

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 246, noes 176, answered “present” 1, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 375]

AYES—246

Abercrombie	Gilman	Olver
Ackerman	Gonzalez	Ortiz
Aderholt	Goode	Ose
Allen	Gordon	Owens
Andrews	Green (TX)	Pallone
Bachus	Gutierrez	Pascrell
Baird	Hall (OH)	Pastor
Baldacci	Hall (TX)	Payne
Baldwin	Hansen	Pease
Barcia	Hastings (FL)	Pelosi
Barton	Hayworth	Peterson (MN)
Becerra	Hefley	Phelps
Berkley	Hill (IN)	Pickering
Berry	Hill (MT)	Pickett
Bilirakis	Hilliard	Pomeroy
Bishop	Hinchey	Price (NC)
Blagojevich	Hinojosa	Quinn
Blumenauer	Hoefel	Rahall
Blunt	Holden	Rangel
Boehlert	Holt	Regula
Bonilla	Hooley	Riley
Bonior	Horn	Rivers
Borski	Hoyer	Rodriguez
Boswell	Inslee	Roemer
Boucher	Jackson (IL)	Rogers
Boyd	Jackson-Lee	Ros-Lehtinen
Brady (PA)	(TX)	Rothman
Brown (FL)	Jefferson	Roybal-Allard
Brown (OH)	John	Rush
Burton	Johnson, E.B.	Sabo
Buyer	Jones (OH)	Sanchez
Callahan	Kanjorski	Sanders
Cannon	Kaptur	Sandlin
Capuano	Kelly	Sawyer
Cardin	Kennedy	Schakowsky
Carson	Kildee	Scott
Clay	Kilpatrick	Serrano
Clement	King (NY)	Shimkus
Clyburn	Klecicka	Shows
Combest	Klink	Sisisky
Conyers	Kucinich	Skeen
Cook	Kuykendall	Skelton
Cooksey	LaHood	Slaughter
Costello	Lampson	Smith (NJ)
Coyne	Larson	Smith (TX)
Cramer	LaTourette	Smith (WA)
Crowley	Levin	Snyder
Cubin	Lewis (GA)	Spratt
Cummings	Lewis (KY)	Stabenow
Danner	Lipinski	Stark
Davis (FL)	Lowey	Stenholm
Davis (IL)	Lucas (KY)	Strickland
DeFazio	Lucas (OK)	Stupak
DeGette	Maloney (CT)	Sweeney
Delahunt	Martinez	Talent
DeLauro	Mascara	Tanner
Diaz-Balart	Matsui	Tauscher
Dickey	McCarthy (MO)	Tauzin
Dicks	McCarthy (NY)	Taylor (MS)
Dingell	McCrery	Thomas
Dixon	McGovern	Thompson (MS)
Dooley	McHugh	Thornberry
Doyle	McInnis	Thurman
Edwards	McIntosh	Tiahrt
Ehrlich	McIntyre	Towns
Emerson	McKinney	Traficant
Engel	McNulty	Turner
English	Menendez	Udall (CO)
Etheridge	Millender-	Udall (NM)
Evans	McDonald	Velazquez
Everett	Minge	Visclosky
Fattah	Mink	Vitter
Filner	Moakley	Walsh
Forbes	Mollohan	Watkins
Ford	Moore	Watts (OK)
Frost	Moran (KS)	Waxman
Gejdenson	Murtha	Weiner
Gekas	Napolitano	Weller
Gephardt	Neal	Wexler
Gibbons	Ney	Weygand
Gillmor	Oberstar	

Wilson  
Wise

Woolsey  
Wu

Wynn  
Young (AK)

