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## THE NATION'S FIRST RESPONDERS

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

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to thank our colleagues for action taken in this body last Thursday when we made an historic vote and, for the first time in the history of this Congress, voted money in the emergency supplemental legislation for our Nation's first responders, our Nation's fire and emergency management personnel.

I rise tonight to pay tribute to and to discuss that legislation, but also to clarify one part of that legislation which I had to remove because of confusion and misrepresentation stated on the House floor in what was a very limited debate.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the legislation itself is appropriate for an emergency supplemental bill because it, in fact, is aimed at our domestic emergency responders. Also in that legislation was \$4 billion for our military, which was desperately needed and which I heartily supported, to help them overcome the shortfall in funding because of the level of deployments that the President has gotten our military involved in. But for the first time in this legislation the Congress voted by a margin of 386 to 28, a very lopsided margin, to support my amendment which would provide \$100 million to the Nation's fire and emergency services.

Now, let me discuss why this is so important, Mr. Speaker. Over the last 10 years, we have seen unprecedented increases in the number of disasters in this country. Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, wild lands fires, the World Trade Center bombing, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Atlanta Olympic bombing, numerous HAZMAT incidents, high-rise buildings, and other incidents involving potential and real situations where lives have been lost and people have been injured.

Now, admittedly, Mr. Speaker, responding to local disasters is a local responsibility, and as a conservative Republican on fiscal issues, I do not want to change that. As a former mayor, having been before that a local volunteer fire chief, and a director of fire training for some 80 fire companies as a volunteer, and then going back and working in my own community and then going on to serve on my county council, county commission, I understand that life safety is a local responsibility, and my amendment did not intend to change that. This was not an attempt, as some would say, to federalize the fire service. It was not an attempt to have the Federal Government move in to take over jurisdiction or responsibility for what should be a State and local issue. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to understand some hard facts.

First of all, the fire service of this country, which consists of 32,000 fire departments, 85 percent of whom are volunteer in every State in the union, and including 1.2 million men and women, have responded to disasters in America longer than the country has been a country. Two hundred fifty years ago this organization of dedicated men and women sprang up to basically protect our towns and cities. And all across America, for the past 250 years, these men and women have protected us from every type of disaster known to mankind, from those that are natural to those that are man-made. And they have done it very well.

In fact, it is the only profession that I can think of where the bulk of those involved are volunteers and that loses, on average, 100 of its members every year; that are killed in the line of duty. Now, we have police officers that are killed, we have military personnel that are killed, but they are paid. That does not make any difference. It is still a tragic loss when that occurs. But with the fire service, each year, on average, 100 of them are killed, and the bulk of those who are killed are volunteers. They are doing what they do because they want to protect their communities. Yet, Mr. Speaker, at the Federal level, we have done little to assist these people because it has been thought of in America as a local jurisdictional responsibility.

But, Mr. Speaker, some things have been changing. First of all, the size of the disasters in recent times have been unprecedented. The floods of the Mississippi River in the Midwest, the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquake, Hurricanes Floyd and Andrew and Hugo. All of these incidents involved a massive impact on ordinary people. The first responders to every one of these incidents was not the military, it was not the FEMA bureaucrat, it was not the civil defense person in the county courthouse. The first responder in every incident that we have faced as a Nation has been the local fire and EMS person, be he or she paid or volunteer.

And, Mr. Speaker, these disasters have had a terrible impact on the ability of these first responders to replace equipment that was ruined, to buy new equipment that is needed, or to deal with the kinds of tragedies that these natural and man-made disasters have caused.

But there is something else that is happening, Mr. Speaker. In the 1990s, we began to see a new threat emerging, a threat involving weapons of mass destruction: Chemical, biological or perhaps even small nuclear devices. And all of a sudden the buzzword around the beltway is that we should provide more support for our military, for our civil defense community to respond to terrorism that would include a weapon of mass destruction. But, Mr. Speaker, again, the first responder to a terrorist act will not be a military unit, it will not be a National Guard unit, it will

not be a FEMA bureaucrat. The first responder in any city, in any town, in any county across America to a terrorist incident will be a locally-based fire and/or emergency responder.

So now we at the Federal level are asking our country to prepare, and yet we have not given any supportive substance to these men and women who we are asking to respond to a different type of threat to our stability, and that is the threat from the use of a weapon of mass destruction. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, it is totally appropriate that we at the Federal level provide some help to our emergency response community.

Now, those who would say that the Federal Government's support of \$100 million for the fire service is simply an attempt to federalize them could not be further from the truth. First of all, the volunteer fire service in this country, which makes up 85 percent of those 32,000 departments and 85 percent of those 1.2 million men and women, has no interest in being federalized. They have no interest in being taken over by the State or their county. It is a proud tradition.

Having been born and raised in a fire service family, and having risen to the position of president of my fire company and then chief of a volunteer fire department, and training director of an academy for 80 of those companies, I understand the fire service mentality. These are proud Americans. They want to protect their communities, and they do not want government to become involved. However, Mr. Speaker, they are facing some very unique challenges that require us to provide some assistance.

First of all, the volunteers are having an extremely difficult time recruiting new volunteers. They are spending so much of their time raising money, through tag days and chicken dinners and bingos in the fire hall, that they are taking away from their ability to train and to take care of the apparatus and prepare for the kinds of situations they have to respond to. So fund-raising is becoming a larger and larger part of the requirement of the volunteer firefighter to meet the needs of the fire department. We need to provide some assistance in that effort.

Recruitment is a big problem all over America. I have traveled to all 50 States, I have spoken to every State fire and EMS group in the country. And in every State I have heard the same message: We are having a tough time recruiting young people. Money from the Federal Government can provide the assistance necessary to recruit young volunteers.

Let me just give my colleagues a piece of frustration that I have heard around the country. This President and this administration, largely supported by the liberal wing of this body and the other body, a few years ago created a well-intentioned program called AmeriCorps. We were told by President Clinton that AmeriCorps was going to

be great because it was going to give people a sense of commitment back to their community. He told us it was going to create volunteers in our towns and our cities. Well, here we are, Mr. Speaker, several years after AmeriCorps has been funded. And guess what, Mr. Speaker. We are spending almost a half a billion dollars a year on AmeriCorps, and yet not one of those 32,000 fire departments can qualify for AmeriCorps funding.

Even worse than that, Mr. Speaker, when the Presidential Summit on Volunteerism was held in Philadelphia a few years ago, the National Volunteer Fire Council, which represents all the volunteer fire organizations in America, was not even invited to attend. I had to threaten the administration, threaten to hold a counter demonstration in Philadelphia if they at least did not invite the national volunteer fire council, which they eventually did. But the point is, here we are at the Federal level spending a half a billion dollars a year on supposedly creating volunteers, which by the way, Mr. Speaker, are paid a salary and are given health care benefits and, in some cases, are given college tuition, and yet we have done nothing for the volunteer fire service, which for the past 250 years has protected this country, and which in every one of those 32,000 departments has volunteered completely, without any active support from any level of government.

It is time we helped these people, Mr. Speaker. It is time we understand that we in Washington do not have to find ways to create volunteers and pay them. The volunteers are already there. And I would also offer this, Mr. Speaker. I cannot think of one AmeriCorps volunteer who risked losing his or her life in the course of his or her duties. Again, 100 of the Nation's fire and EMS personnel every year are killed in their line of duty, and yet we at the Federal level have done nothing for them.

Mr. Speaker, those who would say that we are trying to pay volunteers could not be further from the truth. I will outline what this money is going to be used for. It is going to be used to help recruit new volunteers, to help better train to deal with incidents involving terrorist activity. It is going to be used to help create loan programs and matching programs to buy new equipment, to buy turnout gear, to buy breathing apparatus, to make sure that our volunteers and our paid firefighters nationwide are properly protected and able to respond to incidents that they will be facing throughout this year and in ensuing years.

Mr. Speaker, that is what my amendment was all about. And for those who think that we are trying to undermine volunteers, let me just say this. The worst way to undermine volunteers is to do nothing. Let the volunteers continue to be frustrated, let them continue to spend all their time raising money until there are no more volun-

teers. Then what will we have to do, Mr. Speaker? We will have to spend billions of dollars of taxpayer money to replace the volunteers. Billions of dollars. In fact, one estimate done by a research agency came up with a figure of \$36 billion a year. That is what it would cost to replace the volunteer fire service of this Nation.

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It is in our interest to provide a small sum of money to help these people to continue to protect their towns, to help them continue to do the kinds of things they have been doing for 250 years.

Now we have a similar problem with the paid fire service. The paid firefighters, who largely protect our inner city areas and our more urban areas in the suburban districts around our cities, are finding it extremely difficult to protect the constituents of their geographical areas because of the kinds of new threats that we see emerging.

The World Trade Center bombing, where we had 100,000 people at risk, was totally dealt with by the very professional New York City Fire Department, yet they did not have the communications equipment they needed. And, in fact, the fire commissioner at that time, a friend of mine who is currently the police commissioner in New York, told me that the single biggest need they had was an integrated communications capability to be able to communicate among themselves as well as with State and Federal agencies.

Chief Mars, the chief of the Oklahoma City Fire Department, another paid department, a very capable department, came in and testified before my committee 1 year after the Murrah Building bombing in Oklahoma City and he told me the story of the communications system in Oklahoma City, which is typical of communication systems across America.

He said, when he arrived on the scene, his radio system very quickly became overtaxed and he could not communicate with the police or with the FBI or ATF or the other agencies because they were all on different frequencies. Some were on high-band frequencies. Some were on low-band frequencies. But they could not communicate with each other.

Because of the impending threat to hundreds of people that were trapped in the building or who were unaccounted for, time was of the essence and the chief had to respond quickly. So he switched to portable cellular phones. And there on the scene, law enforcement agencies and Federal agencies were communicating with the fire chief through cellular telephones until the cell became overtaxed and the system failed.

So then the chief of Oklahoma City Fire Department, a very capable paid department in this country, had to resort to handwriting messages and have firefighters and EMS personnel carry those messages to other line officers.

What a terrible waste of time, Mr. Speaker, and what a terrible waste of resources to have an inner city chief have to write down messages when people's lives are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the exception. That is, unfortunately, more common all over this country as we lack as a Nation an integrated coordinated communications network. Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that our domestic defenders deserve as much attention as our international defenders.

Now, as a senior member of the Committee on Armed Services, I support the military, I support the \$4 billion add-on in the supplemental. We spend almost \$300 billion a year on our Nation's international defenders, and we value every life that is put on the line when they go into harm's way to protect America. Mr. Speaker, it is about time we put the same value on the lives of those people who defend our cities every day of the year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these fire and EMS personnel respond to every disaster that we can think of, from toxic materials in our chemical plants and our oil refineries to hazmat explosions on our highways to the kinds of natural disasters that I discussed early on in my comments this evening. And they are faced with more and more technical challenges as they try to deal with these difficulties in saving people's lives.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, it is important that this body made the statement that it made last Thursday. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the paid and volunteer fire, an EMS community of this country, are the true American heroes. If we want to take one group of people that perhaps better than any other group exemplified what America is all about, it is the men and women of the emergency fire and EMS services across this country.

Now, they do not wave their flags and stand up and come lobby the Hill. They do not have high-powered lobbyists to put big money into the pockets of people running for office. But they are out there every day of the year, 24 hours a day, protecting our towns and our cities; and they have done that well before the country was an actual nation, over 250 years.

In fact, our volunteers are oftentimes the backbone of their community. It is the hall where we go to vote on election day. It is the group that organizes the July 4 parades, Memorial Day celebrations, the Christmas parties for the kids in the community. It is the group that we all call when the cat is in the tree, when the cellar has been flooded, and when we need a search party to find a lost child. And if we allow this group of people to have their needs unmet, America is going to be torn apart because it will tear apart the fabric of our local towns and cities.

There is no group of people that we can find in 32,000 departments across this country in Democrat and Republican strongholds that are there day in

and day out to protect their communities.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I offered the amendment that I did last Thursday, an amendment that said that we should step in and provide emergency help for these emergency responders. And this House voted overwhelmingly, Democrats and Republicans joined together hand-in-hand and said, we agree. Three hundred eighty-six Members voted yes. Twenty-eight voted no. Mr. Speaker, this strong show of support is the strongest indication we have ever had in Washington that it is time we help these brave men and women.

