mainly from oil and gas leases, to purchase Federal lands and to give matching grants to State and local governments for the development of parks and open spaces. While this fund continues to be used for Federal land purchases, very little money has been given to States to assist their efforts in preserving natural areas.

That is why I have introduced the Community Recreation and Conservation Endowment Act of 1997 today. This bill will provide funding for grants to State and local governments to develop, repair, and create new parks and preserve open spaces.

This bill will create a $1.6 billion permanent endowment to provide LWCF matching grants to local governments. Interest from that account will help provide funding for parks, campgrounds, trails, and recreation facilities for millions of Americans.

Where does this money come from? On June 19, 1997, the Supreme Court ruled that the Federal Government retains title to lands underlying tidal waters off Alaska's North Slope. As a result, the Government will receive $1.6 billion in escrowed oil and gas lease revenues.

When the land and water conservation fund was established the Federal Government promised to assist State and local governments with preserving natural areas. This legislation will make sure that the Federal Government follows through on that promise. In addition, this bill will ensure that each State receives its fair share of these funds by providing a more balanced distribution of this money between the States.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort which will help preserve natural areas all across this country.

TRIBUTE TO EDDIE ROBINSON

HON. JOHN COOKSEY

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, we all use the term ''One of a Kind'' but there are actually few men who are truly one of a kind. But there is a ''One of a Kind Man'' down in Louisiana and he's in my district. His name is Eddie Robinson. Why is he one of a kind? Well, for starters, he has had more than 100 of his players drafted by the National Football League. His school's stadium is named in his honor. No other football coach has ever coached for 54 seasons at the same college. And only one other man ever coached college football for that many years—period. Nobody else has won 17 Southwestern Athletic Conference championships. Nobody else has won so many ''Coach of the Year'' awards that they named the national trophy in his honor. In 1942, his Grambling State team held all nine of its opponents scoreless. It was only the second time that had ever been done and it has never been accomplished again. And nobody else has ever won 405 college football games. But the main reason I am here to praise Eddie Robinson today is that not only is he a great football coach but he is a good man. He has always appealed to the best in his players and his fans. He is an example of so many of the good things that we hold dear—loyalty, family, hard work, God, and country. So I want to pay tribute right now to a truly great American and a man who is truly one of a kind—Coach Eddie Robinson of Grambling State University.

BUDGET SURPLUSES BELONG TO WORKING AMERICANS

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by the end of this fiscal year, the Federal Government could run its first budget surplus in nearly three decades. This is certainly good news. For the past 30 years, deficit spending caused interest rates to be higher than they would otherwise have been, which in turn suppressed economic growth and reduced the living standards of American families. If not managed correctly, however, I am concerned that short-term budget surpluses could actually undermine the progress that Congress has made in recent years in controlling the growth of Government spending and reducing Government interference in the economy.

With Government revenues still growing faster than the rate of economic growth, and without the economic and political consequences of having to raise taxes or expand the Federal debt to pay for new spending, continued efforts to restrain the growth of Government in the face of a budget surplus will likely crumble. Already, there is pressure to spend unrealized surpluses on Washington-run programs that are no accountable for results. That's exactly what happened in the late-1960's and 1970's, when inflation-driven growth created a surge in tax revenues, which increased the Government's appetite for new spending, which in turn led to the deficits of the 1980's and early 1990's.

To deal with this potential problem, two of our Republican colleagues have proposed setting up trust funds to apply projected budget surpluses to debt reduction and tax cuts. These are certainly important priorities. According to a recent Gallop poll, 41 percent of Americans want Government surpluses to go to reducing the national debt, while 42 percent prefer tax cuts. But both proposals still require taxpayers to send their hard-earned money to a Washington bureaucracy that doesn't need it, and the distribution of those funds would be based on political incentives rather than economic incentives.

Today, my colleague from Louisiana Representative WILLIAM JEFFERSON, and I have introduced the first bipartisan bill which attempts to address the concerns about budgetary choices that Congress may make in an era of budget surplus. H.R. 2933, the Working Americans Gainful Employment [WAGE] Act, creates a permanent mechanism to impose consequences on Congress for any effort to spend a Federal surplus. It requires the Secretary of the Treasury to reduce the Social Security payroll tax rate prior to each calendar year by an amount equal to the Federal budget surplus for the fiscal year ending during the preceding calendar year. It defines ''federal budget surplus'' as the amount by which total Federal revenues exceed total Federal budget outlays—unified budget. It also stipulates that any reductions in Social Security payroll tax rates do not affect revenues that would otherwise be deposited into the trust fund.

The WAGE Act will provide desperately needed relief from a regressive tax on employment. Federal payroll taxes, paid in equal parts by employers and employees, are currently assessed at a rate of 15.3 percent of payroll beginning at the first dollar of an employee's earnings. These taxes, while necessary to finance Social Security and Medicare hospital benefits, impose a tremendous financial burden on working Americans, particularly low- and moderate-income workers. Counting the employer portion of these taxes, which are indirectly borne by employees in the form of lower wages and benefits, approximately 75 percent of American workers pay more in Federal payroll taxes than in Federal income taxes.

The WAGE Act will also promote economic growth through tax rate cuts. Although the payroll tax rate reductions would not be permanent—unless the budget surpluses are permanent—businesses will know in advance what the rate will be for the coming year, and will plan investment and hiring decisions accordingly. Since payroll taxes paid by employers result in reduced employee compensation, any long-term reduction will be funneled back into higher wages and additional jobs. A payroll tax rate reduction will also encourage more small business start-ups because such firms must pay payroll taxes even if a profit is not made.

Payroll tax rate reductions would come from after-the-fact surpluses, not estimated surpluses. The WAGE Act, therefore, would not undermine future efforts to allocate projected budget surpluses to other important priorities, such as tax reform or entitlement reform. If Congress enacts legislation allocating future estimated surplus for other priorities, there is likely to be little if any after-the-fact surplus to apply to payroll tax rate reductions. This is the key incentive that is missing from those proposals which seek to wall off future surpluses for reducing taxes of the Federal debt. The WAGE Act creates a benchmark by which other proposals to allocate future surpluses will be measured. If Congress attempts to apply projected surpluses to new spending or to tax cut efforts, those efforts would come at the expense of a payroll tax cut for working Americans.

And for those who are concerned that payroll tax cuts could undermine revenues flowing into the Social Security trust fund, the WAGE Act explicitly states that deposits into the trust fund will continue to be based on the current statutory rate of 12.4 percent of wages. In other words, the Social Security and Medicare trust funds will be totally unaffected by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, dedicating future budget surpluses to Federal payroll tax cuts will lock in fiscal restraint while providing dividends to low- and middle-income workers who pay the bulk of those taxes. Our legislation accomplishes both of these objectives in a bipartisan way, and I urge my colleagues to join us as cosponsors of this bill.