House. But I think as a general proposition, Mr. Speaker, we ought to raise sanctions, lift them, so that our agriculture community can survive in a free market system in the years ahead.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR OFFENSIVE ART

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many Members have been keeping track of what is going on in New York City, but I think the repercussions of what is going on in New York City really sweep across the entire country, especially when it pertains to two different groups, one, the taxpayers, and, two, the art community.

Let me start at the beginning of my comments to let you know that I have supported the art community. I have in the past voted for the NEA to support their art with taxpayer dollars. I have, however, on a number of occasions cautioned the arts community, do not go spending this money on careless or offensive art. If you have careless or offensive art, what you need to do to fund that is to go out and raise the money privately or have the individuals do it on their own in a display somewhere else.

That is not a violation of the Constitution or a violation of freedom of speech, to go to an individual who is an artist and say, look, your piece of work is too offensive. We are not going to pay for it with taxpayer dollars. That is not to say that you are banned in the United States from displaying your art. You do have freedom of speech; you may display your art. It is just that the taxpayers are not going to pay for it.

So what happens in New York City? Do you think the art community, especially some of the prima donnas in the art community, listen to that kind of advice? Of course they do not. They decide to draw the line in the sand.

Do you know what kind of line they are drawing? They say, look, we have a picture, a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and it has elephant dung, in my country it is known as crap, elephant crap, thrown on the portrait of the Virgin Mary. That is where they decide they should draw the line. They want that to be continued to be funded by taxpayer dollars.

Mayor Giuliani comes out and says this is offensive. Of course it is offensive. I wonder what the black community would do if Martin Luther King's portrait was there and had crap thrown on it. I wonder what those of us who are concerned about AIDS in this country would do if they put an AIDS blanket on there and threw crap on it.

Of course it is offensive. Those communities would not tolerate it. They would probably take down the building. But I guess it is okay for the arts community in New York City, or at least the leadership of the prima donnas, to say it is all right to offend the Catholic religion and to offend Christians throughout the country.

Let me tell you, the Jewish community could be next. For all I know, this museum might put on the swastika and say it is beautiful art and should be paid for by the taxpayer dollars.

I am urging the art community, Mayor Giuliani is right in this case, and you know he is right. Those are taxpayer dollars. Do not offend the taxpayer, do not offend religions across this world, by allowing the Virgin Mary display in your museum at taxpayer expense.

You have plenty of patrons, plenty of rich patrons that support the arts community. Go to your patrons and say look, will you fund this offensive display? By the way, I would be surprised if you have many that do. But will you fund this display of the Virgin Mary with crap thrown all over it? Will you fund it somewhere else, so we do not have to go to the taxpayer?

It is amazing to me. Even the New York Times ran an editorial today, and they say what a courageous stand this art museum is taking by standing up and saying we have the right at taxpayers' expense to display a portrait of the Virgin Mary with crap thrown on it.

I wonder where the New York Times would be if that was an AIDS blanket. I wonder where the New York Times would be if that was a portrait of Martin Luther King or a symbol of the Jewish religion.

It is amazing to me that the art community defies common sense every opportunity they seem to have. I am telling you in New York City and my colleagues that represent New York City, let me tell you, you are hurting the arts community across the United States.

One other point I want to make, if you do think in New York City that this art and that what you have done here does not extend across the country, I am getting calls in my district, the 3rd Congressional District of Colorado. That is the mountains. It is a long ways away from New York City. But I have got constituents, rightfully so, very, very upset about the fact that you in New York City in that arts community, the prima donnas, are funding with taxpayer dollars that picture, that portrait of the Virgin Mary with dung thrown on it, and stand up and have the gall to defend it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCINNIS. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Recently we have, of course, seen a terrible situation where young Christians were murdered and attacked by someone down in Texas. Does the gentleman believe that perhaps some of this vitriol he is talking about could have resulted in that type of violence against Christians? We will leave that for the public.

REFINEMENTS TO THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in frustration, frustration with the government agency that may even be more unpopular than the IRS, if you can believe it. My friends on the Health Subcommittee of Ways and Means and many other colleagues on both sides of the aisle know exactly who I am talking about, the Healthcare Financing Administration, or HCFA.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday of this week our Health Subcommittee will be holding a hearing on refinements to the Balanced Budget Amendment, or BBA. As we plan for this hearing, I hope the administration will not appear before us again in the subcommittee and insult our intelligence. I will be asking some tough questions about their handling of the Medicare program recently, and I hope I do not hear that the agency is unable to address the concerns we are hearing about from seniors across the Nation, and also from Medicare providers, because the agency's hands are completely tied by prescriptive BBA language. That is the constant refrain we get from HCFA, the agency's hands are completely tied by prescriptive BBA language.

We hear these lines about prescriptive language and Congressional intent when the administration does not want to do things, but when it does want to act, when it does want to do something, it is perfectly comfortable with