Now, the radical left will tell us that the death tax is about nothing more than helping the rich. Say that to the farmer that has spent his entire life with his hands in the soil building a farm, praying to God every year that his crops will come in, praying that he will have something to pass on to his sons and his daughter, only to pass away and have his children have to pay 55 percent to the Federal Government just because he had the bad fortune of dying. Fifty-five percent on money that he has already paid taxes on eight or nine times.

Mr. Speaker, that is obscene. With the new collection of wealth in America, with middle-class Americans that are actually getting to earn a little bit of money and investing in small businesses and using their hands and using their minds and sweating day and night to build a small business in the hope of passing the American dream on to their children, they find out that when they die, they are going to have to pay 55 percent to the Federal Government. And what is going to happen to their small business? What is going to happen to their small farm? They are going to have to sell it. They are going to have to have a sale on the courtroom steps, because their children are not going to have the money to pay death taxes and keep that family business or that family farm running.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense. It makes no sense that Americans, while they are alive, spend half of the year paying for taxes, fees and regulations put on them by the government.

Now, what does that mean? That means that when Americans wake up to work on Monday, they are working for the government, and all day they are working for the government. When they wake up and go to work on Tuesday, they are still working to pay taxes, fees and regulations to the government. It is not until they come back from lunch on Wednesday afternoon that they are able to put aside a few dollars for themselves and a few dollars aside for their family and a few dollars aside for a mortgage. God help us all to be able to save a little bit of money for our children's education.

See, this is not the agenda that the President or the radical left want to talk about, because what does this do? Why is this offensive to people on the left? Because it makes sense? It makes sense I think to most Americans. But why is it offensive to people on the left? It is because it takes money out of Washington, D.C., and returns it to Americans.

I think, in the end, the difference between the right and the left is that the left just does not trust Americans with their own money. Like the President of the United States said in Buffalo a few weeks ago: Yeah, we could give you your money and hope that you spend it the right way, but we just cannot do that.

Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that we will be coming to a time in the coming months that we can debate the real issues and debate the real facts. If we are talking about spending, we will keep spending down, we will adhere to the spending caps that we passed in 1997.

We have had Speaker HASTERT and several others come out this week and talk about their desire to stay in the spending caps. We have had the President of the United States talk about more taxes, more spending, more government, two very separate visions of America.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans are fighting hard to cut taxes. Hopefully, we can cut the death tax. Hopefully, we can help Americans that make $45,000 to $60,000 get out of the 28 percent tax bracket and go to the 15 percent tax bracket. Why is an American making $45,000 paying 28 percent in Federal taxes? That is insane and wrong. The Federal Government has enough money. It does not need money that badly.

Hopefully, when we talk about Social Security we can say no to raiding the Social Security trust fund and say yes to keeping Social Security off budget. Say no to the President's plan of looting Social Security by $270 billion, according to CBO, and say yes to the Herger plan, the Republican plan, to keep Social Security off budget.

Mr. Speaker, if we do that and if we go back to what we were talking about doing in 1995, which was balancing the budget, cutting taxes, cutting spending, saving Social Security and being responsible with taxpayers' money, then I think we will really be on to something and we will go into the next century and the new millennium a stronger, freer, prouder country than we have in many, many years.

That is my hope, that is my prayer, and that is what I will be fighting for.

ISSUES AFFECTING THE PEOPLE OF GUAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor today in the course of a special order to try to draw some attention to issues which affect the people I represent, the people of Guam.

Mr. Speaker, Guam is a small island about 9,000 miles from here. It has 150,000 proud U.S. citizens and offers the United States a transit point through which military power is projected into that part of the world. It is a cornerstone of America's projection of its military strength in Asia and the Pacific.

Guam has a $10 billion military infrastructure. Our island is primarily influenced by Asian economic trends, and we have a fair-sized economy for a population of 150,000.

□ 1530

We have a $3 billion economy that is fueled primarily by tourism. We had over 1.2 million tourists last year, we anticipate, and we certainly hope that we will get more.

