

And now, Mr. Speaker, a soldier in that war is saying just that, and Congress should listen to him.

We should listen to Retired Navy Lt. Comdr. Sylvester L. Salcedo, who served for 3 years as a U.S. intelligence officer working closely with law enforcement agencies doing anti-drug work.

As Lt. Comdr. Salcedo put it, the \$1.6 billion being proposed on drug-fighting efforts in Colombia is "good money thrown after bad."

Lt. Comdr. Salcedo also said recently that the stated goal of the aid-package—to disrupt the production and export of drugs to the U.S.—is unrealistic and unrealizable. In fact, the Lt. Commander was so upset by this proposal he wanted to return a Navy medal he received for his work with the Defense Department's Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6).

Mr. Speaker, we need to listen to this experienced Naval commander who says, "I don't think we can make any progress on this drug issue by escalating our presence in Colombia. As in Vietnam, this policy is designed to fail. Rather than spend more money in Colombia, we should confront the issue of demand in the U.S. by providing treatment services to the addicted population. That's what's not being addressed."

Mr. Speaker, this veteran of the drug war is absolutely correct. The Lt. Commander's stated goal—"to get us to focus on our own drug addiction problem"—should be our goal as a Congress.

As Lt. Commander Salcedo put it, "Washington should spend its money not on helicopters and trainers but on prevention programs and treatment for addicts."

The cost of the helicopters alone for Colombia would provide treatment for 200,000 Americans who are chemically dependent. We're about to spend almost \$2 billion on Colombia, while here at home we have 26 million addicts and alcoholics, and most are unable to access treatment.

When President Richard Nixon declared "war on drugs" in 1971, he directed 60 percent of the funding into treatment. Now, we're down to 18 percent!

The evidence is clear that it's been a misguided use of resources to put the emphasis on interdiction, crop eradication and border surveillance.

John Walsh of Drug Strategies, a private company, says \$26 billion has already been spent solely on interdiction programs. Yet, by key measures of drug availability, they are all going in the wrong direction. He said "the focus of anti-drug efforts should be switched from interdiction and eradication to treatment of drug addicts."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Walsh is absolutely right! We will never even come close to a drug-free America until we knock down the barriers to chemical dependency treatment for the 26 million Americans already addicted to drugs and/or alcohol.

That's right—26 million addicts in the U.S. today! 150,000 Americans died last year from drug and alcohol addiction. In economic terms, this addiction cost the American people \$246 billion last year. American taxpayers paid over \$150 billion for drug-related criminal and medical costs alone in 1997—more than was spent on education, transportation, agriculture, energy, space and foreign aid combined!

In addition, more than 80 percent of the 1.7 million prisoners in America are behind bars because of drug/alcohol addiction.

Mr. Speaker, how much evidence does Congress need that we have a national epidemic of addiction? An epidemic crying out for a solution that works. Not more cheap political rhetoric. Not more simplistic, supply-side fixes that obviously are not working.

Mr. Speaker, we must get to the root cause of addiction and treat it like other diseases. The American Medical Association told Congress and the nation in 1956 that alcoholism and drug addiction are a disease that requires treatment to recover.

Yet today in America, only 2 percent of the 16 million alcoholics and addicts covered by health plans are able to receive adequate treatment.

That's right. Only 2 percent of addicts and alcoholics covered by health insurance plans are receiving effective treatment for their chemical dependency, notwithstanding the purported "coverage" of treatment by their health plans.

That's because of discriminatory caps, artificially high deductibles and copayments, limited treatment stays and other restrictions on chemical dependency treatment that are different from other diseases.

If we are really serious about reducing illegal drug use in America, we must address the disease of addiction by putting chemical dependency treatment on par with treatment for other diseases. Providing equal access to chemical dependency treatment is not only the prescribed medical approach; it's also the cost-effective approach.

Mr. Speaker, as a recovering alcoholic myself, I know firsthand the value of treatment. As a recovering person of 18 years, I am absolutely alarmed by the dwindling access to treatment for people who need it. Over half of the treatment beds are gone that were available 10 years ago. Even more alarming, 60 percent of the adolescent treatment beds are gone.

Mr. Speaker, we must act now to reverse this alarming trend. We must act now to provide greater access to chemical dependency treatment.

That's why I have introduced the "Substance Abuse Treatment Parity Act"—the same bill that had the broad, bipartisan support last year of 95 cosponsors.

This legislation would provide access to treatment by prohibiting discrimination against the disease of addiction. The bill prohibits discriminatory caps, higher deductibles and copayments, limited treatment stays and other restrictions on chemical dependency treatment that are different from other diseases.

This is not another mandate because it does not require any health plan which does not already cover chemical dependency treatment to provide such coverage. It merely says those which offer chemical dependency coverage cannot treat it differently from coverage for medical or surgical services for other diseases.

In addition, the legislation waives the parity for substance abuse treatment if premiums increase by more than 1 percent and exempts small businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to knock down the barriers to chemical dependency treatment. It's time to end the discrimination against people with addiction.

It's time to provide access to treatment to deal with America's No. 1 public health and public safety problem.

We can deal with this epidemic now or deal with it later.

But it will only get worse if we continue to allow discrimination against the disease of addiction and ignore the demand side.

We can build all the fences on our borders and all the prison cells money can buy. We can hire thousands of new border guards and drug enforcement officers. But dealing primarily with the supply side of this problem will never solve it.

That's because our nation's supply-side strategy does not attack the underlying problem of addiction that causes people to crave and demand drugs. We must get to the root cause of addiction and treat it like other diseases.

All the empirical data, including extensive actuarial studies, show that parity for chemical dependency treatment will save billions of dollars while not raising premiums more than 0.2 percent, or 44 cents a month per insured, according to a recent Rand Corp. study.

That means, under the worst-case scenario, 16 million alcoholics and addicts could receive treatment for the price of a cup of coffee per month to the 113 million Americans covered by health plans. At the same time, the American people would realize \$5.4 billion in cost-savings from treatment parity, according to another recent study.

Of course, no dollar value can quantify the impact that greater access to treatment will have on the spouses, children and families who have been affected by the ravages of addiction: broken families, shattered lives, messed-up kids, ruined careers.

This is not just another policy issue. This is a life-or-death issue for 16 million Americans who are chemically dependent covered by health insurance but unable to access treatment. It's also a life-or-death issue for the other 10 million addicts and alcoholics without insurance.

This year, Congress should knock down the barriers to chemical dependency treatment and pass treatment parity legislation. The American people cannot afford to wait any longer for Congress to "get real" about addiction!

Then someday, we can realistically and honestly talk about the goal of a "Drug-Free America."

CENSUS 2000

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to some of the comments by some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle concerning the upcoming 2000 Census. The census forms are in the mail, and people should have received them by now or will receive them shortly. Please complete those forms. I think, unfortunately, my colleagues tried to make it feel that it was not necessary to complete the forms, because only statistical sampling should be used or something. That was settled by the Supreme Court last year.

The important thing now is to complete the forms. We need to get everybody counted. Everybody living in this

great country needs to be counted, and there is no excuse not to fill out your form. If you do not fill out your form, it costs the Government more to collect the data, it hurts your local community, and there is nothing to be gained by not completing that form, and I am saddened that my colleagues gave the impression that the Republicans do not want to count people. That is so sad that we have to stoop to that level of politics to say that we are not interested in counting people. That is so, so unfortunate. Because we are doing so much more this year to try to get everybody counted.

I am really pleased with what the Census Bureau is doing on a lot of important things to get the undercounted population raised up so that they are fully counted. In fact, this census cost 150 percent more than 1990. We spent less than \$3 billion in 1990, and we are going to spend almost \$7 billion; and we have given every penny that the Census Bureau has asked for.

Now, I know my colleagues say oh, let the professionals at the Census Bureau do it. The professionals know what to do. Let us look at the first major thing the Census Bureau did in sending out a prenotification letter that was just received last week by 120 million people in this country. Well, what happened with that letter? 120 million were sent out and guess what? All 120 million were misaddressed by the Census Bureau. That is the largest mass mailing mistake in history. Mr. Speaker, 120 million mistake, because one digit was added to everyone's address. These are the professionals that do not make mistakes.

Then this form letter has a return envelope. It explains that the form is coming in the mail and on the back it gives a chance if you want it in five different languages. Unfortunately, for the large number of people who just speak English, they do not understand what it was all about because it never explained in English why the letter was coming. So the Census Bureau is getting all of these questions, being tied up with phone calls, why are we getting this letter. I do not understand what it is all about. They forget to put it in English.

