[Mr. STUMP]. I thank the Democratic Members who are truly making this a bipartisan effort.

ERGONOMICS

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

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, I want to give my colleagues a brief course today on a new word called ergonomics. It is confusing because it sounds a little bit like ebonics or economics. Why are we hearing more about it lately? Because OSHA is starting to promulgate and write a rule that will hurt every American small business.

Since ergonomics a tough word to remember, I will spell it out. The E in ergonomics stands for expensive. It will cost small business an arm and a leg to comply.

The R is for redtape and the regulatory nightmare it would create. The G is for grab more power by the big labor unions, and that is their goal. The O is for OSHA, attempting to control every nook and cranny in the workplace.

The N is for no, because no definitive science exists to support such a standard. The O, once again, is for OSHA for overzealous. The M is for the medical experts who do not know what causes ergonomic injuries yet. The I is for if, because if you think this is a bad rule or the EPA-proposed standards were bad, wait until you see this. The C is for common sense and the lack of it in proposing this idea, and the S is for science and the need for a well-respected National Academy of Science report before we promulgate this rule.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The Chair would remind all persons seated in the gallery that they are guests of the House, and the rules of the House prohibit either approval or disapproval of the remarks of any speaker.

IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR WIC

(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 respond to a letter printed in this morning's New York Times by my friend and my colleague from the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON]. The gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] writes that the President's request for $76 million in funds for the women, infants and children program is based on old census data.

The statement is simply inaccurate. The $76 million figure is based on numbers submitted from the States to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in early April of this year. These are not House Member numbers. These are not administration numbers. These are the numbers from the united States in this country. These numbers are in fact only a few weeks old. More importantly, these figures indicate that without the full $76 million requested by the President, 360,000 women and children will be removed from the WIC Program.

Does the majority party really want to take milk, cereal, and formula off the breakfast tables of thousands of needy families? I do not think so.

Democrats are united in our opposition to the WIC reductions. I urge my Republican colleagues to join us in voting to restore the full amount of the President's request for WIC.

COMMITTEE FUNDING RESOLUTION

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 136 and ask for its immediate consideration:

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 136

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the resolution (H. Res. 129) providing amounts for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fifth Congress. The resolution shall be considered as read for amendment. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on House Oversight now printed in the resolution shall be considered as adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution, as amended, to final adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on House Oversight; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LINDER] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], 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, House Resolution 136 is a closed rule providing for consideration of House Resolution 129, a resolution which authorizes funding for committee salaries and expenses for 17 standing committees of the House of Representatives and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the 105th Congress.

House Resolution 136 provides for consideration of the committee funding resolution without intervention of any point of order. The rule also provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on House Oversight will be considered as adopted.

This resolution provides 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman of the ranking minority member of the Committee on House Oversight. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, as is the right of the minority.

Mr. Speaker, the process established by this rule for the consideration of House Resolution 129 is not any different than the process established for previous committee funding resolutions. Under clause 4(a) of House rule XI, committee funding resolutions are privileged on the House floor and unamendable.

As the minority knows, it is unnecessary to craft a rule to bring up the committee funding resolution unless there is a need to waive points of order that could legitimately be sustained against the resolution. In this case, such a waiver is necessary to address what is clearly a technical violation of the rules of the House.

Specifically, clause 2(d)(2) of House rule X requires committees to vote to approve their oversight plans for submission to the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight and the House Oversight Committee by February 15 of the first session of each Congress.

In addition, the rule prohibits consideration of a committee funding resolution if any committee has not submitted plans by February 15. The House rule also prohibits consideration if these plans were not adopted in an open session with a quorum present. It is quite well known to both sides that certain committees were unable to organize before February 15 because the committee assignment process had not been completed by that time. As a result, those particular committees were obviously unable to assemble and vote to approve their oversight plans in a timely manner.

Today, I am pleased to report that each committee has submitted an approved oversight plan to the Government Reform and Oversight Committee and the House Oversight Committee. I want to commend the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the chairman, for working hard again to produce sufficient funding for House committees to complete their work.

It is clear that he had to balance an assortment of concerns with limited funding at his disposal, and the product of his work under extraordinarily tight fiscal constraints will help guarantee that the available funding is spent where it is needed most.

I urge my colleagues to support the rule so that we may proceed with debate and consideration of the committee funding resolution.

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

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume; and I thank my friend, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LINDER], for yielding me the customary half hour.

Mr. Speaker, this rule provides for consideration of the committee funding resolution for this Congress. On March 20, Mr. Speaker, we took up a rule for committee funding along with an enormous slush fund for political investigations; and a majority of my colleagues, in their wisdom, defeated it.

Today's rule provides for an additional 5 percent increase in committee funding, which will bring the total increase in committee funding to 14 percent, an increase that I think is unjustified, particularly, Mr. Speaker, because most of it will be put toward a slush fund and a political investigation of Democrats. But today's bill contains only funding for committees not involved in extra investigations, and for some committees it contains a fair amount of money for the minority.

As the ranking minority member on the Rules Committee, I would like to thank my chairman, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], for his fair treatment of the minority. When I was chairman of the Committee on Rules, we also gave the minority one-third of the committee's salary money; and I appreciate the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the chairman, continuing in this fair tradition.

I would like to encourage other committee chairs to follow the example of the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the chairman, and treat the minority members as fairly as he treats his majority members. The committee's report says that only 8 out of 17 committees follow the one-third allocation of the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the chairman, and I believe all the committees should follow it.

Mr. Speaker, normally our rule would be unnecessary because this resolution would be privileged. But the Republicans instituted a rules change requiring committees to vote on oversight plans and submit those plans to the House Oversight Committee. If committees did not get their plans in on time, their funding resolution would be subject to a point of order.

□ 1045

Mr. Speaker, today we are seeing yet another Republican rule change, another Republican rule violated, another Republican rule violation waived.

I am not suggesting that the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] is unjustified in asking for the waiver. After all, his committee is being held responsible for other committees' failure to comply with the new Republican House rules. But, Mr. Speaker, this making the rules and this breaking the rules is nothing new. It is another in a long list of Republican rules changes that prove too hard to follow, like the rule requiring a three-fifths vote for tax increases that my Republican colleagues have waived over and over and over and over again.

