

LOOKING AT DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA WITH FRESH EYES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, it has been my habit to come to the floor occasionally in order to report to this body concerning your Nation's capital. There is a special responsibility that the House and the Senate have for the Nation's capital and it is not possible to get a real sense of what is happening in this city, even when in it, to see it in perspective, without the kind of information that I try to give periodically to this body, as we go off to Hershey, Pennsylvania, for our second bipartisan retreat.

Therefore, I want to discuss this evening an issue and a place about which I am sure there is agreement that bipartisanship should always be the order of the day. It is, after all, the seat of our government, the home of more than a half million people, the place where all of us want to do all we can to make it the proudest seat of government we can.

What I would ask of this body, what I think the District has a right to ask of this body, what I think the people of the District of Columbia, the mayor and the city council have a right to ask of this body, is that it look at the District with fresh eyes for, Mr. Speaker, there is a new city, if ever there was one, before your eyes. It is a city where there is a new mayor. It is a city where there is a new city council and where there is a new control board.

I am most appreciative that as the 106th Congress convened, the Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), received the new mayor, Anthony Williams, and me, and we had a very good and encouraging discussion. The same was true of the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the gentleman from Florida (Chairman YOUNG); and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK). The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) has gone into the District over the last few weeks to see for himself the city that now comes under his appropriations subcommittee jurisdiction. I have gone as well, and the mayor, to visit the chair of the Senate District appropriations subcommittee, and the mayor has met with the chairman of the Oversight Committee for the District, Mayor GEORGE VOINOVICH, himself a former mayor, the mayor of Cleveland.

May I say that I continue to work, and in the bipartisan manner that he and I have long ago established, with the chairman of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), and that has been a most fruitful partnership and we think it is a model for

what we should be trying to achieve in the way of bipartisan cooperation when we meet beginning tomorrow in Hershey.

I should indicate to Members that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) has agreed to sponsor, with me, a reception for Mayor Anthony Williams here in the House on April 13, in room 2226 Rayburn. We are doing that simply because we think Members would want to meet the new mayor of the District of Columbia, about which I am sure we have read a great deal and heard a great deal.

It is seldom that a city experiences the kind of change your capital has experienced over the last few months. The city has had a control board because, like Cleveland and New York and Philadelphia, it had financial problems, although I must say that the financial problems that the District had were almost inevitable because it was carrying State functions and no city in the United States carries State functions.

May I say how appreciative I am, the elected officials are and the residents are, that in its wisdom Congress removed at least some of those State functions, the most costly ones, the ones that no city could carry, medicaid or at least part of medicaid; courts; removed pension liability that was built up when the Congress was in charge of the District, enabling the District to breathe and to get control of its finances. We are most grateful for the understanding that that was a necessary obligation of the Federal Government.

What we have got in place essentially is an entirely new team. The control board is new. Except for one member, the vice chair, Constance Neumann, who served so well on the last control board, all the other members are new, appointed by the President.

There is, as I have said, a new mayor and there is a revitalized city council. Even the new mayor brings something very different from what mayors usually bring to the office. This mayor served as chief financial officer and, thus, is himself partly responsible for the rise of the District once again to economic strength. He, in effect, served an apprenticeship for becoming mayor doing what it is that mayors most have to do, and that is balancing a budget and getting control of your finances.

The city council has some of the same members. They are members who have proven themselves to want to exercise oversight and they are joined by others who were elected precisely because the city now demands oversight and accountability, a check on the executive from its city council.

So I ask this body to regard this as morning for the District. It is morning again. It is like it is outdoors today; it is spring; it is a new season with a whole new set of actors in place. All I

ask of this body is it leave behind any sense of the District as it was and give these new players a chance to show what they can do.

I believe that they not only will do so, I think if one reads your morning papers in the District each day one will see that they are doing so. I invite everyone to flip through the Metropolitan Section every once in awhile to see that I am, I believe, right on this.

The District is clearly realigning itself, first for its own residents and then, of course, because it wants the Congress to understand that it is a new city.

What I am asking of the Congress is that the Congress realign itself so that it is ready to meet a new city. I want to say a word about what I mean by a new city because I am not this evening speaking rhetorically.

The city not only has a new administration, it has a new administration because it has a new political culture. The reason it has a new mayor, a new city council, is because there was a voter driven reaction to the state in which the city found itself. It was not driven by Congress. It was not driven by any outside force. It was driven by the circumstances that District residents found for themselves. Essentially, it was driven by a loud and virtually unanimous cry of enough from residents. That is why I say there is a change in the political culture, the kind of change that I think is permanent precisely because it has been driven from the bottom, precisely because of its reaction to what voters and residents felt on a daily basis about their city and they wanted it to be better. They wanted it to be better not because this body insisted so but because they had to live with it every day and because these people who were in charge were people they could either keep in charge or take from their posts, and they have selected among them, and I believe selected wisely.