In the course of trying to represent a territory of the United States, the furthest territory from Washington, D.C., and in the course of trying to represent some very special and unique conditions which affect the people I represent, it becomes necessary to try to get some time to enter into the RECORD and to provide some information for those people who happen to be watching some information about the kinds of issues that affect the people of Guam.

I certainly would like to take the time to start off by talking about a very special congressional delegation that went to Guam last month. In February, there was a Pacific congressional delegation headed by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), who is the chairman of the Committee on Resources. He took a delegation which included the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE), the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON), the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA), the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. CHRISTENSEN), and myself through a four-stop trip in the Pacific.

The Committee on Resources, of which the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) is chair, is the committee of jurisdiction and responsibility over the insular areas.

I want to take the time to thank the members of the congressional delegation for taking time from a very busy schedule in order to go out to the Pacific. I think sometimes people think of these as trips that are taken at a very leisurely pace and that not much is learned. But inasmuch as there is a great deal, perhaps, of misinformation or a lack of understanding or firsthand knowledge about the insular areas, I took it as a great opportunity to do a little teaching about the Pacific. I can testify that flying all over the Pacific, in which time is measured in hours of flight time, cannot be very pleasant when you make basically six stops in the course of 10 days.

In the course of the CODELs, the congressional delegation trips, they happened to stop, of course, on Guam. They went to American Samoa, Guam, Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and Majuro in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

In the course of stopping in Guam, I would like to say publicly that I certainly appreciate the work of Governor Guiterrez and many of the people on Guam who made the visit most pleasant, I think, for the CODEL, the Members, the spouses that attended, as well as the staff that went.

Politics on Guam is very different than politics here. Sometimes when we try to deal with issues, we run into roadblocks of misunderstanding. It is very difficult to try to get the sense or

try to explain the sense of the kinds of situations that we confront.

Yet, in the course of the congressional delegation visit, we did have the opportunity to have a forum between locally elected leaders, the Governor, members of the Guam legislature and Members of Congress to have a dialogue, a roundtable discussion on some major issues. I would like to simply address a few of those issues.

One is political status. Guam is an unincorporated territory of the United States. This goes back to a distinction made and rulings made by the Supreme Court called the insular cases in which a distinction was made between so-called incorporated territories and unincorporated territories.

Unincorporated territories are those areas over which the United States has sovereignty but which are not destined or are not promised or there is no implied promise for becoming States. This is to make a distinction of what was going on in the 19th century with areas of Oklahoma or Arizona or New Mexico which were territories almost always seen as States in waiting.

The problem with unincorporated territories is, realistically, as it stands now, unless we are able to conceptualize a new model for governance and participation in the system, unincorporated territories have very few options, particularly the smaller ones have very few options, in order to be able to participate in the making of laws which govern their lives.

Unincorporated territories are territories that are represented here, one is not even represented here, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, represented here by individuals like myself who are not voting Members of Congress.

Consequently, the people that we represent have no real meaningful participation in the making of laws which apply to the territories. Most of the laws apply to the territories in the same way that they apply to other areas.

Moreover, even though the President is our president as much as any other American citizen, we do not vote for president. And, of course, the executive branch of the Federal Government and all its various agencies issue regulations which in the main are applicable to the territories in the same way that they are applied to the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

As a consequence, it is always an issue to try to figure out what is the long-term process for resolving this situation, because it is a situation which every American citizen must come to grips with at some time. That is, how do you extend the meaning of the phrase concept of the governed to some 4 million Americans for whom that phrase is not fully implemented? It is easy to say to aspire to statehood. Perhaps, Puerto Rico, because of its size and its proximity and the relative numbers that are at work there, it is easy to say that statehood is an option.

But for an area like Guam or the Virgin Islands or American Samoa or the Northern Mariana Islands, that is not often seen as an option. Yet, there is no alternative given in order to find a fuller way to participate in the American body politic. So, as a consequence, these are issues that are always just below the surface on any given issue.