Now, some would say, wait a minute, \$100 million is a lot of money. Let me make some comparisons, Mr. Speaker.

I have listened to this President stand up in this podium eight times now. I have heard him talk about the importance of our Nation's teachers. As a teacher by profession, I agree with him. I have heard him look us in the eye and talk about how we need to put funding for another 100,000 teachers to help our kids. I understand his message. I have heard this President stand up in that podium and talk about the need to help police officers around the country, to put 100,000 cops on the street.

Mr. Speaker, in our budget each year we provide over \$3 billion for local law enforcement efforts nationwide. Again, Mr. Speaker, that is over \$3 billion a year. We even match the local towns to buy the costs of the police vests, the bulletproof vests that protect police officers if in fact they are shot.

I support those efforts, Mr. Speaker. But is a police officer more important, is a teacher more important than a paid or volunteer firefighter, a paid or voluntary EMS person, especially when the bulk of them are volunteers?

In the 8 years I have heard that President speak from that well, I have not heard one word from that podium about the Nation's first-responders, not one word about the fire and EMS personnel, who are the first thing in our inner cities on drug deals that have gone sour, who are the first responders when a person has a heart attack or a stroke, or when an accident occurs and there has got to be a rescue, or when people are fleeing a refinery and they are running in to protect the property and the lives of the people around that facility. Not one word.

Well, this Congress spoke up last Thursday and it spoke up in a bipartisan way and it said it is about time America recognizes these unsung heroes who have asked for so little.

What will that \$100 million do, Mr. Speaker? Well, first of all, \$10 million will fund for the first time the rural volunteer fire protection program. Now, this administration, which talks about being supportive of fire service, especially when they had their budget director go before the IAFF union meeting here in Washington, this administration cut the funding for the

rural volunteer fire program from \$3.5 million to \$2.5 million in 1 year. That is not a commitment to helping the fire service.

My amendment fully funds the rural fire protection act to provide matching dollars for those small rural departments across America in our farmlands, in our rural areas where they really need to buy that antique or used truck, where they need to buy that extra set of turn-out gear. It provides matching funds. So the money they raise from chicken dinners and tag days can be matched now with \$10 million of funding from the Federal Government.

The second \$10 million, Mr. Speaker, goes through FEMA to provide burn research. Nothing is more important to a firefighter. And let me say this, Mr. Speaker, that there is no injury more traumatic than a burn. Having been a fire chief, having responded to numerous situations where both innocent people and fire and EMS personnel have been burned, I can tell my colleagues there is nothing more traumatic than that type of injury.

We need to do more in the area of research for burn treatment, burn prevention, and the cosmetic surgery necessary after a burn to allow a person to live a normal life.

The \$10 million in our amendment last week is used to match money from local nonprofit burn foundations all across America, not just to benefit firefighters but to benefit those children who might dump over a scolding pot of coffee or hot water and cause themselves to be burned. That burn research money is absolutely essential, and even 10 million is not really enough.

The biggest part of the \$100 million, Mr. Speaker, \$80 million dollars, goes to create a program administered by FEMA of competitive grants that any one of the 32,000 fire and EMS departments in America can compete for. They have to match it dollar for dollar.

Some of our States have low-interest loan programs. They can use this money. Some of our towns put some local tax money in. They can use those dollars. Or, again, those fire departments can use the money they raise from their bingos, from their tag days, from their chicken dinners, from all the other fund-raisers they hold.

That \$80 million, by being doubled and matched dollar for dollar, will create \$160 million of additional spending to help the men and women of the fire service of this Nation. The money can be used to help create programs that will help them recruit new volunteers, that will help our paid departments reduce casualties and reduce injuries.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be more important than this commitment of funding for our real American heroes. That is what the amendment did, and that is why it received such broad bipartisan support.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the brief amount of time we had to discuss the amendment, which was 10 minutes,

even though I had broad bipartisan support on both sides of the aisle for the initial amendment, there were 5 minutes called for by an opponent who rose at the eleventh hour at the last minute while the amendment was on the floor objecting to one provision in my legislation, and I want to discuss that tonight because I could not clarify it in the minute that I had to respond to what was 3 minutes of accusations.