NOES—176

Archer	Goodlatte	Nethercutt
Army	Goodling	Northrup
Baker	Goss	Norwood
Ballenger	Graham	Nussle
Barr	Granger	Obey
Barrett (NE)	Green (WI)	Packard
Barrett (WI)	Greenwood	Paul
Bartlett	Gutknecht	Petri
Bass	Hastert	Pitts
Bateman	Hastings (WA)	Pombo
Bentsen	Hayes	Porter
Bereuter	Herger	Portman
Biggert	Hilleary	Pryce (OH)
Bliley	Hobson	Radanovich
Boehner	Hoekstra	Ramstad
Bono	Hostettler	Reynolds
Brady (TX)	Hulshof	Rogan
Bryant	Hunter	Rohrabacher
Burr	Hutchinson	Roukema
Calvert	Hyde	Royce
Camp	Isakson	Ryan (WI)
Campbell	Istook	Ryun (KS)
Canady	Jenkins	Salmon
Capps	Johnson (CT)	Sanford
Castle	Johnson, Sam	Saxton
Chabot	Jones (NC)	Scarborough
Chambliss	Kasich	Schaffer
Chenoweth	Kind (WI)	Sensenbrenner
Clayton	Kingston	Sessions
Coble	Knollenberg	Shadegg
Coburn	Kolbe	Shaw
Collins	LaFalce	Shays
Condit	Largent	Sherman
Cox	Latham	Sherwood
Crane	Lazio	Simpson
Cunningham	Leach	Smith (MI)
Davis (VA)	Lee	Spence
Deal	Lewis (CA)	Stearns
DeLay	Linder	Stump
DeMint	LoBiondo	Sununu
Deutsch	Lofgren	Tancredi
Doggett	Luther	Taylor (NC)
Doollittle	Maloney (NY)	Terry
Dreier	Manzullo	Thompson (CA)
Duncan	Markey	Thune
Dunn	McCollum	Tierney
Ehlers	McKeon	Toomey
Eshoo	Meehan	Upton
Ewing	Meek (FL)	Vento
Farr	Meeks (NY)	Walden
Fletcher	Metcalfe	Wamp
Foley	Mica	Waters
Fossella	Miller (FL)	Watt (NC)
Fowler	Miller, Gary	Weldon (FL)
Franks (NJ)	Miller, George	Whitfield
Frelinghuysen	Moran (VA)	Wicker
Galleghy	Morella	Wolf
Ganske	Myrick	Young (FL)
Gilchrist	Nadler	

PERMISSION TO FILE CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1905, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the managers on the part of the House may have until midnight tonight, Wednesday, August 4, 1999, to file a conference report on the bill (H.R. 1905) making appropriations for the legislative branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 1905, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 7(c) of House rule XXII, I offer a motion to instruct House conferees on the bill (H.R. 1905), making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. TOOMEY moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendments to the bill H.R. 1905 be instructed to insist upon—

(1) the House provisions for the funding of the House of Representatives under title I of the bill;

(2) the Senate amendment for the funding of the Senate under title I of the bill, including funding provided under the heading “JOINT ITEMS—ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL—Capitol Buildings and Grounds—senate office buildings”;

(3) the House provisions for the funding of Joint Items under title I of the bill, other than the funding provided under the heading “JOINT ITEMS—ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL—Capitol Buildings and Grounds—senate office buildings”;

(4) the House version of title II of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR) each will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, all year long as we have been wading through the budget and the appropriations process, we here in this House have been debating the proper level of the Federal Government spending. Despite a clear institutional bias I would argue on the part of the Federal Government in general to spend ever more dollars, by and large the Republican majority in this House and many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have exhibited a great deal of restraint in the growth of

ANSWERED “PRESENT”—1

Souder

NOT VOTING—11

Berman	Lantos	Reyes
Bilbray	McDermott	Shuster
Frank (MA)	Oxley	Weldon (PA)
Houghton	Peterson (PA)	

□ 2234

Messrs. METCALF, LUTHER, DOGGETT, NADLER, HILLEARY and MARKEY and Mrs. MEEK of Florida and Ms. WATERS changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mr. ROTHMAN and Mr. BURTON of Indiana changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

government in general, and, frankly, we have been very responsible with our budgeting thus far. I would like to reflect for a moment just on what we have done.