It comes to the surface on some very difficult things, like the establishment of a fish and wildlife refuge on Guam to deal with endangered species. This was a law that was passed in the U.S. Congress and applied to Guam in the same way that it applied to the 50 States, even though the people of Guam may not want the refuge. And in this instance, they do not, even though the source of the problem is the application of a law in which the people of Guam have no meaningful participation.

So there are a number of issues which were raised. First of all, we dealt with political status, and we hope that we can continue the dialogue on this. We hope that the Committee on Resources will see fit to try to establish new models for governance, new ways in order to establish meaningful participation for citizens who do not participate in the formation of laws which govern their lives. They do not elect a president who is, nevertheless, their president in every sense of the word.

One of the main issues that is always raised in the context of Guam is excess lands. These are military lands. The military condemned approximately 40 percent of the land in Guam in the immediate post-World War II era in order to establish a network of military bases which were subsequently used to prosecute further World War II, to fight the Korean War, to win the Cold War.

But, basically, those lands were condemned by military officials under authority of this Congress when there were no representatives from Guam at that time, not even a nonvoting representative.

If there was anyone who wanted to contest that process of condemnation, they had to take their case in front of a military court. It was a closed system. It was a closed system, a very un-American system, but a system that was specifically authorized by Congress. It could be authorized by Congress because, under the Constitution, Congress could pass virtually any kind of law it sees fit with respect to the territories.

So one of the issues is that today, as the military downsizes, as it changes its needs, is how to get as many lands back to the government of Guam at no cost, back to the people of Guam at no cost.

This is very different than any other circumstance that may be experienced in any other area of the United States. These lands were condemned by military courts primarily for a military purpose. Now that they no longer serve a military purpose, they should go back to the people of Guam.

Moreover, the government of Guam should be granted the option, if feasible, to return some of the land that they do get back to the original land owners. And this is a much contentious issue across a number of lines, because there are many bureaucracies in Washington who fear that this will create some precedence which would make it difficult to deal with excess lands in other parts of the United States.

But, again, given Guam's unique experience, given the fact that we must do what is right for the people of Guam and that we must do what is right in correcting this historical injustice, I think we should draft a provision which allows for that.

Another item which has surfaced also in the course of the discussions is the rate of illegal immigration into Guam, primarily from China. I would like to discuss that at length a little bit later in this special order.

Lastly, compact-impact aid. It is useful to have a little geography lesson about Guam. Guam is roughly 3,500 miles west of Hawaii, about 7 hours flying time. It is in the middle of a group of islands that geographically are called Micronesia. Most of Micronesia was under a trust territory arrangement from the United Nations called the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Emerging out of that old Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands are three new independent nations that are in free association with the United States. These new nations are called compact states. They are called FAS, Freely Associated States. These are the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshalls.

They have their own representation in the United nations. They have ambassadors who are here in Washington, D.C. The United States has ambassadors that are in those three areas of Micronesia.

Yet, because they share a very special relationship, they are the only independent countries in the world that are allowed free migration into the United States. I believe that that is a good policy. In general, it is a good policy. But because of the proximity of Guam, most of these migrants end up either in Guam, the vast majority end up in Guam. Some end up in Hawaii. A few go on to the U.S. mainland.

As part of this treaty between the Freely Associated States and the United States of America, which is a freely negotiated treaty, the United States basically granted these nations the right to freely migrate. The people of Guam were not a party to those negotiations. In fact, because of their status as an unincorporated territory, they could not vote on that in the full House proceedings that occurred here.

So, as a consequence, one can say that the obligation, the fulfillment of this promise made by the United States Government falls on the people of Guam. Today, as we speak, approximately 10 percent of the population of

Guam are these migrants who come to Guam, who have no restrictions, no visa requirements, no monitoring, and they are simply allowed.

When the compacts were passed, the U.S. Congress did put a statement in there that the social and educational costs of the migration of these people into the territories like Guam, they were mindful that something like this would happen, would be reimbursed by the Federal Government.

Well, guess what? The first compacts were negotiated and implemented in 1985 and 1986. It has gone on almost 15 years. The government annually estimates that these social and educational costs, because of the disparity in medical treatment opportunities between Guam and the other areas, because of the disparity in educational and health services, that we estimate that this figure is about anywhere between $15 million and $20 million a year since 1986. But, today, the U.S. Government only reimburses the people of Guam $4.5 million.