Mr. Speaker, there was an objection raised to one part of my amendment that would have changed the language dealing with how local communities can spend Federal community development block grant monies.

As my colleagues know, Mr. Speaker, Federal community development block grant funds, which I strongly support, are designed to help low- and moderate-income Americans. In fact, we spend \$4.8 billion a year on the CDBG program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the town that I used to be the mayor of, which before that I was the fire chief of, is one of the most distressed towns in Pennsylvania. We were a prime target of CDBG funds before I became the mayor and while I was the mayor. I understand the role of CDBG dollars in poor areas.

After serving as mayor, I served as a county commissioner over a county of almost 600,000 people in suburban Philadelphia county, again with a large concentration of impoverished people along our water front. I was again a strong supporter of the CDBG program. But, Mr. Speaker, I saw some problems and some opportunity with that program that I want to discuss and which were a part of my amendment.

Current regulations, Mr. Speaker, specifically define what kinds of activities CDBG funds can be used for.

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The ultimate decision is not done by the Federal Government but rather the funds are passed to the States and passed to our towns on a formula basis and our counties, and they must prove that 70 percent of those funds are being used to benefit low and moderate income personnel. I support that ratio. I am not opposed to that. But, Mr. Speaker, let me talk about some inequities in the program. There is nothing more important to a poor person than having their life saved, than being rescued from a burning building, than being pulled from a traffic accident or a HAZMAT incident. In fact, Mr. Speaker, across America, the largest concentration of heavy industry as it was in my hometown where half of my town was made up of oil refineries, the largest concentration of hazards are in poor areas. But yet even though the CDBG dollars are designed to be modified and doled out at the local level by local officials, there has been a prohibition against local county commissioners and mayors and city councils from using the CDBG dollars for fire and life safety unless it is totally confined to the impoverished area of that

jurisdiction. My amendment sought to clarify that, Mr. Speaker. My amendment simply said that there are examples where a jurisdiction has low and moderate income people who have needs of fire and life safety that we need to broaden and specifically define the uses of CDBG dollars for. Some examples, Mr. Speaker. If we wanted to establish in my home county of Delaware County, which is typical of many counties across America, has a small concentration of low and moderate income people along the waterfront, if we wanted to use CDBG dollars for a countywide training facility that would respond to those incidents in the impoverished communities where the heavy industry is, we could not do it, because under current regulations by HUD, those CDBG dollars could not be used for a training facility unless it was totally in the area of the poverty and only used by those fire departments within the area of jurisdiction of the impoverished community, not broader than that area alone. So it is not cost effective. So it does not get done. And the CDBG money that could be doing a lot more to help the poor cannot do it. In fact, we should be able to assist those fire and EMS departments that regularly respond to impoverished communities. Now, in my home county, if there is a major fire in an oil refinery which is in a poor area, all the fire departments around our area come in with them. Those fire departments are all volunteer. They are coming from communities that might not be low and moderate income. But they are protecting the lives of poor people. Yet the current CDBG regulations, Mr. Speaker, specifically prohibit the use of those dollars to benefit the life-saving activities of fire and EMS departments that are called into impoverished areas. Mr. Speaker, that does not make any sense at all. There is an accident on a major highway going through a city and a volunteer fire department from a neighboring community responds and rescues the people. There is a prohibition against using those CDBG dollars to help that fire or EMS department out. That was what my amendment was about, Mr. Speaker. It was not, as some of my colleagues said, an attempt to undermine the CDBG program. That was hogwash. In fact, it was an out-and-out lie. Some of my colleagues knew it was a lie. There was no attempt to undermine the CDBG program. I take my commitment to poverty very seriously. I was born the youngest of nine children in a poor town. I have supported every effort by this Congress to help empower poor people. I was the coauthor of legislation 3 years ago that this administration objected to to increase our community services block grant program by \$100 million, and we did it. We led the effort on the Republican side of the aisle, not the Democrat side of the aisle, for that \$100 million increase. So when Members stood up with 1-minute soundbites and said this amendment

