

Corporation funds were distributed—\$47.9 million for television program development, \$18.8 million for radio programming development, and \$15.6 million for general system support. The report also reviews the Corporation's Open to the Public campaign, which allows the public to submit comments via mail, a 24-hour toll-free telephone line, or the Corporation's Internet website.

I am confident this year's report will meet with your approval and commend, as always, the Corporation's efforts to deliver consistently high quality programming that brings together American families and enriches all our lives.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 18, 1999.

ANNUAL REPORT OF NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY, 1998—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 504(h) of Public Law 98-164, as amended (22 U.S.C. 4413(i)), I transmit herewith the 15th Annual Report of the National Endowment for Democracy, which covers fiscal year 1998.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 18, 1999.

PRAISE TO STUDENTS FROM COVENANT CHRISTIAN AND CLINTON HIGH SCHOOLS FOLLOWING AFTERMATH OF AMTRAK TRAIN CRASH

(Mr. SHOWS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, today I stand before the American people and my colleagues to comment on the fatal Amtrak train crash that occurred earlier this week. I am saddened this terrible tragedy took place. In their slumber, over late night snacks and conversations, fellow Americans aboard Amtrak's City of New Orleans were jolted into a reality of death and injury.

Today we mourn with our fellow Americans. In particular, I pause to offer condolences to fellow Mississippians who suffered losses in this crash. We pause to give thanks for life while seeking to understand why bad things happen. The American family stands with all those who have suffered.

Out of the tragedy came several stories of heroism. We can find the strength and endurance of the Amer-

ican spirit in many of the passengers who worked to protect and save the lives of others during this crash. I want to tell my colleagues about students from Mississippi who were on this train.

Young Mississippians from Covenant Christian School and Clinton High School were returning from a spring break trip. Out of the chaos and heartbreak, these Mississippi teenagers went to work securing the safety and well-being of fellow passengers. These students were courageous, caring, heroic, and brave.

I want all Americans to know about these teenagers from Clinton High School and Covenant Christian School. Why? Because we can all stand a little taller and feel a little better about our Nation and our future.

Mr. Speaker, I provide the names of these students for inclusion in the RECORD.

List of Students: Danielle Bell, Drew Bilbo, Chris Carter, Suzanne Cole, Emily Diffenderfer, Tim Farrar, Michael Freeman, Anna Fulgham, Stephanie Ly, Jeff Sartor, Shadia Slaieh, Jessica Switzer, Anshika Singh, Caleb McNair, Melissa Watson, and Christina Bomgaars.

Chaperones: Delores Bell, John Farrar, and Phyllis Hurlley.

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.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO BRING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UP-TO-DATE ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the characteristics of a livable community is the desire to promote the safety, health, and economic security of our families.

Today, in the newspapers around the country, people read of the expected flooding that is about to occur this spring. I, obviously, come from an area of the Pacific Northwest that will be particularly hard hit, although we are often under water even in the best of times, and it may be less of a wrenching experience for some of us than around the country.

We are going to watch for an unusually harsh spring in the Pacific Northwest, in the Southwest, in the East, and it is an item that the Federal Government has been concerned about for a number of years. The Federal Government has been a partner working to protect against flood damage since 1960. Over \$40 billion Federal dollars have been invested in this effort.

Ironically, the losses from flood damage today, adjusted for inflation, are three times greater than before we started in 1960 and spent the \$40 billion. Why? In part, because we have not been as wise as we should have been in the expenditure of these funds. We have taken rivers across the country, we have narrowed and channelized them, we have encouraged people to live up to the river's edge with a false sense of security, we have paved over half our Nation's wetlands and, consequently, in many of these areas, there is simply no place for the water to go.

The result of our Federal disaster policy has been massive damage to a number of the same properties at a great cost to the taxpayer. One home in Houston that is appraised at less than \$115,000 has received over \$800,000 in federal flood insurance in less than 20 years.

There is, in fact, a smarter way to promote community livability. I have introduced legislation today, with the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCREST), H.R. 1186, to bring the Federal Government up-to-date on water resource management.

The current system simply does not work well. The Corps of Engineers does cost-benefit analysis that simply does not recognize the benefit of flood damage avoided by moving communities out of harm's way and it, consequently, produces a flawed analysis.

Likewise, Federal financial assistance has a current cost-share formula that penalizes communities that make special efforts to develop and implement hazard mitigation and floodplain management.

Lastly, we do not give communities enough flexibility to fine-tune the projects that we have previously authorized.

As a result, on the books we have projects that are often expensive and do not adequately address the threat in today's needs, and communities are not allowed to be involved in this process directly.

Our legislation, H.R. 1186, would correct all of these items. It changes the cost-benefit ratio to fully reflect the benefits including avoided costs of moving people out of harm's way. It will provide the same financial incentives for the low-cost, innovative, less intrusive approaches to floodplain management as if people are going to use traditional dams, dikes and levees.

Finally, it will allow the private and public local partners, who are working with the Corps of Engineers and the Federal Government, to provide cost-effective solutions and to be able to refine and fine-tune those plans without having to go back through the reauthorization process.