So we are very concerned about this. We took the opportunity to explain it to the Members of Congress who took the time to come to Guam and also took the time to recognize the work in this process and the fulfillment of a long-time commitment by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) to go out to Guam and personally listen to the problems.

□ 1545

I am also pleased to note that the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. DON YOUNG), the chairman of the Committee on Resources, has agreed to try to work with me on some legislation, a kind of an omnibus bill for Guam.

In that omnibus bill there are some provisions that we would like to put in. One is to correct an anomaly in Guam's Supreme Court. Because the territories are governed by an organic act, or an organizing act, this is the basic law that governs the government of Guam or the government of the Virgin Islands.

These organic acts are passed by Congress. They are not passed by the people in those territories. And so if we want to seek a change to them, we have to come to Congress to make those changes.

Guam was allowed to have its own Supreme Court, but because of the way it was worded, it ends up that a lower court, the Superior Court, actually has control over the court system. This is a good-sense measure. It violates most of the ways that the States and other territories run their court systems. If my colleagues can imagine that a district court or one of the Federal circuit courts would have more control over the court system than the U.S. Supreme Court, that is the situation we have on Guam, and we can correct that with a change in the organic act.

Also in a proposed omnibus bill we want to put the government of Guam, the people of Guam, at the head of the line when excess land is declared by the Federal Government. As it stands now, and as it stands in most areas, when there is Federal excess lands which the Federal Government no longer needs, they offer it to other Federal agencies first. So if the Department of Defense had a runway that they no longer needed, they would simply check out all the other Federal agencies. Obviously, when they do that, to be sure, one or more Federal agencies are going to find a use for it.

So what our legislation would do and what we would like to put into the Guam omnibus act is legislation which would treat the government of Guam as a Federal agency and put them at the head of the line whenever any Federal agency declares that land is to be excess.

Given the nature of how this land was originally taken, condemned by military authorities under a grant of authority by Congress and condemned by military authorities and adjudicated in courts presided over by people in uniform, a closed system, it is only fair that we provide the opportunity for the people of Guam to have first crack at the return of excess lands.

In addition, another provision we would like to put in an omnibus bill, a bill to correct many of these inequities which the people of Guam experience, we would like to put in a requirement in which the Department of Interior will make a report and provide statistical information and monitor the flow of migrants from the Freely Associated States. And that, moreover, in fulfilling this requirement, they make an estimate about the costs that are involved in terms of providing these migrants who come to Guam, and who come to other places inside the United States, the cost of taking care of their social needs and their educational needs.

The other item which I would like to talk about and take some time on is about the rash of illegal immigration which has come to Guam. Guam is approximately, if one were to take a flight direct to Hong Kong, is approximately 4 flying hours to Hong Kong, but that represents a great expanse of ocean.

Last year in particular, and this year already, Guam has experienced a surge in Chinese illegal immigration. As a result, ironically, of some liberalization in internal policies inside China as well as the economic problems they are experiencing and a very skillfully organized crime syndicate inside China, there has been a rash of Chinese illegal immigrants coming into Guam.

The rundown of events is shocking to a place that has only 150,000 people. Last year, we estimated that about 700 illegal Chinese immigrants found their way to Guam, and this year the Coast Guard estimates that anywhere between 1,200 and 1,700 will find their way to Guam in 1999.

Last year, on May 11, 10 Chinese illegals were dropped off at Ylig Bay. On May 20, two people were arrested in connection with the Ylig Bay incident. On May 22, 24 Chinese illegals and three smugglers were apprehended off of Guam's eastern shore. On June 8, 75 Chinese nationals were apprehended off of Tanguisson. On June 18, a federally funded report on the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, our neighbors to the north, found that some 200 Chinese citizens were smuggled from Saipan to Guam and are in various stages of a political asylum process. On June 26, 12 of the Chinese nationals caught at Tanguisson on June 8 were discovered to have hepatitis B. On September 15, 48 Chinese illegals were apprehended off Mangilao. On December 25, Christmas day, 11 suspected Chinese illegals were apprehended near Guam Reef Hotel, which is a big hotel, and it is in the middle of a tourist area. It has become even more brazen as times goes on.