was out to gut the CDBG program or undermine CDBG, it offended me. In fact, it outraged me. That was not the intent and that was not the substance of the legislation. The people who made those statements, Mr. Speaker, owe the fire service of this Nation an apology. I hope every firefighter and EMS person in this country who heard the kind of comments made last week will let their feelings be known to their Member of Congress to our colleagues that that was uncalled for. Our effort was to provide flexibility for local town councils and for local mayors to clarify the use of CDBG dollars for fire and EMS purposes and to allow CDBG funds to be used for programs that ultimately benefit low and moderate income people as well as those areas around there where the emergency response groups go in from time to time or assist in the effort of providing life safety measures for our low and moderate income Americans. That was what my amendment was about. And anyone who attempts to try to characterize that amendment in a different manner was just being untruthful. It was unfortunate that my colleagues, largely on the minority side, got cold feet. And instead of doing what our majority whip wanted, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for whom I have the highest respect, and that was to leave that provision in the amendment, I felt it would have jeopardized the overall amendment itself and, therefore, I asked unanimous consent to modify the amendment and remove that provision. I wish I had not had to do that, Mr. Speaker, because then instead of \$100 million for the fire and EMS community, we could have had access to several hundred millions of dollars, perhaps even up to \$1 billion of available dollars going to our local towns to give our local county council members and our mayors and city council members the authority to use some of that money to help provide more protection, not less, for low and moderate income Americans. In my own county, those funds could have been used for enhancing our countywide fire training to benefit our low and moderate income people. It could have been used to set up a countywide HAZMAT team that could have responded to those incidents in those low and moderate income areas. It could have been used to provide an emergency response antiterrorism unit to respond again to low and moderate income areas. But it was shot down, or it was forced on me to withdraw that amendment because of misstatements that were made on this House floor in a brief 5-minute period of time. My colleagues, especially on the other side, did not want to have a vote that they could not properly explain to their folks back home and did not want to be perceived to perhaps be antipoverty, antipoor when that was not the issue at all.

But I say this, Mr. Speaker. There will be another day. I am not going to

let this CDBG issue die. Because I want to give my colleagues some examples that my colleagues on the other side and a couple of my colleagues on my side should have been talking about. You want some undermining of the CDBG program? Let me just give my colleagues two examples as someone who served as the mayor of a poor town for 5 years and a county commissioner and chairman of the county commission for 5 years overseeing CDBG dollars. My colleagues on the floor said, we don't want to use this money for fire and life safety and for emergency response. But you did not hear them mention that it is allowable under the law to use that same money for historic preservation in the richest towns in America. You cannot use the money to provide life safety but you can use it to restore old buildings in the richest towns in our counties.

Mr. Speaker, there is a second allowance of that CDBG money under current Federal guidelines, under HUD's stupid rules, you can use that money to cut curbs and sidewalks. Mr. Speaker, I am not against cutting curbs and sidewalks. I want to see people who are challenged and are confined to wheelchairs be able to get up and down on curbs and sidewalks throughout my town and throughout my county and throughout my State, but as a former county commissioner, I can tell you that that was one of the only eligible programs besides historic preservation that could be used in any town in our county, even the richest one. So what did we do? We did like every other county does, we cut every curb and sidewalk in every town we could. And so hundreds of thousands of curbs were cut in towns all across America, in many cases where no handicapped person would ever travel. I remember the former mayor of Philadelphia, the current chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Ed Rendel, a good mayor, once stating his frustration with Federal funds, that they had cut every curb on the major expressways going to the city, yet it would be impossible and unsafe for any handicapped person to cross that street, but he did it because it was one of the only ways to spend CDBG dollars to help in curb improvements.

So, Mr. Speaker, the irony of the amendment I offered last week was my colleagues were saying to me we do not want to support your effort to help rescue poor people, to help rescue handicapped people trapped in high-rise buildings. We want to use the money to cut curbs on sidewalks where a handicapped person may never ride or may never go or we want to use it to restore historic buildings in our wealthiest towns. My goal was to help use those dollars and help give that local flexibility for county commissioners and council members and mayors to help

save those handicapped people, to develop training mechanisms and response to enter those buildings, to rescue those people from floods and tornadoes and earthquakes. But unfortunately, my colleagues, again largely on the minority side, said to me, "If you keep that in, we can't support your amendment." And so as a result, I pulled that provision from my amendment and I had to offer the amendment in an amended form with only the \$100 million of funding.