We talk a lot on the floor of this House about reducing Federal redtape. This is a simple item that we, by legislation, can permit our communities to

avoid the costs and consequences of trying to crawl back through the legislative process or, worse, build simply a project that we know will fail.

As we watch the flooding that is about to occur this spring across the country, I hope that we will think about how the Federal Government needs to be a more constructive partner for livable communities. I strongly urge my colleagues to join the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCREST) and me in the sponsorship of H.R. 1186.

VACATION OF SPECIAL ORDER AND GRANTING OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

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

There was no objection.

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

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

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the American people what I think is a great injustice that is occurring in our country. It is injustice that seeks to pit community against community, color against color and the American people against one another. It is an injustice that we are witnessing in my district in Staten Island, but it is injustice that I have little doubt we will be battling throughout the Nation before long.

The controversy centers around the seemingly innocuous-sounding policy advanced by the Environmental Protection Agency known as "environmental justice". In theory, this legal doctrine is supposed to reflect the notion that all communities, regardless of race or ethnicity, should share equally in the burdens and risks of environmental protection policies. It sounds reasonable, except, of course, until the theory is applied.

Over the years, the policy has been twisted like a pretzel, so that today, lawyers and activists now believe that different people deserve different treatment or, more precisely, that some people are more equal than others.

Earlier this month, for example, top Federal officials from the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and even the White House Council on Environmental Quality came to New York for a day-long tour of waste transfer stations in the South Bronx. They came to see for themselves and to hear the residents who claim that these facilities pose an

environmental injustice on their community.

Let me add that I have no problem with them going to the South Bronx.

The morning after the tour, the EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality organized an unprecedented 8-hour public hearing in which residents had the opportunity to voice their outrage over the existence of the transfer stations. At the conclusion of the event, and at a speed in which I have never seen the Federal Government act, the White House Council on Environmental Quality announced that it would undertake an environmental justice investigation in the South Bronx.

This is, quite possibly, the most clear-cut hypocrisy on the part of the EPA that I have ever witnessed. At its core, the doctrine of environmental justice defies the most fundamental American principles of equality and justice. Why? Because while the White House Council on Environmental Quality mobilized its top officials for a tour of the South Bronx, granted a predominantly minority community, it never considered traveling just a few miles to Staten Island, which just happens to be a predominantly white community, to see one of the most horrific examples and nightmares of the 20th century known as the Fresh Kills Landfill.

To me, Mr. Speaker, it was an insult to every resident of Staten Island and a slap in the face to the hard working people of my district, who have been burdened for 50 years by this 3,000 acre, 150-foot-high illegal garbage dump, the largest in the country. This facility is not only the largest in our country, but one of, so legend has, one of only two man-made structures visible from outer space.

Recognizing the absurdity of any investigation on waste disposal in New York without a full and comprehensive discussion of Fresh Kills, I filed my own complaint with the EPA for an environmental justice review on Staten Island. In the days since, the silence from the EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality has been deafening.

It should also not be forgotten that for the South Bronx and every other borough in New York City, waste would be continually moving through transfer stations en route to a destination out of state, whereas at the Fresh Kills Landfill the trash literally sits and rots in our community forever.

The EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality failed to see the hypocrisy of fighting tooth and nail against a waste transfer station or transfer stations in the South Bronx because it would be located in a minority community but, at the same time, requiring a community like Staten Island to accept nearly 10 billion pounds of garbage every year.

Let there be no mistake. If the EPA or a State or local agency finds a par-

ticular facility poses a health risk to a community, the agency should mitigate or eliminate that risk, regardless, regardless, of the race or ethnicity of the residents of the neighborhood. But a governmental policy that takes skin color into account does not do justice, environmental or otherwise, to Americans, nor should it be funded with our tax dollars.

The fact is that 234 billion, I say billion, pounds of raw garbage is no less offensive because it sits rotting in a community that is predominantly white. I believe this country stands for equality for all. If something adversely affects someone, it does not matter if they are black, Hispanic or white. If it is bad for one, it is bad for all.

It may come as a surprise to advocates of environmental justice, but thousands of Staten Islanders of all races and ethnicities live within one mile of the Fresh Kills Landfill. Much like me, they do not see color when looking at garbage, they just see trash, and they know hypocrisy when they smell it.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS).

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

There was no objection.

MY COMMITMENT TO CROP INSURANCE

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

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, low commodity prices, disease and weather-related problems, coupled with declining export opportunities and weak demand, have taken a devastating toll on Colorado's agriculture industry. Farm income has fallen dramatically over the past 2 years, and it is difficult to predict how soon it might rebound. While Congress recently helped stave off disaster in rural America, with an emergency assistance package, it is evident gaping holes exist in federal crop insurance as a viable safety net.

In 1996, Congress passed the Freedom to Farm Act, allowing producers the flexibility to adjust crop acreage in response to both economic and agronomic factors, while providing farms a safety net through market transition payments, loan rates, and crop insurance.

Recently, some have suggested Congress return to the old system of deficiency payments and production quotas, and take action to increase loan rates and extended loan maturities in order to improve low commodity prices.