

Mr. Speaker, after much consideration and many discussions with farmers and workers in northeast Wisconsin, I have concluded that it makes no sense to continue opening trade pacts in this hemisphere when we have faulty trade agreements—like NAFTA and GATT—that are hurting our people back home. Before we set out on a fast track to the bargaining table to negotiate our next trade agreement, the President would do well to fix these recent agreements and level the playing field for the United States.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CONTRACTING PRACTICES

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the revitalization of our Nation's Capital will require the participation and commitment of both the public and private sectors. Public-private partnerships will be the anchor of any economic revitalization. This goal will be successful only if all participants are assured that this is a sincere effort, with a level playing field, and not simply an extension of the two decades of poor policy decisionmaking that helped spiral Washington, DC into its recent situation.

The Congress has no desire to run the daily affairs of the city. However, the Congress does have a unique constitutional responsibility to the District of Columbia. Without micro-managing the affairs of the city, the Congress does need to ensure that as a matter of Federal policy, it will support public-private efforts designed to assist in the Capital's revitalization; support creative, imaginative, and unique approaches; support the streamlining of the Federal and District of Columbia review and regulatory processes, where appropriate, to encourage revitalization; and exercise appropriate oversight to ensure that the District honors all of its contractual and financial commitments.

It is well understood by the Congress that the District of Columbia continues to suffer from past financial problems. For example, the District of Columbia has experienced issues with a number of its current vendors as a result of its prior reputation of poor payment performance. A recent newspaper article documented that one of the reasons for schools not having textbooks was " * * * twelve textbook companies refused to ship books because the District still owes for previous orders."

Prior negligence in these matters created a ripple effect that has a broad and negative reach. Vendors have been discouraged from responding to District of Columbia RFP's because of concerns over the selection process. Congress can assist in eliminating this perception without direct intervention. Congress can also assure all current and prospective private sector partners and their respective leaders that it will monitor and respond appropriately to any failing by the government of the District of Columbia to meet acceptable Government contracting practices.

"DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 1998"

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the census language in the Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill H.R. 2267, because it would jeopardize a fair and accurate count of the U.S. population. In true Republican form, the majority has once again politicized an issue that is as straightforward as the science behind statistical sampling. In a self-serving and subtle racist effort to maintain control of Congress, some Republicans are hampering the Democratic effort to ensure that all Americans are counted in the Decennial Census.

H.R. 2267 would allow opponents of sampling to file lawsuits in Federal courts to block the use of sampling in the 2000 census. It also gives unprecedented power to the Speaker of the House to sue on behalf of the House to block sampling and to use resources of the House counsel or outside counsel to pursue such litigation. Finally, the bill is plagued with partisan language which states that statistical sampling "poses the risk of an inaccurate, invalid and unconstitutional census."

It is unfortunate and unconscionable that while we have the tools to obtain an accurate count in the 2000 census, some in Congress continue to object to the use of statistical sampling. We can use statistical sampling to transcend socioeconomic barriers that have historically restricted an accurate count. In the last census, almost four million Americans were not counted because of the antiquated counting method that was used. That means that 1.6 percent of our population was not counted. The current counting method relies on a door-to-door count of every person in the Nation. This method is neither the most efficient nor is it cost effective. The Census Bureau estimates that nearly five million Americans will not be counted in the 2000 census if the traditional methods are used.

Faced with past failures, it is only logical that we should use all of our existing resources to achieve a fair and accurate count. Scientists have concluded that it is close to impossible to physically count each and every person in the United States. Statistical sampling has been universally accepted by the scientific community as the best way to conduct the 2000 census. The Census Bureau would simply account for those residents it cannot count. Sampling is a scientific method endorsed by the American Statistical Society, the General Accounting Office, and the National Academy of Sciences.

In light of all of these facts, we must ask ourselves: Why does the Republican majority continue to oppose sampling? The answer lies in who the census undercounts when sampling is not employed. Studies have concluded that the undercount is not uniform across the population. Minorities, particularly in urban areas, are grossly undercounted by traditional methods. This leads me to conclude that race has become an underlying factor in the 2000 census debate and raises more questions about why statistical sampling has come under

attack by Republicans. The results from the census determine how Federal funds are allocated to the localities as well as how congressional seats are distributed among States. For instance, census data determines how certain public works funds are distributed, the creation of Federal empowerment zones, the establishment of fair market rent values, and the need for equal employment opportunities programs. Only through sampling can we ensure that States receive their fair share of Federal funds and programs. Since minorities have historically supported the Democratic Party, I believe that Republicans are positioning themselves to maintain power by depriving minorities of scarce Federal funds and representation in the Congress.