I am very pleased that all of the signals from Congress have been that this body, Senate and House, does understand that this is a new city and should be treated accordingly. I am very pleased with the bipartisan approach to the city's issues that we have seen thus far, and there is evidence that I will allude to shortly.

I come to report today in a different spirit than I have come to the floor sometimes on the District. I do not come in complaint. I do not come to say, let the District be the District, let democracy reign in the Nation's capital the way it does every place else. I come to say that I am grateful for the way in which Congress is stepping back and letting the District do what I believe it is doing very well already.

I certainly hope, and I must say based on our conversations with the leadership I do believe, that I will not experience an appropriation this year

that is anything like the appropriation I experienced last year where I stood for 10 hours on this floor. Even though there was before this body a consensus budget and almost no changes were made in the budget itself, I stood on this floor for 10 hours while Members pasted one or another anti-democratic attachment on the D.C. appropriation, an appropriation that comes here with only money raised from the taxpayers of the District of Columbia and, by right, should not be here at all.

□ 1830

I had to stand here and fight back, for the most part unsuccessfully, amendments that Members might have wished to put on to their own district, but certainly had no right to put undemocratically on to mine. This occurred even though everybody could see that the District was on the mend. The former mayor had said he was not going to run again, the budget was in order, and yet the budget became a vehicle for Members' desires having nothing to do with the wishes of the residents of the District of Columbia. I am hoping that the new cast of characters, if nothing else, will get the respect of this body so that our budget comes through, budget with our own money, without attachments, and I have no reason to believe that that will not be the case this year.

I raise it because there is no reason, as I have said to the Speaker, and as I have said to our appropriators, why the District should not be the first, rather than the last, budget that comes from this House where, after all, it is not the money of the Federal Government, it is the money of District residents.

The City was closed down for a week during the government shutdown. In the middle of its own financial crisis, one can imagine the bitterness that was left with District residents when, as far as they were concerned, it was their money and it should not have been up here at all. The delays in our budget cost us in interest, when we have to borrow, because of the uncertainty the market believes is there when what our council and our mayor have done has to go to yet another legislative body and one not as familiar with the City because it is not their particular budget.

Some of my colleagues were not here, so I raise it so that they know what has happened in the past, and so that we can make what I hope will be a clean break with that kind of past.

I believe that there is signal evidence that that kind of break has already been made. As the session opened, I introduced the first of a series of bills. The series is called Democracy Now, and the first bill was called D.C. Democracy 2000. It seeks to sunset the control board, the board that was necessary when we got into financial trouble early, because we are no longer in

financial trouble, and it sought to return some powers that were taken from the mayor and the city council to the mayor and the city council.

While the second part of the bill was not ripe because the new administration had no track record, the part that would sunset the control board, that is; I believe that the first part was ripe, and that there was no reason why the take-charge new mayor of the District should not have what it takes to rebuild the City. To his credit and with much appreciation from me, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), the chairman of the subcommittee, took the first part of my bill and brought it through subcommittee and then the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), through full committee, and then on to this floor where it easily passed in the House as well; and I am pleased to report this evening that my bill, or the first part of my bill, which, in fact, became a Davis-Norton bill, has become PL106-1. That "dash 1" means it is the first bill of the 106th Congress to be signed by the President of the United States.

How appropriate that the first bill that a Democratic mayor signed was a bill that the Republican House and Senate passed to return democracy to the mayor, to the mayor and the city council. We are most appreciative. We think it bodes well for the Congress and for the District, and it is what I mean when I say the District has to realign itself and the Congress has to realign itself, and I believe that that shows that both bodies are, in good faith, trying to do exactly that.

Now, I did not and have not yet pushed for the second half of D.C. Democracy 2000, as I have indicated, because I think it is only fair to ask even a new mayor who has the confidence of the House to get his own track record before our sunset or seek to have the control board to sunset a year early. My, how I would wish, however, that as the year 2000 dawns, the District of Columbia can be free of any oversight, except this Congress. That would mean that the control board would go a year early.

Mr. Speaker, let me indicate why I think that should happen. It is not simply because we have a new mayor in which I believe everybody, residents of the District of Columbia and Congress alike have confidence, it is because the evidence is already on the table. The Congress, through the control board statute, indicated that the District could be rid of the control board if, at the end of four years, the City had a balanced budget.