So let me repeat, Mr. Speaker. The gentleman from California is not responsible for the need for this waiver because of circumstances over which he had no control. His committee, the Committee on House Oversight, was forced to go up to the Committee on Rules and ask for this rule to waive points of order.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 136, I call up the resolution (H. Res. 129) providing amounts for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the 105th Congress and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 129

Resolved,

SECTION 1. COMMITTEE EXPENSES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—With respect to the One Hundred Fifth Congress, there shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives, in accordance with this primary expense resolution, not more than the amount specified in subsection (b) for the expenses (including the expenses of all staff salaries) of each committee named in that subsection.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $7,656,162; Committee on Banking and Financial Services, $8,901,617; Committee on the Budget, $9,940,000; Committee on Commerce, $14,576,580; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $10,125,113; Committee on House Oversight, $6,100,946; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $4,815,526; Committee on International Relations, $10,368,358; Committee on the Judiciary, $10,699,572; Committee on National Security, $9,756,708; Committee on Resources, $9,876,550; Committee on Rules, $4,649,102; Committee on Science, $8,677,830; Committee on Small Business, $3,906,941; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $2,456,300; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $12,483,000; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $4,344,160; and Committee on Ways and Means, $11,066,841.

SEC. 2. FIRST SESSION LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount provided for in section 1 for each committee named in subsection (b), not more than the amount specified in such subsection shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 1997, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 1998.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $3,791,039; Committee on Banking and Financial Services, $4,363,817; Committee on the Budget, $4,970,000; Committee on Commerce, $7,122,959; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $5,002,127; Committee on House Oversight, $3,093,200; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $2,358,040; Committee on International Relations, $5,145,358; Committee on the Judiciary, $5,054,800; Committee on National Security, $4,729,454; Committee on Resources, $4,800,014; Committee on Rules, $2,306,407; Committee on Science, $4,263,672; Committee on Small Business, $1,936,471; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $1,276,300; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $6,141,500; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $2,084,368; and Committee on Ways and Means, $5,387,934.

SEC. 3. SECOND SESSION LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount provided for in section 1 for each committee named in subsection (b), not more than the amount specified in such subsection shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 1998, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 1999.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $3,865,123; Committee on Banking and Financial Services, $4,537,800; Committee on the Budget, $4,970,000; Committee on Commerce, $7,453,621; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $5,122,986; Committee on House Oversight, $3,007,746; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $2,457,486; Committee on International Relations, $5,223,000; Committee on the Judiciary, $5,644,772; Committee on National Security, $5,027,254; Committee on Resources, $5,076,536; Committee on Rules, $2,342,695; Committee on Science, $4,414,158; Committee on Small Business, $1,970,470; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $1,180,000; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $6,341,500; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $2,259,792; and Committee on Ways and Means, $5,678,907.

SEC. 4. VOUCHERS.

Payments under this resolution shall be made on vouchers authorized by the committee involved, signed by the chairman of such committee, and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Oversight.

SEC. 5. REGULATIONS.

Amounts made available under this resolution shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Oversight.

SEC. 6. ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY.

The Committee on House Oversight shall have authority to make adjustments in amounts under section 1, if necessary to comply with an order of the President issued under section 254 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or to conform to any reduction in appropriations for the purposes of such section 1.

SEC. 7. OFFSET OF INCREASE IN COMMITTEE EXPENSES.

Any net increase in the aggregate amount of expenses of committees for the One Hundred Fifth Congress over the aggregate amount of funds appropriated for the expenses of committees for the One Hundred Fourth Congress shall be offset by reductions in expenses for other legislative branch activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to House Resolution 136, the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in House Resolution 129 is adopted.

The text of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

Resolved,

SECTION 1. COMMITTEE EXPENSES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—With respect to the One Hundred Fifth Congress, there shall be paid out

of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives, in accordance with this primary expense resolution, not more than the amount specified in subsection (b) for the expenses (including the expenses of all staff salaries) of each committee named in that subsection.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $7,656,162; Committee on Banking and Financial Services, $8,901,617; Committee on the Budget, $9,940,000; Committee on Commerce, $14,535,406; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $10,125,113; Committee on House Oversight, $6,050,349; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $4,815,526; Committee on International Relations, $10,368,358; Committee on the Judiciary, $10,604,041; Committee on National Security, $9,721,745; Committee on Resources, $9,876,550; Committee on Rules, $4,649,102; Committee on Science, $8,677,830; Committee on Small Business, $3,906,941; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $2,456,300; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $12,184,459; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $4,344,160; and Committee on Ways and Means, $11,036,907.

SEC. 2. FIRST SESSION LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount provided for in section 1 for each committee named in subsection (b), not more than the amount specified in such subsection shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 1997, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 1998.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $3,791,039; Committee on Banking and Financial Services, $4,363,817; Committee on the Budget, $4,970,000; Committee on Commerce, $7,122,959; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $5,002,127; Committee on House Oversight, $3,042,603; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $2,358,040; Committee on International Relations, $5,145,358; Committee on the Judiciary, $5,054,800; Committee on National Security, $4,719,454; Committee on Resources, $4,800,014; Committee on Rules, $2,306,407; Committee on Science, $4,263,672; Committee on Small Business, $1,936,471; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $1,276,300; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $5,992,229; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $2,084,368; and Committee on Ways and Means, $5,366,700.

SEC. 3. SECOND SESSION LIMITATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Of the amount provided for in section 1 for each committee named in subsection (b), not more than the amount specified in such subsection shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 1998, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 1999.

(b) COMMITTEES AND AMOUNTS.—The committees and amounts referred to in subsection (a) are: Committee on Agriculture, $3,865,123; Committee on Banking and Financial Services, $4,537,800; Committee on the Budget, $4,970,000; Committee on Commerce, $7,412,447; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $5,122,986; Committee on House Oversight, $3,007,746; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $2,457,486; Committee on International Relations, $5,223,000; Committee on the Judiciary, $5,549,241; Committee on National Security, $5,002,291; Committee on Resources, $5,076,536; Committee on Rules, $2,342,695; Committee on Science, $4,414,158; Committee on Small Business, $1,970,470; Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, $1,180,000; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $6,192,230; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $2,259,792; and Committee on Ways and Means, $5,670,207.

SEC. 4. VOUCHERS.

Payments under this resolution shall be made on vouchers authorized by the committee involved, signed by the chairman of such committee, and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Oversight.

SEC. 5 REGULATIONS.