First of all, we have set aside the Social Security surplus for the next 10 years in our budget. We have provided priority funding for key government functions, such as defense and education. I think we have recognized by and large the importance of maintaining the projected surpluses so that we can pay down some debt and reduce taxes.

My point is, Mr. Speaker, that, by and large, this body has been doing a great job demonstrating some fiscal discipline. We think our leadership deserves a lot of credit and think the appropriators deserve a lot of credit, as do my colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Just as a reminder, we are at the point of passing ten appropriations bills, and it is a remarkable accomplishment what we have done with these thus far. We have essentially freed spending on Agriculture, Treasury and the Interior Departments, we have got a small reduction in military construction, a 4 percent reduction for the Energy Department, an over 4 percent reduction for the Transportation Department, an over 5 percent reduction in foreign aid, and about a 25 percent reduction for the District of Columbia.

Now, there are two exceptions to this trend that we have established. The first is defense. I think it is clear that it is high time that we started to rebuild our military forces and provide our men and women in uniform the resources they need to carry out their job, and we begin that with the defense appropriation bill.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the other exception to this trend of holding the line on spending now appears to be the bill that funds Congress itself. Just last Friday the House Committee on Appropriations significantly increased the 302(b) allocation for the legislative branch appropriations bill. This new 302(b) allocation will increase the overall non-emergency spending in this bill by 5.4 percent over last year's number.

Now, in order to spend that much money, to reach that level, the conferees would have to substantially increase the funding levels within this bill well beyond the levels that were approved by this body on June 10, just two months ago.

Mr. Speaker, I just do not think that is right, and I am therefore offering a motion to instruct conferees that is really very simple. My instructions would say, stick with the numbers we gave you. Hold the line on spending. Let the legislative branch of this government lead in the fight for fiscal discipline by example. Finally, let us reflect the will of the House.

I would like to go to my chart to explain exactly what my motion would do.

□ 2245

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

Mr. TOOMEY. I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I have a point of inquiry.

With this motion to instruct, can the gentleman tell me whether or not the cost of living allowance for our staffs will be in any way adversely affected?

Mr. TOOMEY. There is no cost of living adjustment for the staff that I am aware of in the current bill.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. So if this bill is passed, regardless of the gentleman's instruction, the gentleman does not intend to include a cost of living allowance for our staffs?

Mr. TOOMEY. It is up to the individual Members to decide how they spend their Members' account.

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

Mr. TOOMEY. I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, the average Member in the House of Representatives turns back almost \$45,000 a year, of which, if we gave our staff an 8 percent increase, we would have more than enough money, based on that average turnback.

So the fact is, there is plenty of money turned back in now to have every Member and all their employees a cost of living increase.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, this chart depicts the spending of the legislative branch appropriations bill in fiscal year 1999, and it reveals the instructions that I would intend in my motion for fiscal year 2000.

As Members can see, the Senate vote for 1999, the Senate appropriation was \$524 million. The House was \$776. The joint other category, which as we know covers such things as buildings and grounds and the Library of Congress, comes to \$1 billion and 50 million. The grand total is \$2,350.

On June 10 this body adopted a bill that allocates basically the exact same level for the House, \$777 million. It voted for a slight increase in the joint other category of \$1,085,000,000. The Senate in its bill voted for a \$554 million, which is about a 5.7 increase, and 11.24 for the joint other category.

What my motion simply does is it asks our conferees to reflect the will of the House. That means that the House number would be reflected, or the House number for both the House itself and for the funding of the joint and other categories would be the House numbers, and the Senate would stick with its own number.

That would leave the total funding for the bill at \$2,416 million. That would be a 2.8 percent increase over fis-

cal year 1999, and would be approximately \$62 million lower than the new 302(b) appropriation allocation, if it were fully funded.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is very important, as I said earlier, that our conferees reflect the will of this body, which has already voted on this matter, which has voted for these numbers.

