing for us to protect.

Mr. Chairman, then our seniors. I want to talk a little bit about their health care. It is vital that the health care of seniors be protected, yet we see cuts being proposed, large cuts in Medicare, because we do not have enough money.

I represent a district that has a coastal area. It has the most dangerous place where the river comes out into the ocean. That bar is perhaps the most dangerous in the world. We have a wonderful Coast Guard station. Every day the Coast Guard protects our security, the security of fishing women and men who cross that bar. They also do tremendous work in drug interdiction. But guess what? Their budget has been cut. That budget is a real security budget. It is a budget that real men and women need.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard that the CIA budget has actually decreased, but in fact if we look at the figures since 1980, true, there has been a decrease since 1989, but if we look from 1980 to 1996, we see an overall increase of 80 percent. Imagine, just imagine, an 80-percent increase in education, health care, law enforcement.

I think it is our absolute duty here to spend the public's money wisely. The most wise and commonsense way to spend it is to look at every budget and figure out, are we giving them enough? Could we cut something? But to increase this budget 3.9 percent this year does not make common sense. The American people want common sense. They want us to spend their money wisely. Let us hold it at last year's rate, and let us have a commonsense approach to security.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

Mr. Chairman, I will just point out to my colleagues that I am as sympathetic as they are to the fact that we have reduced some of the most important domestic programs in this country. In fact, I supported both the Blue Dog budget and the Clinton budget, which I think in overall budgetary terms were more balanced than the alternative which was adopted by the House.

But I have to remind my good friends and colleagues who have suggested that we can just take this money from defense and intelligence and move it over to the domestic side; that, unfortunately, is not the way the budget works here. If we make the reductions in intelligence, the money is going to go over and be spent on defense, because it is all within the same budgetary item.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard a lot today about the NRO. This committee has dealt effectively and supported John Deutch in his efforts to get control over the NRO. We have significantly reduced the carryforward funds and used it for other crucial defense priorities.

Having said that, we are in the midst of a very important modernization of our signals and imagery collection systems. What we are trying to do is to modernize so we will have fewer but more capable systems and that they will ultimately save money, because we are able to shut down equipment and facilities that will save us money over the longer term and still give us a very capable system.

Again, I want to remind my colleagues, everybody gets up here today and talks about the CIA. The CIA is just a small fraction of the overall intelligence budget. I voted with my colleagues to make that number known, the aggregate number known. The vast preponderance of funds that we have in the intelligence budget are used to assist the men and women who are serving us today very effectively in the military all over the world. It is the ability to give them rapid intelligence so they can go in and find a relocatable Scud launcher and destroy it that will save American lives in the future.

In the gulf war we were vulnerable to that situation because we could not find those relocatable Scud launchers. Now we have improved intelligence capabilities that will allow us to do that and to target them rapidly and to protect and save American lives.

Mr. Chairman, I would urge my colleagues today to oppose the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK].

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. I am glad to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK], for whom I have enormous respect.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I would just point out to the gentleman, when he says if we make this cut it goes not to domestic but to defense programs, that is so because the House voted it that way. There is nothing in the law or Constitution that would require that. We would have the option.

The chairman of the Committee on Appropriations on the House side has just gone through the difficult process of doing the allocations of funds among subcommittees. If we were to reduce that by $1.5 billion plus, he could then take that out of the national security allocation and give it to others. Indeed, interestingly, $1.5 billion is a figure that, as I understand it, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee has said he needs to distribute to other domestic programs to prevent real carnage, so this one amendment would ease that.

It is true if we reduce this authorization and made no other change, they would gobble it up; but we have, by the same vote that we reduce this authorization, the ability to reduce overall appropriations and allow the reallocation. It is entirely within our decision.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK].