

fiscal restraint, but I disagree with some of the priorities reflected in this bill, particularly the funding level for the EQIP program.

The ramifications of this funding level are made quite clear when we consider the backlog of projects that exist under this important program. By some estimates, the backlog for EQIP funding nationwide is in excess of \$1 billion, with the backlog in South Dakota alone in the tens of millions of dollars. These are commendable projects that do a great deal to improve water quality and wildlife habitat across the country.

I appreciate the stringent budgetary constraints under which we are currently operating, but this is not the program that should be the target of such substantial cuts.

Another important program is the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, or WHIP. WHIP is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private land. USDA provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

WHIP has proven to be a highly-effective and widely-accepted program across the country. By targeting wildlife habitat projects, WHIP provides assistance to conservation-minded landowners who are unable to meet the specific eligibility requirements of other USDA conservation programs.

Unfortunately, this bill would fund WHIP at \$25 million below its authorized levels for fiscal year 2005. While \$25 million may not seem like a large sum of money relative to other amounts considered by this body, keep in mind that this bill funds the entire program at \$60 million. The difference between \$85 million and \$60 million is almost 30 percent. This is a significant shortfall, and one I think should be reevaluated in conference.

Again, I voice my overall support for this legislation and will vote in favor of final passage, but I am concerned with some of the funding choices that were made. I urge my colleagues that will serve as conferees to seek additional funding for both the EQIP and WHIP programs.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. EVERETT).

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

I rise to engage in a colloquy with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA), chairman of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

For the past 3 years, the committee and Congress have supported funding for the Tri-States Joint Peanut Research project between Auburn University, the University of Florida, and the University of Georgia. In the past this project has focused on a sod-based rota-

tion with peanuts, cotton, and other row crops.

This year the project was renamed the Tri-States Initiative to incorporate fruits, nut crops, and vegetables in the rotation. This created some confusion and was unfortunately viewed as a new start and subsequently received no funding. As the gentleman is aware, producers in southern States face the problem of compacted soils, which can be greatly improved with the use of proper crop rotation. This research would allow southeastern producers to make informed decisions on how to diversify their operations while increasing farm profitability and improving soil characteristics.

The Tri-States Initiative is a reasonable extension of a previously funded project. Since the project was viewed as a new start, I ask the chairman to be supportive of restoring the fiscal year 2004 funding for the project in conference.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. EVERETT. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

The gentleman is correct. The naming of this program did cause confusion, but it is clear that this is a continuation of the program that the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Subcommittee has funded for the past 3 years. The Tri-State Initiative conducts important commodity research in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia; and I would be happy to work with the gentleman to restore funding for this program in conference.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank the chairman for his response, and I appreciate his willingness to work with me in conference to restore this important program.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As we close this evening, I just want to say that the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH) and I intend to offer a biofuels amendment tomorrow to the bill with great hope that we can help push America into a new energy age, a new renewable energy age, starting right in rural America; and I wanted to acknowledge that while she is still on the floor with us tonight.

I did also want to, for the record, thank deeply Roger Szemraj of our own staff for the tremendous work that he does and for the time he takes away from his own family to be with us even tonight on this floor as we move this important bill for fiscal year 2005 agriculture appropriations.

Mr. Chairman, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING) having assumed the chair, Mr. TERRY, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4766) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 2045

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HENSARLING). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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 gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE GARRETT LEE SMITH MEMORIAL ACT

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

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a subject that is very difficult for many of us to address, and that is the subject of suicide.

Last Friday, along with the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON), the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK), I introduced H.R. 4799, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. This legislation offers a comprehensive strategy toward addressing suicide, suicide prevention and mental health in high schools and on college campuses.

So why is it important to address this critical issue? I would like people to consider these facts.

Number one, more children and young adults die from suicide each year than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke and chronic lung disease combined.

Number two, over 4,000 children and young adults take their own lives