Amounts made available under this resolution shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Oversight.

SEC. 6. ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY.

The Committee on House Oversight shall have authority to make adjustments in amounts under section 1, if necessary to comply with an order of the President issued under section 254 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or to conform to any reduction in appropriations for the purposes of such section 1.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] and the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON] each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS].

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

House Resolution 129 is the second installment, if you will, of committee funding for the 105th Congress. If my colleagues will recall, in House Resolution 91, which the House passed a short time ago, we funded one of the standing committees, the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, and assisted in maximizing the utilization of staff with the creation of a reserve fund. The other committees were maintained at the then-current House rules provision until a second funding resolution could be created. House Resolution 129 is that second funding resolution. It contains funding for 18 standing committees of the 19 and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The dollar amounts funding these committees are roughly the same as in House Resolution 91. There are, however, in particular committees, various reductions which equal about $550,000 over the 2-year period of the 105th Congress. The total amount of increase for these committees from the 104th Congress to the 105th Congress is 4 percent. That is 2 percent a year; 1997, 1998.

The committees determine for themselves the distribution of the expenditure between the years, but in the aggregate, the amount of this resolution is a very modest increase of 2 percent a year for the 105th Congress.

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

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

Our greatest frustration, of course, was not with this portion of committee funding. Many Members on the other side of the aisle, obviously, were upset and I think outraged by the amount of funding and the uncontrolled situation with the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] and his committee. In some other matters in this area, frankly, there are some differences on this side, but generally there is not strong disagreement with what the committee is doing.

We are glad to see in general that some of the things that were tried are now being returned to the way they had operated in the past, in a more regular order. This Congress does the people's business, and while great focus is placed on the numerical activity that will occur here on the floor in the budget sense, the real question is how well we are doing our people's business.

There is a frustration there as well, not so much with what is happening in this committee but generally on the floor of the House of Representatives. Issues that need to be addressed, from campaign finance reform to children's health, do not seem to be moving. We are in danger in the budget process of not simply ignoring deadlines, which would sound somewhat arbitrary, but the pressure of tax cuts and other things there that may balloon the deficit in the out years loom once again.

So our concerns here are to make sure that, not just in a budgetary sense but from an operational sense, are we doing the business of the people of this country? Are we trying to improve the standard of living for every working American to make sure they have health care, that their children can get a decent education? That is what the resources that are being discussed today are meant to do. And the real question in my mind is: Is this Congress leading the country in the right direction? There we have a very significant debate.

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume and say that I find it somewhat ironic that the gentleman from Connecticut cites a number of issues that he believes are overdue for correction, and he finds himself mentioning campaign finance reform when, in fact, in the 103d Congress the gentleman's party controlled the House, the Senate, and the Presidency, and during that time nothing was presented to the President.

In this particular congressional situation, Republicans have control of the House and the Senate and his party controls the Presidency. Notwithstanding that, we have moved fundamental welfare reform. We are on the verge of announcing a historic budget agreement. And if the gentleman mistakes the lack of movement in the committees for the lack of movement between the House, the Senate, and the administration, I can assure the gentleman that as the final touches are put on a budget package, the committees will be more than busy.

That is one of the reasons we want to move the financing for the committees, so that when they get the budget specifics they will be able to move relatively quickly.

I do think it is important to remind my colleagues and those who are watching and listening that at the beginning of the historic 104th Congress we cut committee staff fully by one-third. We maintain that one-third reduction. We cut by about a third the funding for the committees, and with

modest increases we retain that reduction.

So instead of a meaningful comparison between the 104th and the 105th Congress, the most meaningful comparison would be between the 103d and the 105th. And if we compare committee funding under the last Democratic majority Congress and this, the second Republican Congress, we will find that funding has been cut by more than 20 percent.

So although we sometimes get wrapped up on narrow numbers and talk about a modest 4-percent increase for these committees from the 104th to the 105th, we should not lose sight of the fact that there was an enormous reduction both of staff and of the cost of the committees. Major legislation has gone through the committees and, in fact, arrived on the President's desk and was signed.

Not to mention the significant number of changes that were long overdue in the way in which the House has been run, including the first ever audit, the follow-up audit, and now audits becoming rather routine, when, in fact, in the history of the House there had never been a private-public audit before.

So when the gentleman looks for arguments, I find it ironic that he focuses on the fact that while the President and the leaders of the House and the Senate are at this moment working to craft a historic document, he points to the fact that committees are not moving product for the sake of appearing to be busy.

One of the things you will find under this majority in both the House and the Senate is that it is not necessarily quantity that counts, it is the quality of the work that we do that counts most.

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

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

I would like to take my friend up on his discussion of campaign finance reform and say several things:

One, in the two previous Congresses to the Republican majority, the House of Representatives did pass comprehensive campaign finance reform, which I led the effort in in the Congress. Prior to President Clinton's election, President Bush, at the behest of many of the Republican Members in this Congress, vetoed the bill.

In the first term of President Clinton, where we finally had a President who said he would sign campaign finance reform and encouraged us to pass it, and indeed we did pass it in the House, and it violates House rules to mention a particular Senator in the other body, but there was a Senator from Kentucky who is still there who is threatening again to kill finance reform if it ever got out of this institution.

□ 1100

But there is an even more important issue at hand here. When we talk about campaign finance reform, the Republican majority does not believe in spending limits, does not believe in limiting the amount of money in campaigns, and fundamentally we cannot have reform unless we are ready to limit the amount of money in campaigns.

As far as the operations of the House, there are certainly operations in the Clerk's office and in HIR that are not working as well as they were prior to all the reforms. We hope you get there and there are always some bumps in the road in going through this process, but it seems to me there are some things that still need to be fixed here.

Again I think among the most important issues we could be discussing today would be campaign finance reform, and there are a number of very positive proposals out there. I am now working on a $100 spending limit, which I think would really give people confidence that they could be significant players in the political process, no more than $100, a $100 dollar bill would be the limit. We would not have $10,000 or $100,000 contributions. But we cannot discuss that on the floor generally and move on it until the majority gives us a rule or allows us to bring the bill to the floor.

So as happy as we are to see the committee moving, and they made some progress on the disbursement of funds, it seems to me that some of the fundamental issues not only are far from reaching the floor of the House but we find ourselves with a Republican majority not even believing in the basic principles that are necessary to move the debate forward. Are we ready to limit large contributions? Are we ready to limit it to $100 so that every American can participate on a relatively equal level, or do we want to keep those $10,000, $100,000 contributions?