Let me tell my colleagues what the record is. The District has already had not one balanced budget, and that was three years ahead of time, but three balanced budgets plus surpluses in each of those three years. Mr. Speaker, a

\$185 million surplus in 1997; a \$444.8 million surplus in fiscal year 1998, and the City projects a \$158 million surplus for fiscal year 1999. As if that were not enough in the way of surpassing the expectations of the Congress, we had put into the revitalization package that this body passed taking over State functions in 1997 a provision that would allow the District to borrow in the fourth year if it had a balanced budget on the one hand, but we had not quite been able to get rid of, an operating deficit that it has been carrying now for years. But the District of Columbia is going to be able to eliminate its \$322 million operating deficit from its own revenues without any borrowing.

This is strong evidence that the District has not only met, but surpassed, congressional expectations and is no longer in an emergency or crisis status, and when one is no longer in an emergency status, one no longer needs a control board. A control board is an emergency mechanism; it is not a security blanket. No city gets it, or must have it, unless it is in an emergency.

The District has pulled itself out of a financial crisis in a way no one would dare to have predicted a couple of years ago. Nevertheless, I can understand that to pass the second half of Democracy 2000, the burden is going to be on me, it always is, and therefore, I have not requested of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) even hearings, yet, on the second half of that bill that would sunset the control board. Rather, with a new administration that took office only in January, it is only fair to let the mayor get his steam up, show what he can do, and then have hearings and see whether or not this bill can pass the House and the Senate.

Is the evidence on the table that this new mayor is in charge of the City and does not need any oversight from anyone except the voters of the District of Columbia? I think the evidence is very clear already. I think we need to see it continue for a few more months, but it is very clear already. Members have come up to me, came up to me after this first big snow the other day and told me that they noted the very quick and efficient way in which the streets were cleaned, and that it was in contrast to some other experiences that they had had.

Let me cite the way in which the new administration gets hold of problems, because he cannot promise us that there are not huge numbers of problems left over. The real question is, is he in charge of them? Does he gain control of them? Do we have an administration that knows how to get rid of problems? Because the fact of problems are going to be there for some time.

An example is an article in the Washington Post, a series, exposing problems in homes for retarded people. The District did a very good thing in taking

retarded people and other disabled people out of a huge monstrosity of an institution, taking them out of institutionalized care and spreading these disabled people in homes around the City. Well, The Washington Post did what they were supposed to do. They went around and looked at these homes and these homes have been in existence now for 3 or 4 years and they are private homes all around the City run by contractors, and it found evidence that some of them are not treating retarded people very well, and that is itself, I will not say criminal, but it is pretty close to it when we consider that we are talking about people that are pretty close to helpless. There was a time when there would be exposure of problems like that and then we would wait to hear word that something had happened.

Well, the articles ran a couple of days ago. This morning's paper said that the mayor has moved in already to debar two of the contractors in two of the homes, and to move the people out.

That is what I mean by "take charge." That is what the Congress cannot do, what the control board cannot do; that is what only a fully empowered mayor can do and what, with his powers fully intact, he is now doing.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many examples of management progress in the City. Let me just take two, the first being perhaps the institution most exposed to the public and about which the public most cares because they affect their lives so directly: Schools. This may be the institution in the District where the Congress has had the greatest concern, the public schools. To say they have done very poorly is to speak far too lightly of schools that deserve nothing but contempt for what they had done to our children.

What has happened in the District now is that a new, bold, energetic, collegial superintendent named Arlene Ackerman has come to the superintendency and things began to happen immediately. Her Summer Stars program will probably be a model for the country where she took children and said, in order to eliminate social promotion, they were to go to summer school and that if one wanted to get ahead, one could also go to summer school so that the children were not stigmatized, and that there would be a ratio of 15 children to every teacher, a very low ratio. Here is the kind of summer school that no one has ever seen much of. It was over-subscribed, and in the morning, children were put to very intensive reading and math instructions, and in the evening, or afternoons, she was able to get funding from private sources to take these youngsters all around the region to cultural and fun activities that would otherwise have been unavailable to them.

Even before she began with the Summer Stars program, she had so changed the regime in the schools with respect to how teachers were to confront their job that the scores in every grade had risen significantly. It can be done if we have the right people in charge.

Arlene Ackerman is so good that I am sure some Members would like to steal her, and we will not let that happen. Because that kind of progress from a school system that was in the gutter, it was so bad, to so quickly see it come up in the hands of somebody who knows what she is doing is precisely what this City has needed.

□ 1845

Let me take another agency that of course is of great, great concern; the police department. The District went out and did a nationwide search and got itself a first-class police chief. They got him from a much larger city, Chicago.

They got a police chief whose reputation has been made in community policing. No approach is more popular in this body than community policing where we put the police on the ground. They get to know people. They get to deal with problems at the ground level, and we get rid of crime.

Chief Ramsey has brought his community policing and his management style from Chicago to the District, and we are already seeing the kind of control and innovation that had been absent for too long.