It is immoral and undemocratic for anyone to support a proposal that would deny the Census Bureau the vehicle to count each and every American. In a major and unprecedented move to mend the sad state of race relations, President Clinton has created an "Initiative on Race." It is rather ironic that Republicans are trying to turn back the clock by refusing to have a census that counts not just their supporters but every American. While we all know that American history is rampant with instances of prejudice and racism, it is unfortunate that this Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill will add another pathetic chapter to that piece of history we are trying so hard to heal.

PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN
ACTION RECOGNITION DAY

HON. JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request unanimous consent to include the following proclamation in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I have always been a strong supporter of efforts to help our POW/MIA's and their families.

The following is the text of the Massachusetts' proclamation declaring September 19, 1997, as Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Day:

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS—A
PROCLAMATION

(By His Excellency Governor Argeo Paul
Cellucci, 1997)

Whereas: In each of our country's wars, American prisoners of war have made tremendous sacrifices for our nation, enduring the burdens of loneliness, trauma, and hardship; and

Whereas: Prisoners of war have at times endured treatment at the hands of the enemy that is in violation of common human compassion, ethical standards, and international agreements; and

Whereas: In a time when we enjoy the blessings of peace, it is appropriate that all citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts recognize the special debt owed to those Americans held as prisoners of war; and

Whereas: It is also appropriate that we remember the unresolved casualties of war and those soldiers for whom we have not yet accounted; and

Whereas: Since the pain and bitterness of war endures for the families, relatives, and friends of those whose fates are unknown, we

must continue to seek a resolution in cases where questions remain;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARGEO PAUL CELLUCCI, Acting Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in accordance with Chapter 99 of the Acts of 1986, do hereby proclaim September 19th, 1997, to be PRISONER OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION RECOGNITION DAY and urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

IS CONGRESS FAILING OR IS IT
JUST MISUNDERSTOOD

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on September 13, the Center for the Study of the Congress at Duke University held a roundtable discussion to analyze the low and often hostile opinions of the Congress held by the American people. I participated in the roundtable, which was entitled "Is Congress Failing, or Is It Just Misunderstood?" Reflected one of its major objectives—to distinguish between misconceptions people have about how Congress does and might function, on the one hand, and areas in which the institution is failing to satisfy reasonable expectations on the other.

Joining me in the roundtable discussion were U.S. Rep. DAVID DREIER, Elaine Povich of *Newsday*, Candy Crowley of CNN, survey research expert Peter Hart, and scholars of congressional studies, media and public affairs, Joseph Cappella, John Hibbing, Tom Mann, and David Rohde.

Two bedrock points brought the participants together. First, understanding and responding to Congress' low regard is important for the country. The United States, lacking the relatively homogeneous culture that serves to unite many counties, has grown together around its common Constitution and its political institutions and convictions. Before loss of confidence in our Government threatens our sense of shared identity, we ought to do what we can to restore that confidence. Public opinion polling shows that the public views the Congress as the most powerful of the three branches of Government, so that the general distrust of Government expressed in many surveys gets concentrated on that body.

Second, no one advocated anything beyond trying to restore a healthy skepticism toward the institution, the kind of vigilant attitude that has served the country well. Still, as Tom Mann has pointed out, today this skepticism frequently borders on corrosive cynicism, and sometimes slips over into it. This already-in-place conviction that whatever Congress is going to do will disadvantage ordinary citizens saps Congress' ability to take tough stands on hard issues. We understand that Presidents need the political capital to make the tough decision; the same holds for the Congress.

Continuing research on the public's attitude add considerable detail to the blunt image of angry voters that so dominated the 1994 elections. Recent surveys done by Peter Hart for the Council for Excellence in Government show that five of the top seven reasons for the low public confidence focus on our elected of-

ficials failing to assert leadership in addressing the public's concerns, and John Hibbing's studies of public attitudes toward the Congress confirm this. As Hibbing put it, the voice of the average American is getting drowned out of lobbyists trumpeting special interest and by the self interest of Members, whether this can be expressed through pay raises or through an obsession with re-election. Rounding out citizen impressions is the taint of hypocrisy: believing what they do about the real motives of Members, citizens react to Members' defense of their actions in public minded terms as hypocritical attempts to manipulate voters.

None of these characterizations fit the institution and its Members as well as Congress' worst critics assert. Close observers of the Congress continually testify to the dedication, hard work, and public spirit of Members and staff. Most Americans are not close observers, however, and, as Elaine Povich commented, one's sympathy for the institution varies inversely with proximity to the Capitol dome.