When the Republican majority brought out a campaign finance bill in the last Congress, they took the limits off. They wanted to increase how much wealthy individuals could give to campaigns. If you believe the problem in the American political system is that wealthy people do not have enough access to government, you have been on another planet. What we need to do is find another way to make sure that every American has equal access to the political process, to make sure that we limit even the appearance of things that look bad, and that is why we are hoping to see that kind of bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. LAMPSON].

Mr. LAMPSON. I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, when the majority party was in the minority, they did complain about the size of government. Now they seek an outrageous increase in the dollars spent on their own personal political fiefdoms. It begs the question of whether the majority's supposed concern about the size of government was a core belief or just political rhetoric, particularly after a promised freeze.

Actions speak louder than words. I know there are uses for those dollars that can benefit working families. I find it difficult to believe that the committees need such an increase in staff. The majority's meager agenda so far in this Congress certainly does not warrant it, and I will vote against House Resolution 129.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. NEY], the vice chairman of the Committee on House Oversight.

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 129 authorizes $149.9 million over 2 years for the basic operation of 18 House committees in the 105th Congress. I think it is important to note today that this is a $46.3 million decrease from the authorized level in the 103d Congress, a 24-percent reduction. Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker. This is a $46.3 million decrease. This allows the U.S. House to continue officially to operate on behalf of the taxpayers the committees that are established here in Congress, but also due to the great guidance of the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], our chairman, and the members of the committee, we have a fiscally responsible plan that provides a decrease, yet allows us to do our duties and to carry forth the process of the committee.

Historically, Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention this today, the minority party was funded far below the one-third targeted amount that we are trying to achieve in this new Congress. In 1991, the minority party was funded at 19 percent. In 1993, the minority party was funded at 18.5 percent. Beginning in 1994, with the 104th Congress, not only were we able to again decrease the amount of funding to the committees, but we were able to start the process of having the funding begin to rise for the minority on the committee. In 1994, the minority party was funded at 21 percent, and in 1995, the minority party was funded around 29 percent. These are averages, Mr. Speaker, of the entire committee funding.

Let me give just a few details. There are 7 committees that the minority staff is funded at 33 percent or more, far above the 19 percent type of average that we were dealing with in 1993 and 1994. So there are 7 committees that the minority staff is funded at 33 percent or more. There are 7 committees that the minority staff is funded at 25 percent to 32 percent funding. And there is one committee that the minority staff is funded at 20 percent to 24 percent. There are no committees that it is funded less than 20 percent.

Our goal is to have the minority funded at one-third and we are not far from that goal. It has been hard in some cases to achieve it but, frankly, previous to the 104th Congress, the minority was so low in most of the cases that it is tough to build that base back up.

What do we have? We have promises that we have made and promises that

we have kept. We promised to cut the committee staff, and we did that. In the 103d Congress, the approximate number of committee staff was 1,645. In the 104th Congress, we reduced it by one-third, to 1,100. This is a good proposal we have today, and I would surely credit the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the chairman, and the members of the committee for being so responsible and for also conducting the business of the House in a fiscally responsible manner.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Michigan [Ms. KILPATRICK], a member of the committee.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Connecticut for yielding me this time to address our committee resolution.

I do want to thank the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the chairman, and our ranking member for the experiences I have enjoyed as we worked through the committee resolution. I am very hopeful that as we move to our implementing of the resolution that the minority in fact will get the one-third that is necessary for us to carry out our business. It is important as I serve in this 105th Congress that we are all able to participate, that we are all able to represent those who have sent us here, and I am really anxious that the committees can get off and get into doing their work. We have got a lot of work ahead of us.

I wish this bill were before us that would solve the problems of campaign finance, but the fact of the matter is it does nothing, it absolutely does nothing to change what we do need, which is a major overhaul in campaign financing. What it will do is provide committees the monetary assistance they need to carry on the business of their committees.

I am hopeful that as we move into the Congress, we will again address the families first agenda. That will include good housing, adequate education, clean environment, water, air, all those kinds of things, good-paying jobs. I am anxious that this 105th Congress get into those.

Today we will be debating H.R. 2, which is the new housing comprehensive legislation. It has a lot of problems. I hope that as we go into this debate, as we give the committees the moneys they need to do their work, that we remember, the American people want action from this Congress. They want us to provide the leadership that this country needs so that our children can be educated, our seniors can be safe, good jobs return to this country and that the environment is safe.

Again I want to thank the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] for his leadership and the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON], our ranking member, for providing us the opportunity. Let us move on with the work of the Congress and do what the people require it to do.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. EHLERS], a valued member of the Committee on House Oversight.

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

Mr. EHLERS. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address this topic. It is one that we have spent a good deal of time on in the Committee on House Oversight. As most of the Nation knows, when the Republicans took over the House of Representatives, we put in some drastic budget cutting measures. In fact, we saved $210 million from our congressional budget for the people of the United States of America in the last session. That is the larger cut than we applied across the board to any Federal agency.

In other words, we felt we should lead the way in this Congress and in this committee by cutting our own budget first. We cut committee staff by one-third. I am pleased with the amount of work that we have been able to do in spite of that cut. I have heard the news media saying that the Congress is not doing anything. I do not know where they are. Maybe they are sitting in the coffee shops instead of coming to the committee meetings I am in. I have spent hours and hours in the Committee on Science, of which I am a member. I have spent hours in the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where we are working on the formula for funding ISTEA, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which is a major piece of legislation up for reauthorization this year. I just came to the floor to speak while sitting in a hearing in the Subcommittee on Aviation dealing with war risk insurance, something that must be addressed soon. But in the Committee on Science in particular, my schedule has been full, as has been the schedule of every member of the Committee on Science. We have reported out approximately 10 bills for action on the floor, most of which have been taken up on the floor, with one major piece still remaining to be considered. And we have been able to do all this and do quality work after having cut the staffs of our committees by one-third. In other words, we have gotten rid of the fat and we are down to the bone, and we are doing good work with the bone that is left.