I am not suggesting that we change the number that the Senate has voted for itself. I think it is important that we do this to simply lead in the process of demonstrating our fiscal discipline.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for bringing the motion to instruct, but I have to inform the House and the Speaker that approximately 2 hours ago the conference on this particular bill concluded, and but for a technicality that it may not have been filed, the discussion and the instructions are moot, I would tell the Members.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague, has the conference report been filed?

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

Mr. TOOMEY. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I know that the staff was about to file it, and I do not know whether or not it has been filed, but everyone was trying to get this thing filed. There was a unanimous consent to file it by midnight. Maybe the chairman of the committee could add to that.

Mr. TOOMEY. Reclaiming my time, it is my understanding that it has not yet been filed, so it is not a moot point until it is actually filed. It is my hope that when it does get filed, it would reflect the levels that the House voted for.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I would simply make two observations.

A short while ago I was asked by the majority leadership whether, as the ranking minority member on the Committee on Appropriations, I would agree to unanimous consent to bring up the legislative appropriation bill and the District of Columbia appropriation bill and one other appropriation bill so that we could finish our work tomorrow, instead of spilling over into Friday. I told them I would try to get that done, at least on two of the three.

Now we are being told that we perhaps should not consider that on this side of the aisle because the gentleman is going to offer a motion to instruct

on a package which the leadership has already asked me to cooperate with in getting to the floor as soon as possible. We cannot cooperate in both efforts at the same time, because they go in different directions.

Second, I would simply say that the cut that was made in the House bill originally averaged about \$65,000 for each and every Member's office account. I would simply point out that the result that the gentleman says he is trying to seek, where the House would stick with its numbers and the Senate would stick with its numbers, would continue a practice which has led to a situation in which the average staffer for a Senator, for the same work done by the staffers for people in this House, gets \$16,400 more.

That is just not justified, but the reason it happens is because the Senate continually assures that there is enough room in office accounts to fully provide for COLAs, and the House often does not. On a number of occasions, we have denied them to our staffs.

I would point out that given the House action earlier this year on Members' pay, where this House voted by a very large margin to assure that Members would receive a COLA, it would be the height of outrageous behavior if, having received that COLA for ourselves, we then take actions which would make it very difficult for a good many Members in this institution to provide that same cost of living increase for the people who work for us.

Mr. Speaker, there are some Members, no doubt, who have enough room in their office accounts, but there are many more who do not. The fact is that there are a lot of Members of this House who represent almost 100,000 more people than some of the rotten borough districts that we have in the country.

So I would suggest that the average amount left in each Member's office account is misleading. In fact, it is meaningless. What we have to do is to determine on a case-by-case basis the situation for every office.

I would simply say I would find it, indeed, ironic and cynical if this House allows Members of Congress to receive a cost of living increase while it takes action on this bill that denies people who get paid a whole lot less than we do.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to make a brief response. Then I am going to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Oklahoma.

I would point out that there is nothing in these instructions which set levels of staff salaries and nothing in the instructions which would forbid Members from changing the level of staff salaries.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question I want our staff to be adequately paid. I do not think that is what this is about. It sounds good, but it is not.

We have so liberalized the rules on Membership's accounts that we can move money from office overhead, we can take our mail money, which averages well over \$100,000 per Member, the frank, and use that money for staff salaries. The fact is, there is nothing in this motion to instruct that limits Members' abilities to pay their staff competitive salaries with the Senate.

The other thing that I would say is that we are seeing reflected in the House through the appropriation process how good of a job we do in our own offices. What we are saying is, we cannot control the costs in our own offices, we cannot run them efficiently. Therefore, we need to have more money.

People on social security this year are going to get less than 2 percent, and what the conference is about to do is to increase the MRAs for every Member 5 percent.

