

to be used for child abuse assistance programs, increasing the earmark from \$10 million to \$20 million. This increase reflects a growth in contributions to the fund since the set-aside for victims of child abuse was first established.

Mr. Speaker, all of these changes will funnel more resources to the State and local level, where the individuals who are on the front lines in the fight against child abuse are best equipped to help our children. And I know my colleagues will be pleased to know that the CAPE Act draws on existing resources instead of creating a new Federal program that requires more taxpayer financing.

The CAPE Act has bipartisan support and was favorably reported by the Committee on the Judiciary without controversy or amendment. So while we do not expect numerous amendments to be offered today, this issue is simply far too important to deny a full and fair debate. That is why the Committee on Rules has reported this open rule, which I hope my colleagues will support.

I look forward to today's debate, which I hope will not only be a prelude to the passage of legislation that gives hope to millions of children, but also an effort to raise awareness about the horrors of child abuse and the steps we can take to end it.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), for yielding me this time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the rule for H.R. 764 is an open rule, and I am pleased to support its consideration.

Mr. Speaker, every year, millions of children are the victims of child abuse or are witnesses to terrible violence. The repercussions of this violence is often felt for the rest of that child's life. Study after study suggests that children who are victims of child abuse or neglect are far more likely to run afoul of the law either as adolescents or adults. Statistics show that most people who are abusers were abused as children themselves.

Even as the crime in some areas is going down, experts tell us the number of crimes against children is going up. This bill is an important effort aimed at child abuse treatment and prevention. It was passed just a few days ago by a voice vote in the Committee on the Judiciary and is now here on the floor for consideration by the full House.

□ 1430

Several important amendments have been identified, and I look forward to the thoughtful debate concerning this most important issue.

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

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in participating in today's debate and strengthening the voice of millions of children who live each day with terror and in pain.

Raising awareness is the first step toward ending the living nightmare of child abuse. The next step is providing the resources to eradicate this scourge on our society. Today, happily, we can do both.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this fair and open rule and the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 764.

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

There was no objection.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS). Pursuant to House Resolution 321 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 764.

□ 1432

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 764) to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect, and for other purposes, with Mr. HANSEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM).

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of H.R. 764, the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act.

The bill was introduced by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) and has 54 sponsors and bipartisan sup-

port. The Crime Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary held a legislative hearing on the bill on May 12, 1999; and last week, the full Committee on the Judiciary ordered the bill favorably reported by a voice vote.

The purpose of the bill is to increase the funds available for the investigation of child abuse crimes and programs designed to prevent child abuse and other domestic violence. It will do this by amending existing grant programs that provide funds to States for crime-related purposes so that funds can also be used to provide child protective workers and child welfare workers access to criminal conviction information and orders of protection.

These workers often do not have access to criminal history records and information and may be unaware that when they place a child in foster care or return a child to a parent, that they are placing the child in the custody of a person with a criminal history. Allowing these Federal funds to provide child protective and child welfare workers with access to State records will help alleviate this problem.

This bill would accomplish this purpose by doing two things. First, section 2 of the bill would amend a small Justice Department grant program that currently helps States provide equipment and personnel training for closed circuit television and videotaping of the testimony of children in criminal child abuse cases.

H.R. 764 would permit the Department to make grants for an additional purpose, namely, to provide child protective workers and child welfare workers in public and private agencies access to criminal conviction information and orders of protection based on the claim of domestic or child abuse or to improve law enforcement access to judicial custody orders, visitation orders, protective orders, and guardianship orders.

Section 3 of the bill would modify the federal crime control assistance program known as the Byrne Grant Program. This program authorizes the Federal Government to award both block grants and discretionary grants for specified activities. Block grants are allocated to the State on the basis of population and are to be used for personnel, equipment, training, technical assistance, and information systems to improve criminal justice systems. The discretionary program funds are distributed to non-federal public and private organizations undertaking projects that educate criminal justice personnel or that provide technical assistance to State and local governments.

The Byrne Grant statute specifies 26 permissible uses for these funds. This bill proposes to amend the Byrne Grant program to add an additional permissible use for these funds, namely, "to enforce child abuse and neglect laws