I am also glad that my colleague from New York put up the phone number to call, because we do need to work in the local census offices. Because the Census Bureau in their letter, instead of giving the number, what they gave is call directory assistance. Well, that is nice. That only costs 50 cents, whatever it is, in your particular phone provider area, but they did not even have the ability to put down the phone number.

□ 1800

Now these professionals have botched the first big job. I want to make sure we have everybody counted, so I am saying that these mistakes were unfortunate, it is embarrassing for the Bureau, and we need to do everything we can to get everybody counted.

Now they say that Governor Bush will not release another set of numbers. First of all, the Supreme Court has ruled. The Supreme Court ruled last January, a year ago January, and said we cannot use these statistically-adjusted numbers. I am a former statistics professor. We have a lot of use for sampling and adjustments, but the court has ruled, so stop going on about that issue.

They tried this in 1990. They did something called the PES, similar to what is called the ACE this time. It was a failure. What they did was they did a full count and then they tried to adjust it and get a second set of numbers.

When they came up with the second set of numbers, they were not reliable. They played around with them for 2 years and they never used them. They still have never found a use for those numbers because it did not work.

To say, oh, we are going to have this adjusted set of numbers and they are going to be great, the statisticians will even tell us they are not sure it is going to work. They are going to take a sample of 300,000 and adjust the entire population, the 270 million people in this country, based on that 300,000 sample.

What we are working with in this is what is called census blocks, with maybe 25 people in them. It is a very complicated process. Here is a Census Bureau that cannot even send a letter out to tell us about the other matter straight. They botched it three different ways. And they are going to have the ability to do this extremely complicated experiment in statistics and get it right? I am really concerned about it.

Governor Bush is right to say, let us see what we can come up with. I do not think it is going to work. I feel very confident the Supreme Court is going to rule it is illegal and unconstitutional. In that case, we only have this set of numbers.

So please, everybody should complete their form. That is the best record we have. Everybody please complete their form, whether they get a short or long form. One out of every six people get the long form. I know there are a lot of questions on there, but we really need to get the best Census possible this year.

THE PRIORITIES OF THE FEDERAL BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, just across the street here, the Committee on the Budget is working on unveiling the blueprint for the Federal budget. We do this every year to pay for everything from social security for our senior citizens to Head Start programs for America's preschoolers.

The budget, introduced by House Republicans this week, has a few important priorities. I would like to spend the next hour talking about those priorities.

First, we save and protect social security by walling off the money and making sure it cannot be spent on anything other than retirement for America's seniors. We pay down public debt.

Republicans disagree with the Democrats and the leadership coming out of the White House, the Clinton-Gore team over there, on the matter of spending. We on the Republican side do not think it is right to make our children pay tomorrow for money that we are spending today. We think, frankly, that we ought to have the courage to find the cash to pay for the things we want to buy now, rather than make my children and their children pay for it many, many years from now at many times the expense, after we factor in interest and just the general cost of bloating the Federal debt.

We also provide Americans with relief from the unfair tax on marriage and the unfair social security earnings limit, which penalizes senior citizens who want to work beyond retirement age. In fact, for those who earn over \$17,000 this year, they will be penalized. They will actually have to pay dollars back to the Social Security Administration for every \$3 over that \$17,000 cap that they earn. For every \$3 they earn, \$1 has to go back to the government.

I just met with some constituents out in Colorado just last week at Wal-Mart, and found a number of individuals working there beyond traditional retirement age. One woman approached me and said she had to write a check. It was for \$88. She said it was not the dollar amount that bothered her so much as it was the principle of the thing, the notion that just to work she has to pay. If she wants to be ambitious and continue being productive in the work force, she has to pay the government back as a result of this penalty.

We found the funding in our budget to eliminate that penalty altogether, and make it possible for people to go on working beyond retirement age without fear of being penalized and punished by their government for their entrepreneurial spirit, their dedication to work, and for their personal enterprise.

Finally, we strengthen funding for important priorities like education and defense, so both our children and our Nation have a more secure future.

These are the things I will be fighting for as the budget continues to work its way through Congress. These are the things I will continue to work for as I will help Congress craft a budget that meets the needs of people of all ages across my district in the Eastern Plains of Colorado.

Over the course of this next 55 minutes of the special order, we expect other members of the Republican majority to make their way down to the