If Members want to tell their seniors that they deserve 2½ times the increase that they have to buy the food and buy the drugs that are out there for their living, that is fine, vote against this motion to instruct. But if Members think we ought to lead by example, that we ought to do the hard work, maybe we will send less mail in terms of mass mailings, maybe we will just answer the letters that come to us and not use it as a political wedge, then we can accomplish what we need for our staffs and we can live within a budget, as we are asking the American people to do as we try to live within the caps and not spend social security money.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that the remark that there is nothing in this motion that affects pay is, in my view, at least indirectly ingenuous. The fact is that Members provide for the cost of living increase for their staff from the office accounts that are funded in this bill. We do not have to directly go after those COLAs. If we simply shrink the total amount available, we effectively shut off the Members' ability to provide that cost of living for their staffers.

I think every worker in America ought to judge Members of Congress at least in part on whether or not they treat their staffs at least as well as they treat themselves. A Congress that provides itself a pay raise and makes it more difficult at the same time for their employees to get a COLA is hypocritical.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just talk about some of the issues. We can budget in our offices our COLA increases for our employees. It is up to us as managers of our office accounts to budget appropriately and to budget COLA increases, cost of living increases, for our employees.

But I would like to go back and talk about what the gentleman from Oklahoma said. The seniors in my district are not getting 5 percent increases in social security payments this year. The seniors in my district are getting less than 2 percent increases in social security, COLA increases.

I think it is time for Congress to lead by example. I think it is important that when we have made such a historic move this year to wall off social security, and let me just rephrase this, this year for the first time in a generation, for over 30 years, Congress passed a budget that stopped raiding social security.

This is the first Congress that has done this in so long, we should lead by example. Because we chose to stop the raid on the social security trust fund, that drives many other budget decisions around here. It makes spending less in other areas, because for once in a generation, we are not going to raid the social security trust fund.

That is why all we are saying, take the House number, which is lower than the Senate number in a legislative branch appropriations bill, a 2.4 percent increase, not a 5 percent increase. It is very important that we lead by example and we free up the fiscal space to pass our appropriation bills on budget and away from the raiding of social security, as we are doing.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. TAYLOR), the distinguished chair of the Subcommittee on Legislative.

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I commend all these young Members and all the people who have been working for a balanced budget, as well as reserve funds for social security and the efforts we have made.

In fact, if the legislative branch, and I owe this to my predecessors, because the last two chairmen have reduced the legislative branch substantially. We are not even back up to where we were in 1993 and 1994, even with inflation. I hope we can stay below that.

I also point out that we are substantially below the caps that were given to us. We are going to report a bill that is substantially below the caps. I am not sure any other committee will be doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to all of us in the body that if they have a \$1.8 trillion corporation, they are not going to talk about not having adequate staff and qualified staff to carry out the

funding and the appropriations of that \$1.8 trillion appropriations.

□ 2300

If one does, then one is pennywise and pound foolish because one has to have adequate people and pay them adequately, especially in today's market, to carry out that task.

We have in our report returned a portion of the MRAs to the Members, and I certainly support that. I agree with the gentleman, what he said about a lot of Members will return portions of the budget. I commend them for doing that. If they have the ability to do that, they certainly should.

But we all know that every district is different in this country. If I were in, for instance, a district where I had one television station and I could report to the people what was happening in the Congress without mail or without any communication other than that television station, and there are Members of the Congress that do that, then I would be able to return more of my money.

But I have 15 rural counties, and the only way I can report is to give them a report by mail. In my district, over 90 percent of the people regard that as favorable, and they respond so. They point out that they want more information, not less, about what is going on in Congress. As I say, if the people in my district support that, then I am certainly going to continue to put my efforts in that area to tell them what is going on in this body.

I think that, as I say, we have done a good job. The word "conference" means that we go across the body and we have to confer with the Senate. They asked for a lot more money. They did not get it all. They got some. Because, in a conference, one has to give and take. We would have liked to have spent less money, but we held the line very diligently. I think we will be proud of this report.

