

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 221, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

**DISASTER MITIGATION
COORDINATION ACT OF 1999**

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 818) to amend the Small Business Act to authorize a pilot program for the implementation of disaster mitigation measures by small businesses.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 818

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Disaster Mitigation Coordination Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(b)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by adding "and" at the end; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:
 "(C) during fiscal years 2000 through 2004, to establish a disaster mitigation program to make such loans (either directly or in cooperation with banks or other lending institutions through agreements to participate on an immediate or deferred (guaranteed) basis) as the Administrator may determine to be necessary or appropriate to enable small business concerns to implement mitigation measures pursuant to a formal disaster mitigation program established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, except that no loan or guarantee may be extended to a small business concern under this subparagraph unless the Administration finds the concern is otherwise unable to obtain credit for the purposes described in this subparagraph."

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 20 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(f) DISASTER MITIGATION PILOT PROGRAM.—The following program levels are authorized for loans under section 7(b)(1)(C):

"(1) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2000.

"(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2001.

"(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2002.

"(4) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2003.

"(5) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2004."

(c) EVALUATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On January 31, 2003, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall submit to the Committees on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the effec-

tiveness of the pilot program authorized by section 7(b)(1)(C) of the Small Business Act, as added by subsection (a) of this section.

(2) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report shall include—

(1) information relating to—

(A) the areas served under the pilot program;

(B) the number and dollar value of loans made under the pilot program; and

(C) the estimated savings to the Federal Government resulting from the pilot program; and

(2) such other information as the Administrator determines to be appropriate for evaluating the pilot program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. TALENT).

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

Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking my colleague, the ranking member on the Committee on Small Business, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), for her assistance in moving this bill and also my colleague from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) for his assistance in handling it.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 818, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 1999, is a common-sense approach to applying the principle of preventive care in coping with natural disasters. H.R. 818 is substantially identical to a measure reintroduced by Senator CLELAND, the measure which actually passed the Senate last year. It is part of the administration's budget request, and it has substantial bipartisan support.

Since 1953, the Small Business Administration has administered the Disaster Loan Program authorized by section 7(b) of the Small Business Act. This program provides loans to help small businesses rebuild after natural disasters.

In past years, the loan program has spent billions of dollars helping small businesses recover from natural disasters. For example, in fiscal year 1998, the SBA lent \$728 million for 30,154 disaster loans. In 1997, it lent \$1.1 billion for 49,515 disaster loans. In 1994, the SBA's highest demand came when it loaned over \$4.1 billion for damage done due to the Northridge Earthquake in California. It was important, Mr. Speaker, that we do this to help people recover from the damage inflicted by natural disasters.

We should also recognize that the cost of disaster assistance has risen over the past several years due to increases in construction and other costs, and it is clear that efforts must be made to help prevent this kind of damage in the first place, both to prevent the human injury and toll and also to hold down costs to the taxpayers. Implementing the program to help small businesses use techniques to lessen damages caused by natural dis-

asters offers the potential to save much anguish for many people across the United States and also to save millions of dollars in the future.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency currently manages Project Impact which works in conjunction with communities and businesses on such mitigation policies and techniques. Passage of H.R. 818 will complement and further these efforts at mitigation by offering small businesses low-interest loans for disaster mitigation through the Small Business Administration.

H.R. 818 authorizes the SBA to establish a pilot program to make loans to small businesses for purposes of mitigating the effects of natural disasters. These loans will be made in support of the mitigation program established at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The mitigation techniques are varied. They include a wide range of activities, including building improvements, relocation and the like.

H.R. 818 will authorize SBA to lend up to \$15 million each year through fiscal year 2004 in support of the Disaster Mitigation Pilot Program. These funds will come from existing section 7(b) disaster loan appropriations and will be subject to appropriations available for that program, so the bill does not authorize any new Federal spending.

Finally, H.R. 818 will require the SBA to report to Congress on January 31, 2003. The report will document the number of loans made, the areas served by the pilot and the estimated savings to the government as a result of the program.

I want to again thank my colleagues, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), and my friend, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD), for their assistance in moving the measure before us. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 818.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my distinguished colleague from the great State of Missouri, the chairman of the Committee on Small Business, for his work in bringing this bill to the floor today and for his initiative in seeking measures to assist and prevent disasters throughout the country. I would also like to thank my colleague from New York, the distinguished ranking member, who has joined in working to prevent disasters and provide assistance for the victims of disasters.

Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about the need to adequately support people whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters. I happen to live in a district where disasters are not uncommon. With Mount Saint Helens in our district, with heavy rainfall