In regard to the proposal before us, the committee funding proposal, we are talking about an average 2 percent per year increase, below the cost-of-living increase, below the increase that is being given to all Federal employees and Federal retirees, below the increase that is being given to Social Security recipients. I think it is remarkable that we would cut our staff by one-third in the last session, and have a below-cost-of-living increase in this session, and still be able to do the amount and the quality of work that we have been doing in our committees. They are receiving a lot of careful consideration. The floor action has been less than overwhelming, simply because so much work is being done in committees, but that work will come to the floor very shortly.

I am very pleased to rise in support of this proposal and to recommend that the House adopt what is a fair funding proposal for the committees, one that conservatives and liberals alike should welcome as an example of how we can use the taxpayers' money to get the job done at much less cost than we had before.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maine [Mr. ALLEN].

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the committee funding resolution. The majority seeks to increase committee funding by $22 million, or 14 percent over the level that was spent last year. Yet last week the majority cut $38 million from the President's budget request for Women, Infants and Children, one of our most successful programs. That $38 million reduction in the President's request essentially would deny 180,000 women and children the most basic nutrition and health assistance.

These Republican priorities are embarrassing. Twenty-two million more for House committees and investigations, $38 million less than is needed for mothers and infants. Study after study has found that the WIC Program successfully increases low birth weights and reduces infant mortality and child anemia. The first 3 years of a child's life are critically important for a child's intellectual and emotional development. Good nutrition is a strong component of that equation. The GAO reports that each dollar invested in WIC prenatal care saves $3.50 in later expenses in Medicaid. AT&T's CEO Robert Allen called WIC the health care equivalent of a triple A investment. It is. Millions more for House committees and investigations, millions less than is needed for 180,000 women and children. Those are the wrong priorities. That is deplorable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote no on the committee funding resolution.

□ 1115

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW].

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I would rise also with grave concern today about the committee funding resolution that is before us. We are in the final discussions, I understand, concerning the budget. Very difficult decisions are having to be made, priorities are having to be set, and when I look at my constituents in the 8th District in Michigan, I want to be able to say that my priority was on the WIC Program that was just discussed by my

good friend from Maine on the opportunities for families to send their children to college, making sure that they have technology in their schools and they are prepared for the jobs for the future, have good jobs and that all families have opportunities to cover their children with health care.

Mr. Speaker, my concern is that when we look at this funding resolution in total, we are looking at over a 14-percent increase in the amount of dollars going to fund our own committees. I would agree with my good friend from Michigan that we are working hard in the Committee on Science, we are working hard in a number of committees and reporting bills, but we have been doing just fine reporting those bills and working hard without a 14-percent increase in the committee funding bill.

If I were to ask my constituents whether they would prefer that we hire more staff here at the Capitol or whether or not we provide more opportunities for their children to go to college, I know where the votes would be, I know where my constituents would be telling me to vote, and that is why today I cannot support this kind of a tremendous increase in this bill and I would strongly urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take another look at what our real priorities are.

This is not about the internal workings of Congress and increasing employees, increasing staff. If we have to work a little harder, fine. My constituents are working very, very hard every day working hard on behalf of their families, and my priorities are with them.

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

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the last two speakers who both indicated that they were going to vote against the funding resolution are freshmen and therefore they have had no experience in what the Congress has looked like when their party was in the majority. I appreciate the gentlewoman from Michigan indicating that she is working hard in the Committee on Science, and there is a 14-percent increase. The record shows the Committee on Science has increased 3 percent. It is 3 percent for the 105th Congress; that is 1½ percent a year.

The cost of living, which is certainly not automatic, and although the chairmen will probably vote where it is appropriate for a cost of living for the employees is about 2.3 percent. So it is obvious that the employees working for that committee will not within the budget increase find enough money to cover a COLA.

But what I would really like to remind the freshmen Members on the minority side is that when their party was in the majority the most recent Congress, being the 103d Congress, spent $223 million on staff and the committees. So if they are unwilling to support a $177 million cost for running the committees, I only wish my colleagues had been here in the 103d so they could have castigated their leaders at that time for wanting to spend and, in fact, spending $223 million. We are spending $45 million less than the amount that was spent when the gentlewoman's party was in the majority.

So I understand they have to find some reason to oppose reasonable legislation, but it really does make it difficult when they have no historical perspective because frankly since the Republicans have become the majority in January 1995, if they want to look at the larger picture not in terms of a government program, but in terms of the economy which after all is the engine that makes this system go, the deficit has been cut in half from $203 billion in 1994 to about $70 billion this year. Welfare rolls have been decreased by 20 percent. Violent crime has been reduced by 5 percent. Unemployment has dropped by 10 percent. The poverty rate has declined. And in the stock market, the Dow Jones average has almost doubled. It is not a coincidence that all this has happened since the Republicans became a majority in January 1995.

It is always possible to find one specific reason to choose to vote ''no.'' Actually the more responsible position in the opinion of this gentleman is to look at the aggregate and say what we have done with one-third fewer staff and one-third fewer resources is quite remarkable.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am just stunned to hear my friend from California endorsing President Clinton's agenda and his successes, and it is so nice to see him recite all the advances that have occurred under this Democratic President.

Now he did not give the President any credit, but we cannot expect him to go that far. But it is at least a refreshing opportunity to hear him point out that under the Democratic leadership of President Clinton we have made tremendous progress from the setting of budget priorities that began with the Democratically-controlled Congress and the President's first day in office, and he has kept us on track. He has prevented some of the egregious kinds of policies that we found in the early Reagan years, which frankly some of this budget debate and the Republican demands seem to want to reinstate tax cuts that will cost the Treasury upwards of $250 billion in the outyears which will once again balloon the deficit. Their solution, of course, is to give the richest another tax break while the poorest and the working poor are once again disadvantaged.

We are happy to see the Republicans recognize the wisdom of President Clinton's budget priority and policies today. We just hope that they would give up on some of their what I would consider foolish economic desires to balloon the deficit in the outyears and thereby again endangering our ability to educate our young, to give them proper health care, and to build the kind of road blocks to economy that we have had under President Clinton's leadership.

There is one other area that I would like to bring us back to, and again as much as I enjoy the discussion here today, I think we ought to have meatier issues before us that have been avoided in this Congress. Campaign finance reform is still without a date to come to this floor. Under President Clinton's first year in office the Democrats brought campaign finance reform to the floor of this House and passed it. We had passed it, as I said earlier, through the House and Senate in the previous Congress, but it was vetoed by President Bush. Then we find ourselves in the next Congress under President Clinton's leadership; it is filibustered to death in the Senate. Now they will not even bring it to the floor.