I would also point out that I do not think any Member who has spoken tonight has consulted with either the committee chairman or the ranking member or the staff to see what actually we have done. They may be surprised that we have held the line much better than previously than what they think may have been happening.

So I would commend this report to my colleagues. It will be coming before we leave in August. I think that my colleagues may be more proud of it in this body than they might think.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to remind my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, of what I said at the beginning, which is I think our appropriators have done an excellent job thus far this year, and I think we are going to finish up the process with an excellent track record.

My colleague indicated that there are, in all likelihood going to be pleasant features to this bill when we see it. I hope, in fact, that the conferees did hold the line and that the funding levels will, in fact, reflect the will of the House as it was voted on back in June.

Again, we have done a great job thus far ensuring that we are going to see the surpluses that we believe we will see, and that means we are going to be able to do the right thing with respect to Social Security, with respect to lowering the tax burden on the American people.

I just hope that we finish the job and we show that we can lead by example that a 2.8 percent increase in our own budgets is sufficient for us. We do not need to go higher than that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Chairman, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the results of the highly productive and informative experience that the U.S. delegation had at the Annual Session of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly—or the OSCE PA. As many of you know, this year seventeen members of Congress formed the U.S. delegation, and as the U.S. delegation does every year, we attended the Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session in a member country of the OSCE. This year's Annual Session was in St. Petersburg, Russia and met from July 6–10. I am pleased to inform my colleagues that our week in St. Pe-

tersburg was a successful one, both for the entire Assembly and especially for the U.S. delegation.

The purpose of the Annual Session is to bring parliamentarians together in order to discuss and assess developments in conflict resolution within Europe, as well as to form proactive means of approaching a wide range of security issues, including arms control, preventive diplomacy, human rights and economic security. These thoughts, recommendations, and goals are then compiled into a declaration, which is ultimately adopted by the entire Parliamentary Assembly.

I draw inspiration from this document for many reasons. On its surface, this document is a comprehensive and vital educational tool. It brings to our attention gross violations of human rights, such as the international trafficking of women and children; it offers us effective methods to continuing the peace process in Yugoslavia and Kosovo; and it describes initiatives of securing peace and democracy throughout Europe. In effect, the St. Petersburg Declaration serves as an important reference on a wide scope of events and issues, which better aids us all in understanding the current global order.

On a secondary level however, the St. Petersburg Declaration, and the OSCE PA declarations that preceded it, demonstrate the value of inter-cooperation and dialogue between countries. The OSCE parliamentarians form a body of representatives from fifty-five governments throughout Europe, Central Asia, and North America; and it has adopted an all-embracing approach in its membership and approach to security, conflict resolution, and economic cooperation in the OSCE region. Consequently the Parliamentarians bring to the OSCE PA a vast range of knowledge and experiences that complements and supplements one another. In a time of fungible borders and instantaneous communication between continents and cultures, it behooves us all to understand these varying perspectives and opinions.

More important, however, is the OSCE's ability to use this collection of experience and thought for the greater good of security in Europe and justice throughout the world. The sum of the parliamentarians' collective expertises and experiences is so much greater than the individual parts. Indeed, when brought together and shared in such a forum, there is an exchange of ideas that better enables us to understand the root of global concerns, and ultimately how the international community can best take action to remove these problems. In effect, we are able to combine the best ideas and developments of our various countries in order to work toward peace and cooperation throughout the world.

Such innovation and progress would simply not be possible if we acted as isolated agents, and I firmly believe that the effectiveness of the OSCE PA lies in its ability to draw on both our shared and unique experiences. The St. Petersburg Declaration reflects the value of this interrelationship, and I am grateful for the opportunity to both learn from and contribute toward it.

While I am certainly proud to be a member of a distinguished body like the OSCE PA, it gave me particular pleasure to attend the Assembly as part of the U.S. delegation. This