Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Omnibus Appropriations Bill of 1999. This is massive bill put together at the last minute with very little chance for Members to study its contents. It combines five appropriations bills as well as two very admirable but totally unrelated pieces of legislation. In addition, it contains countless budget gimmicks in order to label it “balanced”. In short, it is dishonest.

I cannot in good faith support this agreement which was completed outside the regular budget process, includes untold pork, relies on numerous budget gimmicks and raids the social security trust fund. The final bill relied on numerous budget gimmicks as offsets: a pay shift for all military and civilian employees by one day at the end of the fiscal year which will push such outlay into the next fiscal year; a transfer of reserves held by the Social Security trust fund to the board of education; and an across the board cut of .38 percent in budget authority. In addition, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the already passed appropriation bills will result in spending about $17 billion of the Social Security trust fund.

Moreover, this bill exceeds all of the balanced budget caps passed in 1997, but masks this action by declaring programs like Head Start, begun in 1964, and the census as emergency funding. We should forego such a charade and be honest with the American people about the federal budget.

Since my first house vote in Congress, I have fought for the protection of Social Security and honest budgeting. This final package, contrary to its supporters claims, raids the Social Security trust fund and threatens the future solvency of Social Security and Medicare. In addition the budgetary gimmicks utilized will only make next year’s budget even more difficult.

Congress could have chosen to keep their promise to pass all appropriations in regular order by September 30th. They could have worked with other Members to ensure the final product did not spend any of the Social Security trust fund. Instead, they chose to delay until the eve of Thanksgiving and force a massive and dishonest spending measure on the House. As such, I will oppose this bill and urge my colleagues to do likewise.

TRIBUTE TO TIM DONOHOE
HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, November 22, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to pay special tribute to an outstanding individual from Ohio’s Fifth Congressional District. For more than thirty years, Larry Burkhart has educated the children of Northwest Ohio, Mr. Burkhart first realized the difference that teaching can make in the lives of our youth while attending Miller City High School. After graduating from high school, he went on to college and graduated from Bowling Green State University. Not long after graduation, Larry Burkhart began his long and distinguished career in education by teaching industrial arts.

Larry Burkhart truly has made an enormous difference with his students. Through personal interaction and diligent attention to their academic achievements, he has helped them through some of their biggest successes and disappointments. He spent several years in the classroom before becoming a guidance counselor—a position in which he has served for the past twenty-seven years.

In addition to his service as a teacher and guidance counselor, Larry Burkhart has made an immeasurable difference on the more than 750 athletes he has coached in the last three and a half decades. During that time, he has helped instill in those students the qualities of respect, sportsmanship, competitive spirit, dedication, and hard work. Larry Burkhart’s students, both athletes and nonathletes alike, will carry with them throughout their lives the positive aspects he has taught.

Clearly, Larry Burkhart has given freely and unselfishly of his time and energy for the betterment of our children. He understands that our children are the future of our nation and the best way to prepare them to lead is to provide them with the best education possible. His caring and guidance for his students and his strong support for the profession of education distinguish him as one of the community’s most respected educators.

Mr. Speaker, it is often said that America prospers due to the wondrous deeds of her sons and daughters. Without question, Larry Burkhart has dedicated his life to the future of our nation through the education of our children. I urge my colleagues to stand and join me in paying special tribute to Larry Burkhart. For his extraordinary service to education, we salute him and wish both him and his family the very best in the future.

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