In the last Congress, when my friend brought a campaign finance reform bill to the floor, it had no spending limit. Ask anybody out there in America did they think the problem in campaigns is there is not enough money in it.

I love my Republican friends. They talk about education; they say, well, we cannot throw money at it. They talk about health care and children in need; they say we cannot throw money at it. When it comes to campaigns, they say we need more money. The Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. GINGRICH] says I need more money. When they talk about reform they raise how much wealthy individuals can give. That is not reform. We ought to limit campaign spending. Nobody should be able to give more than a hundred dollars. We ought to do it by law; we cannot do it individually. We have got to find a way to deal with independent expenditures and issue advocacy. We have got to end soft money.

But we cannot do any of that, Mr. Speaker, unless we have an opportunity to bring the bill to the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER], a member of the committee and one of our hardest working Members, I might add.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what the gentleman said, because the chairman of our committee who works very hard and is very knowledgeable on this institution references the progress that has been made over the last 5 years, and I think that ought not to go without being referenced.

When in 1993 we adopted the economic program of this administration,

to a person, to a person, the then-minority party stood and said the adoption of this program will lead effectively to the ruination of America's economy. To a person. The chairman of the Committee on the Budget now, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH], stood and said this is going to lead to high unemployment, high inflation and a ruinous economy. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], who tells us repeatedly that he is an economist, said to the President and said on the floor of this House that the adoption of that economic program would lead to disaster for America's future.

Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing and honest to hear in fact the opposite has occurred. The gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, has just ticked off where this economy now stands, not because of anything that was adopted in 1995 or 1996. As a matter of fact, the now-majority party laments the fact that the President did not allow them, as a result of vetoes, to enact their program so that they cannot honestly claim credit for the performance of this economy.

And in point of fact, as Alan Greenspan, appointed by George Bush, not by a Democrat, observed, this economy is in the best shape that he has seen it in in over 3 decades. He so testified before the Joint Economic Committee.

Yes, we consider a budget resolution for the committees of this House. As my colleagues know, it is always in my experience somewhat of a political exercise; the majority party points out how fiscally responsible they are being, and very frankly the minority party says, ''Well, you're being a little hypocritical.'' I really do not want to get too engaged in that debate.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this funding resolution is relatively reasonable. I have disagreements with parts of it. Very frankly, I think we are substantially wasting the taxpayers' money, wasting the taxpayers' money by funding this investigation in the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight way over what the U.S. Senate said was necessary to come to grips with the facts, and in fact, unlike the Senate who more honestly wants to look at the generic problem, this study obviously is a partisan attempt to embarrass the President of the United States, not to come to grips with what the facts are, as the U.S. Senate studied much broader in scope and much cheaper in cost.

Then, of course, we have this interesting device, the $7.9 million extra fund. Mr. Speaker, that does a number of things. No. 1, it allows committees to report that they are getting less money than ultimately they may get. No. 2, I would suggest to those who are very concerned about the reforms that have been brought to bear by the Republican revolution in 1995 when they said one of the things the Democrats are doing, my colleagues, is allowing agencies, horrors, to fund committee staff.

Now what did that mean? That meant detailees from various agencies were sent to committees for the purposes of working on substantive issues of which they had knowledge.

Well, lo and behold, the Republican revolution said that was wrong, it was obfuscation, it was hiding the actually costs. And so what did they do? They said we are not going to allow that anymore.

Lo and behold, my colleagues of this House, particularly those who came as freshmen in the revolution; lo and behold, there is $5-plus million in this budget resolution which we do not see. It is not included, it is not computed in the figure. Why? Because we have now changed our policy and we have said well, maybe we will allow detailees to be funded by agencies but to be utilized by committees.

My, my, my. Five million dollars in addition to the $7.9 million that does not show up in the committee budgets.

Now, as I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, these funding resolutions can be demagogued on both sides, and are historically.

□ 1130

I do not like to participate in that. I think the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] has tried to come to grips, and from his side of the aisle, there are obviously disagreements within his own caucus. Some say that it ought to be far less and some say it ought to be more. That is the dynamics of funding enterprises where we are trying to come to grips with an administration, an executive department of government that has gotten at least $550 billion, which this Congress has the responsibility of overseeing.

We suggest a budget over two years of about $180 million to do that. I do not think the taxpayer, when they relate that $540 billion or $50 million of discretionary spending in the executive department, is taking that a coequal branch of government has the ability.

I frankly want to tell the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS], the chairman of my committee, the Committee on House Oversight, I thought $222 million was an appropriate sum. Was it exactly the right sum? I do not know that, but the fact of the matter is, I did not think it was out of line with this Congress's responsibility to oversee the operations of the executive department, Republican or Democrat.

Our constituents expect us to know what is going on. Our constituents expect us to know what are the proper amounts that we ought to fund. Our constituents expect us to know what the authorizing committees should do in oversight, in exercising the appropriate amount of care and diligence in determining whether the executive agencies are, in fact, operating effectively, honestly, within their budget, and spending the taxpayers' money appropriately.

That was a good investment. We can argue back and forth on the specific dollar amounts. But let us be clear: Irrespective of the amount in this funding resolution, the chairman did in fact point to what is important, and what is important is the policies adopted that have affected the quality of life in America.

In 1993 President Clinton came forth with an economic program, very controversial, and opposed to a person by the now majority party, the then minority party, with the observation that it would lead to disaster. In fact, as the chairman has very appropriately noted, not only has it not led to disaster, it has led to high employment, low unemployment, low inflation, higher working standards, a better dollar; in fact, a dollar that is so strong that perhaps we are going to have to evaluate whether or not we made the economy too strong. I read in this morning's paper, those who have talked about growth over and over and over and talked last Congress about how slow the growth was, I am sure we are glad to see that we had a 5.6 or 5.1, I am not sure which, GDP growth in the last quarter.

I say to my colleagues of this House, whether we adopt this funding resolution, and I presume we are going to, any funding resolution will be controversial. I know that there will be some of my colleagues, rightfully, who will want to make a statement that being penny wise and pound foolish by increasing spending on the operations of the House of Representatives, while at the same time reducing by a factor of $38 million assistance to women, infants, and children, which every side of the argument agrees has a tremendously positive payoff for children and families and for America, is an appropriate debate. And some of my colleagues will want to vote ''no'' on this, to make that very point that our priorities are skewed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that as we do vote on this funding resolution, let us on both sides of the aisle stop demagoguing this institution, stop belittling this institution. This institution has a critically important function to carry out. We are the people's House, elected every two years, closest to the people, to carry out the functions of adopting policy and overseeing its implementation. I think we have done that reasonably well; not perfectly by any stretch of the imagination.

