Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the majority on the Committee on Rules chose not to make in order an amendment that I intend to offer today which would prohibit the commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service from releasing any criminal aliens who are currently detained by the INS and are subject to deportation per the 1996 Immigration Reform Act.

The reason that this amendment is necessary is, in January of this year the INS, in an internal communication with its regional directors, put out a memorandum which stated that because of lack of detention space they were going to start releasing criminal aliens who would otherwise be subject to deportation. Now, among these individuals are people who were convicted in U.S. courts of felonies such as assault, drug violations and the like.

This is also a situation where previous Congresses have provided funding increases for the INS, $3.5 billion, including $750 million for detention. The INS has subsequently reversed this policy. But the fact remains that has been the policy of the INS, and this Congress should take steps to try and address it.

Now, it is disappointing that the Committee on Rules chose not to make this in order. We all know that the supplemental appropriations bill ultimately, once it is negotiated out with the administration, will pass. And I think it is important that Congress send a message to the INS that they are not to conduct this activity.

I think many of us are familiar in our own districts, when the States have gone into releasing otherwise violent criminals for space needs, the public outcry that has occurred. I think the same would occur if the Federal Government, of which we are the stewards, is allowed to release criminal aliens who are subject to deportation.

So I have an amendment that was filed that would prohibit the INS from doing this. I realize it is subject to a point of order. I do intend to offer the amendment this afternoon. I would hope that Members will take a look at it, because I do not think Members want to be on record in endorsing this misguided INS policy.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) chairman of the Committee on Rules.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of this rule and of the underlying supplemental appropriations bill.

It is an open rule. And while I am sorry that we were unable to provide waivers to all the Members who wanted them for their individual amendments, I do believe that we will have a chance for a free and open debate here, which is exactly what this calls for.

The major thrust of this supplemental appropriations bill is to deal with a very serious crisis, and it is a crisis. I just upstairs met with one of the top executives with Dole Food who was telling me about the situation in Honduras, how they as a company stepped in and tried to provide much-needed relief.

We know that literally thousands of people lost their lives and over 30,000 people have been left homeless, and the numbers go on and on and on, from Hurricane Mitch. And we have been waiting to try and put together this package of assistance. I am very proud, as an American citizen, that we can step up and help our very good friends at this important time of need.

We, as a Nation, have had a constant interest in Central America. My friend from Sanibel, Florida (Mr. GOSS) and I have on several occasions visited Central America and we know that the tremendous strides that they have made toward political pluralism are important to recognize. Unfortunately, they faced this horrible catastrophe. And while this is a great deal of money, it is I believe very, very important for us as a society to step up to the plate and provide this much-needed assistance to our neighbors.

As we know, these dollars are offset within the guidelines that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has put forward, and I commend him for that, and I think that it is in fact the responsible and right thing for us to do. And so I hope my colleagues will join in strong support of not only this rule but this very important legislation.

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

Mr. GOSS. 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material on the bill (H.R. 1141) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

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

There was no objection.

1999 EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 125 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1141.

□ 1107

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1141) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes, with Mr. PEASE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the supplemental appropriations bill that we present today was requested by the President of the United States several weeks ago to respond to the disaster in Central America, Honduras and Nicaragua specifically, as well as the earthquake damage in Colombia.

Actually, the bill has been fairly well discussed during consideration of the rule, but I think it is appropriate that we point out that this bill reflects a humanitarian reaction to a terrible disaster in our own part of the world.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, this Congress and the administration spent billions of dollars in attempting to keep Fidel Castro and his friends in the Kremlin from exporting communism all over that area. We were very successful, and we helped our friends develop democratic forms of government. With the exception of Cuba, we currently have democratic governments throughout these regions. They are our friends, and they are our neighbors, and it is appropriate that we respond to them in their time of need.

As soon as the disaster occurred, American troops were sent to the region. They pulled children out of flood waters. They pulled people out of mud-swept homes. They did many, many things to save lives and to bring sanitary conditions to the region.

So what we are trying to do with this bill, as requested by the President, and he did not request all of it, I will have to admit, and we will talk about that later; he did not request the offsets that we use to pay for this bill, but the President did request that we provide $152 million for our own agricultural programs here at home, which we have done. The President requested that we provide funding for Central America, which we have done.

The President also requested that we provide a payment to Jordan, one of our greatest allies in the Middle East and an ally that is very important to peace in the region. We did provide the $100 million for Jordan, but again we offset this $100 million.

We also replaced $195 million for the Defense Department to pay them for