It is important to understand that this rash of Chinese illegal immigrants is very unlike what we normally think of as a source of illegal immigration. Most of us think, and, quite honestly, I myself am very sympathetic with many illegal immigrants who come to this country, because they usually come as people who are in economically destitute situations, who are simply trying to find a new way of life, trying to find a way to economically improve themselves. If they find a way to cross the border to our southwest and they find a way to get a job, eventually, many of them, if they find a way to live through all of that, become quite successful in living inside the United States.

Now, I am not advocating illegal immigration, but that is what we normally think of as the kind of illegal immigration.

The kind of illegal immigration that is occurring in Guam from China is very different. This is part of a well-orchestrated, highly-organized criminal network operating inside Fujian Province, inside China, in which the people will go out and buy a very decrepit fishing boat that will barely survive an extended journey, which takes anywhere between 18 to 22 sailing days to get to Guam. They will load these people up, take them off to a point off of Guam, and then, through some coordination with people onshore, they will ferry them in by smaller boats and then, hopefully, once they get caught, and almost all of them do get caught, they will claim political asylum. Then the process of adjudicating these asylum requests ensures that, by and large, most of them will stay on.

These people who are coming to Guam's shores in this way are responsible for coughing up anywhere between $8,000 and $10,000 each. If they are taken all the way to North America, they are responsible for coming up with about $35,000 each. A boatload, a decrepit fishing boat that can take and move them from the coast of China illegally.

The People's Republic of China is not encouraging this. They are a little embarrassed by it, frankly, but this is the work of criminal organizations.

They will take that boat and move them to Guam. But they barely get to Guam or they barely get near the coast of Guam, and they are usually diseased by that time or diseased to begin with. Many of them are beaten. Many of them are living in holds that are meant for catching tuna, and so they live in some shocking conditions.

I got a complete briefing on this by the U.S. Coast Guard, and it is a scandal as to how these people are being treated.

Most of them are men in their 20s. And the reason why most of them are men in their 20s is because they really do become indentured servants once they get in the United States because they have to pay off an enormous debt. So this is a planned criminal activity which preys upon human hope and practices human misery.

And then, at the other end of it, once they get in the United States, there is planned indentured servitude which goes on for year after year after year. So this whole stream of criminal activity that affects my constituency on Guam is part of a planned criminal network.

In order to deal with it, I have introduced legislation which will take Guam out of the INA, the Immigration and Naturalization Act, for purposes of easy political asylum. Now, what that means is that if, for example, the Chinese illegal immigrants come to Guam and they are caught, and invariably all of them will be caught in one way or another, because Guam is not a very large place. And if an individual is Chinese and does not speak much English, someone will notice. When they are caught, they are then instructed to claim some kind of asylum. Under existing INA laws, the immigration officers are very limited in their flexibility to deal with that.

I am not proposing that we eliminate political asylum all together, because there is a minimum standard which we must adhere to as a country no matter where political asylees come from. And there may be, in the future, legitimate claims for political asylum. But what we have to do is pass a law which gives the INS officers the flexibility to say, no, this individual is part of a criminal process trading in human misery, and what we are going to do is we are going to detain this individual until we find a way to get them back to China.

And if we do that, even if we are allowed to do that with one boatload, then that will be enough deterrence for the people who are making money off of this human misery to know that that route for them is closed.

It is a very sad commentary on what goes on in that part of the world, but it is important to understand that the loophole that we are trying to close is not borne out of an opposition to political asylum. Rather it is the utilization of political asylum to advance a criminal agenda. The only people who make money off of this enterprise are not even the individual illegal immigrants themselves but rather the criminals who organize this network.