Mr. Speaker, I hope our colleagues, in reading both my statement last Thursday and my comments here tonight, understand what really happened with the provision for CDBG. It was not an attempt to undermine the CDBG program. It was not an attempt to get our foot in the door, as one of my colleagues said. Mr. Speaker, there is no better way to help poor people than to provide life safety for poor people. Today HUD has a system of measures that do not make sense, that are ridiculous, that are outrageous, as I just cited in two instances are a gross waste of taxpayers' money. I think, Mr. Speaker, the program needed reform and I will continue this effort, hopefully with my colleagues' support. Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank our colleagues who voted for the amendment. For those who did not I would ask them to reconsider. I now want to focus the attention of our colleagues on the other body.

Mr. Speaker, we need to create an awareness among our Senate colleagues that this issue is extremely important. I would ask my colleagues to lobby the leaders in the other body on the need to move this legislation to provide this \$100 million of funding. On the way home from Washington last week, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of a phone conversation with a distinguished Senator from Delaware, BILL ROTH, who this year is chairman of the Congressional Fire and EMS Caucus which I formed 13 years ago. Senator ROTH has said that he will champion this issue in the Senate and even though Senator LOTT has said he will not bring up an emergency supplemental bill as an individual piece of legislation, Senator ROTH has said he will champion the amendment that I offered as a separate freestanding effort in the Senate. Mr. Speaker, we need our colleagues to use every bit of energy to convince every member of the other body to support Senator ROTH's efforts in moving this \$100 million piece of legislation through in a very quick and timely manner. I would encourage our colleagues to enlist the support of their constituents all across America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUYKENDALL). The Chair must remind the gentleman that he is to not ask for action in the other body.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I am asking our colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to respond. I am not asking for action in

the other body. I am asking our colleagues to use their influence and their influence with other individuals to support legislation that we have passed here.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman should refrain from urging any particular action on the part of the Senate.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. I am not asking the Senate to do anything, Mr. Speaker. I am asking our colleagues who are in the House to take appropriate action. I am not challenging the other body to do anything. If the parliamentarian would listen to my statement, I am challenging the Members of this body who happen to be our colleagues in the House to take action and support the legislation we passed last Thursday.

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Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, so I do not get the Parliamentarian upset again, I will just say that to all of our colleagues who supported the amendment last week, I would encourage them to continue to exert their full influence in having the legislation that we passed not just leave this body quickly with the support of the Speaker, but to also be joined in a bipartisan effort to become law. I would urge our Members to use their voice to convey that message to their constituents all across America, because passage in this body is not enough. It is a nice message, it is a great win, but it does not, in fact, become law until the entire process is completed.

So, Mr. Speaker, I encourage our colleagues to use their voices with their constituents and interact with their constituents across America to get the message of the importance of fire and life safety across this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their actions. I want to thank them for their support. This measure is historic. It is an unprecedented event and is one that I hope will eventually become law, and with the support of the Nation's First Responders, I am confident that will happen.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DIAZ-BALART (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today on account of official business in his district.

#### 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. McNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BALDWIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WU, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BARCIA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. THURMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. NORWOOD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, April 11.

Mr. METCALF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. KELLY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 46 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 5, 2000, at 10 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6931. A letter from the Chief, Programs and Legislation Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, Department of Defense, transmitting the Secretarial Determination To Temporarily Waive The Applicability Of 10 U.S.C. Subsection 2466(a); to the Committee on Armed Services.

6932. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Force Management Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the annual report on Access and Purchase Restrictions in Overseas Commissary and Exchange Stores; to the Committee on Armed Services.

6933. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule—Loans in Areas Having Special Flood Hazards—received January 21, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Banking and Financial Services.

6934. A letter from the Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final rule—Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers To Use Technology (RIN: 1840-AC81) received January 21, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

6935. A letter from the Chairman, Board of Trustees, Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's annual report for 1999, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 2012(b); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

6936. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, transmitting the White House personnel report for the fiscal year 1999, pursuant to 3 U.S.C. 113; to the Committee on Government Reform.

6937. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report of surplus real property