in the defense bill. The Appropriations Committee reported out $252.2 million in H.R. 4576, including: $6 million for laser vision correction research, $3.7 million for nutrition research, $10 million for ovarian cancer research, $15 million for HIV research, $3 million for chronic fatigue research, and $7 million for alcoholism and chronic fatigue research. Now, some of these programs may be valid, but they are non-defense items. We have a Labor/Health and Human Services Appropriations bill that is more suitable for these programs. Hiding these items within H.R. 4576 is unfair to our taxpayers. In addition, H.R. 4576 skirted two important issues with profound budget and readiness implications:

Base Realignment and Closure Commission—H.R. 4576 does not include funding for two new BRAC rounds, despite the fact that the Pentagon has estimated it has an excess base capacity of 23%. CBO estimates that two new BRAC rounds would save the Defense Department $4.7 billion by 2010, and that after completion in 2012, DOD could realize recurring savings of over $1 billion per year. Congress' inaction means that the Pentagon must continue to waste billions of taxpayer dollars maintaining obsolete bases.

Aircraft—H.R. 4576 includes billions for research, development and procurement of three different fighter planes (the Navy's F-18 E/F, The Air Force F-22, and the Navy & Air Force Joint Strike Fighter) when there is not a strong consensus that all three fighters are necessary. Some defense experts say the JSF meets the needs the F-18 & F-22. Some say it needs the JSF. Congress' answer is simply to fund all of the fighter planes in question. Now, Congress is forging ahead with the production of 10 F-22 Aircraft when there are indications that the program is not ready for production. In doing so, Congress takes away from aircraft (specifically bombers and unmanned aerial aircraft [UAVs]) that, while less glamorous, are a more pressing need for the military.

I agree that the Congress should fund a military that is second to none. And H.R. 4576 does include several important items I support, such as support for our troops serving in the United States and abroad. With the recruiting problems the military has, it has difficulty getting enough soldiers just to fill out the gear it already has. Building more unrequested planes only aggravates that problem.

Cold Weather Equipment—Congress added $24 million for Gore-Tex cold weather gear that the Pentagon did not request, at the request of a Congressman whose constituents manufacture the gear. With the recruiting problems the military has, it has difficulty getting enough soldiers just to fill out the gear it already has.

Wolverine Heavy Assault Bridge—The Army requested no funds for the Wolverine heavy assault bridge. In fact, although the Army received $82 million for the Wolverine for FY 2000, it did not intend to spend it on the bridge. H.R. 4576 commands the Army to spend the $82 million on the Wolverine, as well as an additional $15 million. In short, Congress is requiring the Army to spend $97 million on a bridge that it doesn't need.

Medical Research—The Administration requested $16.5 million for medical research
the streets by displaying the FBI’s “most wanted” list, now wants to do the same with defective products.

Posters containing color pictures of products recalled by the Good Samaritan Product Safety Commission are going up in 33,000 post offices nationwide. Every day, about 7 million people will visit those post offices to mail letters and ship packages. Now they’ll be able to get potentially life-saving information while they’re there.

“We can get dangerous products off store shelves, but the real challenge is to get them out of families’ homes,” commission Chairwoman Ann Brown said.

That’s the crux of it. As more and more products are recalled, a smaller and smaller percentage of them rate a mention in news reports. For the rest, it’s left to consumers to determine whether products they own have been recalled. That’s a bad system, and as the Sun-Sentinel reported in its product recall series last year, several proposals have been put forth to fix it.

Ralph Nader, for example, has suggested using computers to notify consumers immediately if products they own have been recalled. Others want to repeal or modify section 6(b) of the Product Safety Act, which requires that recalls be kept secret until the companies involved can review the information, a process that can take years.

Those are good ideas, but unless and until they are implemented, displaying posters in post offices will help. It’s another way in which the post office can serve as “the one hand that binds this nation together,” as one postal official put it.

And hey, if you see any wanted criminals on your way to return a defective product, call the police and tell them you want to report a defective person.

NATIVE NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND POLICY ACT OF 2000

HON. GEORGE MILLER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 9, 2000

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to establish the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy (NNI). I am pleased to be joined by the Chairman of the Resources Committee Mr. Young and a number of our colleagues.

The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy will provide an essential and comprehensive training program for American Indian leaders so that present and future generations of tribal leaders will have access to necessary management and policy decision making skills.

The Native Nations Institute will be based at the University of Arizona and be under the leadership and guidance of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy. The Udall Center will take on primary responsibility for the implementation of NNI’s programs while the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation (established by Public Law 102-259) will approve NNI’s annual budget and manage any federal appropriated funds. Members of the Board of Trustees of the University of Arizona, representatives from Indian Nations, and representa-