If they can get a decrepit fishing boat for $100,000 and charge this human cargo of misery and get them to Guam, they can make $5 million on that as they go through that process. And the inducement to that, the incentive to that, the conduit for that is basically existing immigration and naturalization, the existing INA Act as applied on Guam.

Now, the reason, going back to Guam's status as an unincorporated territory, that we can make a change in the law which gives INS officers this kind of flexibility on Guam but not that kind of flexibility in other areas, is because Guam is not part of the United States for all purposes. So trying to utilize that flexibility in order to deal with an immediate situation is something that I think is widely supported on Guam and certainly widely supported even by the law enforcement agents that are working on this.

It is important to understand that sometimes many of us do not think of the U.S. Coast Guard as particularly hazardous duty, but the Coast Guard has to interdict these vessels and they are facing some very rough situations.

□ 1600

They are dealing with some criminal organizations and people who are very desperate and there has been some very serious, violent incidents at sea as a result of this. I want to publicly acknowledge the work of the Coast Guard and also call on the Coast Guard to devote more resources to the Pacific area in order to deal with this. As part of a package which I am not sure of its current status here in the House but there is an emergency package, the Central American and Caribbean Relief Act which is supposed to be marked up today, I am not sure that it was, but in that they are hoping to give some money to INS in order to deal with the immigrant situation which occurred as a result of Hurricane Mitch in Central America. A little part of that funding is going to go to deal with the Guam situation and so I am hopeful that that package passes here in the House and eventually in the other body. What INS has done on Guam is with one group of 80 Chinese illegal immigrants found in Guam in January, is because INS had no more funds to adjudicate them, to prosecute them, no more funds to detain them, they decided to turn them loose on Guam. Many of these people have hepatitis, many of these people suffer from tuberculosis and almost all of them test positive for tuberculosis, so all of them have had contact with TB. Because of our concern on Guam, the government of Guam has willingly taken up the cause for detaining them.

That is our situation with the illegal immigrant problem. I want to stress again so that this legislation which I have proposed not be misunderstood. There is a minimum threshold which is internationally recognized, how nations are supposed to deal with people who make political asylum claims. The United States in its wisdom has a more generous threshold on that. And so when INS officers are confronted with this claim, they have limited movement, limited freedom of action in order to deal with it. In our case, because these illegal immigrants are basically part of a network of criminal activities, they are all men in their 20s, they are carefully selected because these men will work for many, many years and will continue to pump money back into the crime syndicate which brought them over, it is important that we remove that incentive for the time being in order to deal with this and to end this problem. I would add that this is a growing problem not only in Guam although Guam is the first part but even as far away as the Virgin Islands, there are incidents once in a while in which there are people being smuggled in from China by criminal organizations. This is a widespread problem. In our case I think it makes sense to try to deal with it in the way that I have just outlined.

Lastly, I would like to address a problem very briefly which affects everyone, and, that is, the Y2K problem. I think our contemporary world is ever more dependent on computers to assist with and manage our daily lives. From the ATM machine to the desktop PC, to the pacemaker, to air traffic control systems, computers and their myriad of programs all work in concert to make our lives better and more productive. On my home island of Guam, computers have improved mass communication with the U.S. mainland and overseas areas in all facets of life, law, business, government, commerce, military, trade, transportation and perhaps most important for us, staying in touch with our families wherever they may be throughout the world. Because our lives on Guam are so intertwined with computers, the year 2000 or the Y2K problem may pose quite a crippling problem to many communities. I want to point out that the year 2000 will first be experienced on Guam, 15 hours before it will be experienced here. So if we are going to get some computer glitches, we are going to feel them in Guam right away.

The Y2K problem was created by a programming oversight. As a result of an archaic, two-digit dating system in computer software and hardware, vital systems may be knocked off-line on January 1, 2000, creating cyber-havoc for many. This concern has led the General Accounting Office to elect the Y2K problem to the top of the ''high risk'' list for every Federal agency.

There exists a Congressional Research Service report, requested at the behest of Senator DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN over 3 years ago, dealing with the implications of the Y2K problem. The report states, among other

things, that the year 2000 problem is a serious problem and the cost of rectifying it will indeed be rather high.