But as we move forward on the debate, which I guess now is going to conclude on this funding resolution, let us understand that under the Democratic administration and the democratically controlled House and Senate, America, in the last five years has seen its deficit come down dramatically to a third of what it was when we took over, and its economy grow substantially to the benefit of its citizens and indeed the world.

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

I will be very brief at this point and just close by saying that, in following

up on what my colleague from Maryland said, that what we do here is very important. Our responsibility here is to fight for the men and women back in our districts, many of whom are still going through very difficult times around the country, whether it is floods in one part of the country, or in my part still recovering from the economic pressures of the end of the cold war and reduced defense spending, trying to get through the change from defense to nondefense economic activities.

We do have a serious responsibility here, and I cannot help but be reminded by again what the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] said: My parents left the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany to come to this country because of its Democratic institutions.

While we have substantial differences on what we ought to do, new evidence, again as the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] said, indicates how incredibly important nutrition and other health activities are in those first several years of life. Those fights are terribly important fights, and while we disagree with them on many of these issues on the other side of the aisle, it is not their honor we question.

We question the policies that will make the country be the strongest, the most productive, and the fairest for all of its citizens, and that really is our job here, as well as making sure that we defend these institutions, not when we are wrong, but from the kind of easy attacks that undermine people's belief in Democratic government.

There are still so many millions and, yes, over 1 billion people on this planet who would give their lives to have the Democratic institutions we have. We ought not squander the trust of the American people as we try to maintain this institution, which more than any other institution on the face of this planet represents the hopes and aspirations of free people everywhere.

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

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

Frankly, this gentleman from California is confused. I have to tell my colleagues on the other side, they cannot have it both ways. Either we are not doing the job that the people want us to do and we should fund the committees more, or we get criticized because we are funding the committees more because we are not doing the job that we are supposed to do.

The gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. GEJDENSON] wants us to move campaign finance reform. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] gets up and says ''the constituents want us to know what is going on.''

Well, I think if anybody paid attention at all in the last election, there was a lot going on in the gentleman's party, in his national party and over at the White House, and that if we are going to write meaningful campaign reform, we ought to find out what was going on. But we are criticized because we do not rush to the floor with a solution to whatever the problem is, because we have not had a chance to examine it. But obviously the minority, which has no responsibility in dealing with this, loves to get up and say ''We want it both ways.''

The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] criticized the fact that we have detailees. The problem, I would tell the gentleman, in the 103d Congress was that just one committee had more than 100 detailees. They also had more than 100 staff, and they had more than 100 detailees.

The current policy is to limit the detailees to 10 percent of the staff, and so for that committee the detailees would amount to the munificent number of nine. If they do not see the difference between 100 detailees and 9, then obviously the argument that we have detailees, without telling the whole truth about the kind of outrageous policies that were present in the 103d, means that they want it both ways.

I read a list of achievements since January 1995, not for the last 5 years, not for the last 10 years, not since F.D.R. was President, but only since Republicans have become the majority in the House and the Senate. One of the items I mentioned was the reduction of the welfare rolls by 20 percent. As a matter of fact, the Democratic President signed that bill, but I can assure you that many of the people who have spoken on the other side of the aisle did not vote for that bill. So it is with some degree of pleasure that I can indicate to my colleagues that a Republican House and a Republican Senate and a Democratic Presidency are working together to change America for the better.

I only hope that as this President and this Congress come to an agreement on an historic package which will balance the budget, which will preserve and strengthen Medicare, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will join with us, the majority, in supporting their President in making the kinds of budgetary and entitlement and tax changes with which our President agrees.

So I fully understand the frustration of the minority, having been there myself for a number of years, they certainly have the privileges, to have it both ways. They praise on the one hand and condemn on the other. I certainly am more than willing to tell them that if they believe it serves a useful purpose, it is certainly their right to do so, but I would tell this House that House Resolution 129 is a prudent funding package. It is appropriate. It is necessary. I would urge a ''yes'' vote on House Resolution 129.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of House Resolution 129, the committees' funding resolution for the 105th Congress.

I do want to thank and commend the members of the Committee on House Oversight and the Democratic and Republican leadership for their diligence and hard work in bringing forward this resolution today. Striking a happy balance with committee budgets is a difficult and thankless job.

Mr. Chairman, I will vote for this resolution. It is a step in the right direction, allowing our committee to begin recovering from the large budget cuts of 2 years ago.

Historically, the work of the Congress increases in direct proportion to the enormity of the challenges facing this Nation. Getting more work done with less is always one of the greatest of our challenges. The increased funding in the budget for the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is fully justified.

The committee is the largest authorizing committee in Congress. When I came to the ''Hill'' in 1963, the committee had 34 members. In the 104th Congress, we had 61. Today we have 73—a 215-percent increase over 1963, and a 20-percent increase over the 104th Congress. This is a mixed blessing, but definitely an indication of the interest House Members have in the work of our committee. We welcome new Members, but also we need more resources to handle the increased workload.

In the 104th Congress, for the first time one committee—Transportation and Infrastructure—was given jurisdiction over all modes of civil transportation. Our new jurisdiction included the major areas of rail, Coast Guard, and maritime transportation.

Now we can deal more effectively with the broader, intermodal picture which has a host of problems, many of which we hope to address in the reauthorization of ISTEA this session.

Congestion has risen on our highways to a level that costs American businesses $40 billion each year. Americans waste 1.6 million hours every day sitting in traffic.

Airport traffic delays have strained the capacity of 22 of our major airports, and within 10 years 10 more airports will be added to this list unless we modernize.

More of our ports need dredging and expansion to compete in the international marketplace. Our railway system needs to be more integrated and accessible, and our only national passenger rail system needs the recapitalization long promised, but never received.

Transportation policy decisions are very much a key factor to the standard of living for every American. At last count, our national transportation economy accounted for 10.8 percent of our gross domestic product.