Sensibly sizing up Congress' strengths and weaknesses from afar runs into several sources of interference. First, many citizens harbor unrealistic expectations about how smoothly disputes can get resolved in a representative democracy, especially one designed to make blocking action much easier than taking action—OK, so there's some truth in the coffee-and-saucer story.

Second, media coverage of the Congress generates an image of the institution in which its warts, foibles, and inefficiencies loom larger than life and its laudable activity shrinks from view. Numerous analyses have documented the media's emphasis on conflict between Members, strategy over substance, and scandal at the cost of policy. Recent research has begun to link these types of coverage to citizen reactions to them, and the results are not auspicious for the institution. For example, Joseph Cappella's work at the Annenberg School finds a decided connection between stories written using a strategy framework and cynical reactions toward public officials involved. Candy Crowley noted that institutional changes such as more dependence on capsule TV reporting, the decrease in newspaper readership, the advent of tabloid TV journalism, the increase in TV magazine shows, and the explosion in talk radio and TV drive some of these media emphasis.

Third, Members aid and abet both the unrealistic expectations for institutional performance and the media's unhelpful tendencies. Members frequently lead the verbal assault on the institution for its inability to act, and all Members know that hot rhetoric that implicitly treats solutions to problems as obvious and simple is more likely to get coverage than modulated comments that credit the good faith of opponents and acknowledge the difficulties of the issues being debated. When Members refer to the institution as a cesspool, as in a remark recently made to DAVID DREIER by one of his colleagues, it becomes that much harder to criticize journalists for reporting on it that way.

Clear away these sources of interference, and you would still have an institution that needs to reform itself. No one at the Duke conference sought to absolve Congress itself from the obligation to do a better job at governance. I talked about the felt necessities of campaigning exert ever more pressure on

governing, reducing Members' willingness to take positions that may be correct, but are difficult to explain. David Rohde pointed out that we need campaign finance reform, if Americans were ever going to feel that interest groups and money are not the real powers in the Congress. More than one person noted that the negative tenor of modern campaigning only exacerbates poor images of Congress.

The responsibility for Congress' low regard can be found in many places—the design of the institution and its process, the behavior of its Members, the operation of the media, the constant and rancorous campaigns, the influence of special interests, and the expectations and knowledge of the citizenry. What is more the way in which each of these contribute to cynicism and low regard seem to mutually reinforcing. For this reason, any attempts at reform must proceed on several fronts at once.

Finally, I and other participants at the conference agreed on one point. We all know most, if not all of Congress' failings. However, almost to a person believe that it is much better than perceived. I am proud of the work of the Center for the Study of Congress in attempting to separate the Congress' real problems from the perceived ones and come up with a course of action to deal with both institutions.

[From the Sunday News & Observer, Sept. 14, 1997]

PANEL WEIGHS IMAGE OF CONGRESS—CITIZENS' COMPLAINTS ABOUT CONGRESS ARE DISCUSSED BY 2 CONGRESSMEN, PROFESSORS, A POLLSTER, AND JOURNALISTS

(By Kyle Marshall)

DURHAM.—Those who think Congress feeds off conflict and controversy wouldn't get an argument from Rep. David Dreier, a California Republican.

But to describe today's Congress as a "cesspool," as one Democratic congressman put it to Dreier over lunch this week? That's going too far.

"I happen to love this institution," Dreier said of his place of employment. "And I take umbrage when I have many of my colleagues, who have chosen to be here and have stepped up wanting to be a part of it, maligning it."

Dreier, vice chairman of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, has spent a lot of time thinking about the role Congress plays in governing—and what needs to change to make it work better. On Saturday, he joined North Carolina Rep. David Price, a Democrat from Chapel Hill, on a panel with academics, pollsters and journalists to hash out the many complaints about Congress from the citizenry.

The forum, at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, was sponsored by the Center for the Study of Congress, a newly formed arm of the Duke University School of Law.

Polls consistently show a lack of trust in Congress. To many on the panel, that comes as no surprise, because it has always been that way.

Tom Mann of the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank, noted that in the election of 1874, no fewer than 183 incumbents were thrown out of office in the wake of a bribery scandal. And Dreier quoted the House speaker in 1925, Nicholas Longworth, who said being a member of Congress had always been an unpopular task and always would be.

What has changed in just the past few years, however, is the amount of outright venom spewed at Congress—much of it inspired by special-interest groups and talk radio, some panelists said.