Now, the Federal Government, and we have heard about this and read about it almost on a daily basis, has become rather proficient in getting its agencies and its departments to comply with the inevitable reprogramming that is required to fix this bug. But not without some effort. Both the Senate and the House have truly taken the lead on this pressing issue. Under the gentle prodding of Senators MOYNIHAN, BENNETT and DODD as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), the President appointed a Y2K Council to get the government, the U.S. Government, the Federal Government, focused on this issue. They have done well enough that many citizens do not fear the end of the year despite the rhetoric of many doomsayers. That said, to paraphrase Robert frost, we have many miles yet to go before we sleep.

Up until today, States, territories and local authorities have been left to their own devices in terms of fixing the year 2000 problem. While most of the Federal Government's critical services may be Y2K compliant by January 1, 2000, many of the States and local jurisdictions will not be. This includes Guam and other territories. In Guam, for example, the local Office of the Public Auditor recently released a study outlining the territorial Y2K problem. While some of the government of Guam's departments are Y2K compliant ahead of schedule, many are not. Guam's Department of Public Works and Department of Public Health and Social Services, both lifeblood agencies for both Guam's public infrastructure and poor and handicapped, do not have enough money or are behind in scheduling and performing Y2K conversions. The story is the same throughout the country in many cities, counties, towns and territories: time is running out or the money has already run out.

The bill which I have introduced today will establish a program that will allow States and territories to apply for funding to initiate Y2K conversions of State computer systems which distribute Federal money for vital welfare programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, better known as WIC; child support enforcement, child care and child welfare, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, better known as TANF. Through the application of Y2K technical assistance funds for these programs, we can ensure that the lifeblood of many of the poorest Americans will not be disrupted by the turn of the calendar.

This vital legislation, which I have introduced today, is the House companion bill to the Moynihan-Bennett-Dodd bill, S. 174 as introduced in the Senate. We have modified the original Senate vehicle to ensure that the territories and the District of Columbia will not be excluded from this important program, an apparent and accidental oversight of the Senate version. I will not tell my colleagues how many oversights we have experienced similar to those, but certainly those of us from the territories are always cognizant of the fact that many legislative items do not address our needs until we take specific action to take care of that. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan and fiscally responsible and necessary legislation. I would like to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTIAN-CHRISTENSEN), the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for lending their support as the representatives from non-State areas of the United States. Finally, I want to especially thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and Senators MOYNIHAN, BENNETT and DODD for taking the lead on educating all Americans on the Y2K problem as well as legislating wise solutions to ameliorate its potentially harmful effects. This is good legislation. I think it deserves careful scrutiny in order to assist local governments that deal primarily with Federal programs to make sure that there are no glitches in the system as we celebrate the end of 1999.

Again I want to reiterate, I want to express my personal gratitude to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and all the Members of Congress who went on the congressional delegation to the Pacific areas to try to deal with some of the problems, to understand some of the problems experienced by Guam, the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, and the Republic of the Marshalls, which was kind of a State visit. These islands represent a marvelous part of the world, a part of the world that is frequently romanticized and sometimes misunderstood. These are real people with real-life stories and compelling stories to tell. All of them have made an enormous contribution to the United States in one way or another and are deserving of the respect and dignity of human beings and U.S. citizens everywhere.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon) laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
Washington, DC, March 4, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 5(a) of Public Law 105–255, I hereby appoint the following individual to the Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering, and Technology Development:

Dr. Jill Shapiro, Ph.D. of Tiburon, CA.

Yours Very Truly,

RICHARD A. GEPHARDT.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Government Reform:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 3, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As you may know, I have been appointed to serve on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence by Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri.

I respectfully request a leave of absence from the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight for the duration of my service on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. In accordance with the rules of the Democratic Caucus, I will retain my seniority on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight during this period.

Sincerely,

GARY A. CONDIT,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. CHENOWETH (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today, on account of illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PASTOR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SANDERS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HAYES) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SHIMKUS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGLISH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NETHERCUTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHAFFER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GILMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 12 minutes