Transportation safety continues to be a serious problem. Since 1991, a staggering 200,000 Americans have died and more than 15 million have been seriously injured on our highways at a cost to society of more than $750 million. There has been no appreciable decline in highway fatalities in the past 10 years. Each and every day the equivalent of a major airline crash occurs on our highways in communities across the country. Nine out of 10 Americans want the Federal Government to play a strong leadership role in highway safety, similar to food safety and aviation safety.

Aviation safety, itself, is increasingly a concern. Last month, the National Transportation Safety Board reported that in 1996, 380 people lost their lives in airline accidents, the highest level since 1985.

Rail safety is also a serious problem. In the first 5 months of last year alone, there were 54 serious rail accidents, including 2 in which entire towns were evacuated for 3 weeks, 3 in which poison gas was released, and 1 in which a train carrying 750-pound bombs derailed. Three cases involving runaway trains might have been prevented had the Federal Railroad Administration acted promptly on Congressional directives to reform power brake rules.

Safety is not a partisan issue. With added resources our committee can conduct the oversight and produce the legislation needed to reverse the disturbing increase in accidents in 1996.

I have only touched on a sampling of transportation issues from our primary list. In this Congress we also need to be dealing with a number of intricate and technical matters in the areas of water resources, public buildings, and economic development. Obviously, this Congress will be an extremely busy one and we need solid and thorough staff work to support our efforts.

In addition, at a time when the Federal Government is making drastic cutbacks, the need for close congressional oversight increases dramatically. Unfortunately, there are many issues that will receive less, or even no, attention simply because of the limits of our resources.

I can tell you as the ranking Democratic member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, there are countless challenges and frustrations in my job, but few more exasperating than trying to stretch and make do with inadequate resources. My budget, in particular, for Democratic staff on the committee is one-third of the total personnel budget for the committee. At current funding levels, we are unable to fill two vacancies or to grant staff a cost-of-living adjustment. This is not the way to attract and retain quality, expert, and experienced staff needed to accomplish the work before us.

Our committee badly needs the increased funding provided by the budget resolution. It will enhance our ability to make in-depth, informed legislative judgments and to vigorously pursue our oversight responsibilities.

In answering to the American people, I would much rather defend funding we truly need, than try to explain that our job didn't get done for the lack of resources.

There is no doubt we have to pass this resolution, and we should. It represents a good faith effort under very difficult circumstances. Accordingly, I will vote for this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to House Resolution 136, the previous question is ordered on the resolution, as amended.

The question is on the resolution, as amended.

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

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 262, nays 157, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 98]

YEAS—262

Aderholt
Archer
Armey
Bachus
Baesler
Baker
Ballenger
Barcia
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Bereuter
Berman
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bliley
Blunt
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Borski
Boucher
Brady
Brown (CA)
Bryant
Bunning
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canady
Cannon
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Chenoweth
Christensen
Clay
Coble
Coburn
Collins
Combest
Conyers
Cook
Cooksey
Costello
Cox
Crane
Crapo
Cubin
Cunningham
Davis (VA)
Deal
DeLay
Dellums
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doolittle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
Ehrlich
English
Ensign
Eshoo
Evans
Everett
Ewing
Farr
Fawell
Fazio
Flake
Foley
Forbes
Fowler
Fox
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Ganske
Gejdenson
Gekas
Gibbons
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gonzalez
Goodlatte
Goodling
Goss
Graham
Granger
Greenwood
Gutknecht
Hall (TX)
Hamilton
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Hefley
Hill
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hoyer
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Jenkins
John
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Kasich
Kelly
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kim
King (NY)
Kingston
Klink
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaFalce
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
Livingston
LoBiondo
Lucas
Manzullo
Martinez
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McHale
McHugh
McInnis
McKeon
McNulty
Metcalf
Mica
Miller (CA)
Miller (FL)
Moakley
Molinari
Mollohan
Morella
Murtha
Nethercutt
Ney
Northup
Norwood
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Packard
Parker
Paxon
Pease
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pickett
Pitts
Pomeroy
Porter
Portman
Pryce (OH)
Quinn
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Regula
Riggs
Riley
Roemer
Rogan
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roukema
Royce
Ryun
Sabo
Salmon
Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaefer, Dan
Schaffer, Bob
Scott
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Sisisky
Skeen
Skelton
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (OR)
Smith (TX)
Smith, Linda
Snowbarger
Solomon
Souder
Spence
Spratt
Stearns
Stenholm
Stump
Sununu
Talent
Tauzin
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Thune
Towns
Traficant
Upton
Visclosky
Walsh
Wamp
Watkins
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
White
Whitfield
Wicker
Wise
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—157

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Baldacci
Barrett (WI)
Bentsen
Berry
Bishop
Blagojevich
Blumenauer
Bonior
Boswell
Boyd
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Capps
Cardin
Carson
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Condit
Coyne
Cramer
Cummings
Danner
Davis (FL)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Deutsch
Dickey
Dixon
Dooley
Doyle
Edwards
Emerson
Engel
Etheridge
Filner
Foglietta
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gephardt
Goode
Gordon
Green
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Hooley
Hulshof
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (WI)
Johnson, E. B.
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kind (WI)
Kleczka
Kucinich
Lampson
Lantos
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney (CT)
Maloney (NY)
Manton
Markey
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntosh
McIntyre
McKinney
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Millender-McDonald
Minge
Mink
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Nadler
Neal
Neumann
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pappas
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Poshard
Price (NC)
Rangel
Reyes
Rivers
Rodriguez
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sanchez
Sanders
Sandlin
Sawyer
Schumer
Serrano
Sherman
Skaggs
Slaughter
Smith, Adam
Snyder
Stabenow
Stark
Stokes
Strickland
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson
Thurman
Tiahrt
Tierney
Torres
Turner
Velazquez
Vento
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
Wexler
Weygand
Woolsey
Wynn

NOT VOTING—14

Andrews
Becerra
Davis (IL)
Fattah
Herger
Istook
Lewis (CA)
Myrick
Oxley
Pascrell
Pombo
Schiff
Stupak
Yates

☐ 1206

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Ms. DANNER, Mrs. TAUSCHER, and Messrs. HEFNER, DIXON, LUTHER, CONDIT, BISHOP, and DAVIS of Florida changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. FLAKE, BARTON of Texas, MILLER of California, MCHALE, SPRATT, MARTINEZ, and COSTELLO changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid upon the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the resolution just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.