For example, the Chief, instead of having what we used to in most cities, which is the command sitting in headquarters, has moved the command into the field so that one can hold cops accountable, because the command is not somewhere downtown. The command is right there in the neighborhood.

This man means it when he says community policing. That does not mean just a cop on the street. It means everybody is involved in community policing.

Troubled police department. Slow to take down crime. It is finally going down significantly in the District, and it was before even this police chief came. But here is a man who knows how to keep that progress going, with a real live management style that trucks no excuses.

An example, he found a police department that, according to, again, a series of articles, had excessive shootings. Again, the Washington Post, just as it did a series on how retarded people were treated in group homes, earlier did a series that showed that the police department, albeit before Chief Ramsey, came to the city a few months ago, had one of the highest excessive shooting rates in the country. High crime rate, and our cops were apparently using their guns and firing them more than they should. This flowed from a whole set of problems, including too little training.

What the Chief did seems to me is an example for all of us who are public officials. He believed that, if his internal affairs unit took this evidence that was in the paper, of shootings that had occurred, allegedly, excessively over the years; and if he did his own investigation, that the public would not have the greatest confidence in a police department investigating itself concerning these accusations.

So he went to the Justice Department, and he asked the Attorney General if she would assign some objective investigators to look at the problem of excessive shootings. One, had they occurred? Had they been excessive? What should be done about them?

Here, you have the opposite of what people have come to expect in many cities, no cover-up, but rather a police chief pulling the covers off and saying investigate us and tell us what should be done. If that does not inspire confidence in the police department, nothing will.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is wholesale confidence in the various sectors in this city. There is great and new business confidence. The First Lady was, just a few days ago, at an event in the District, attended by the great corporations and small businesses of this region, that was about efforts that they had made over the past year on their own to raise money for a real private/public partnership with the District. It was very encouraging to see how private business in the city and in the region were responding to the new District of Columbia of which I speak.

One such response I must bring to your attention, Don Graham, the publisher of the Washington Post, and business leaders in the region and in the city came to see the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and me about an idea that they were themselves going to match.

They noted that we have only one small public open admissions university in the District. So if one does not fit that university, one has no other public university in the District the way they would if they lived in Virginia or Maryland or New York or California.

They proposed that a youngster in D.C. be able to go to public universities elsewhere, such as Virginia, with the Federal Government paying the difference between in State tuition and the out-of-State cost.

So that would mean, for example, at the University of Virginia where it costs \$16,000 if one lives out of State, but only about \$5,000 if one lives in the State, that a youngster from D.C. could go for the \$5,000. Boy has this been greeted with hallelujah in the District of Columbia.

There are many sacrifices that people make to live in the District of Columbia. One is that, when one's kids get to be college age, there is no public university except an open admission one,

and a very important open admission one, but it certainly does not fit every student. Students have flocked to this idea.

In order to make clear that this proposal was meant to take nothing from the need to build our own open admissions city university, I have achieved an agreement with the chairman that our open admissions city university would itself get a grant that would be an annual grant so that it can assist the university in its own rebuilding.

So there is going to be a win-win situation here. For youngsters who remain in the District, and many of them who graduated from our schools will have to remain here and will want to remain here, there will be a University of the District of Columbia which has some added money on an annual basis.

For youngsters who want to go out of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia College Access Act, co-sponsored by me, introduced by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), will provide a subsidy so that the parents, the families will have to pay only the in-State tuition cost.

Meanwhile, these business leaders have not just come to us and said come up with some Federal money. They have already raised \$15 million themselves to supplement youngsters who, indeed, go to college anywhere in the United States, including in the District of Columbia, whether or not they take advantage of this in State tuition subsidy.

So that means that if one, for example, wants to go to the University of Virginia, somehow one's family gets the \$5,000, that is, the in-State tuition rate, one still has a lot to come up with if one is going to live outside the District. This private fund will be functionally necessary for many to even take advantage of the Davis-Norton bill that would subsidize in-State tuition.

The name of our act is the D.C. College Access Act. The name of the private program is the D.C. College Access Program. So they are a kind of coherent approach with a subsidy for tuition from the Federal Government and a subsidy for living expenses and for expenses that prepare these youngsters for college that makes sure that they remain there once they get there. So it is just the kind of synergy that the Congress likes to encourage.

But this time, the notion of the in-State tuition, Federally subsidized, and the notion of the private subsidy have come from the business community. That is what I mean when I say there is confidence in this city. It is coming from every sector. It came first from the voters who elected a whole new set of actors or at least the many of whom were new. It comes from the Congress, which has already passed a bill to return powers to the mayor and the city council. We see that it comes also from the business community.

The question of new money for the District is still on the table, because, while the Federal Government has taken over the most costly State functions, the District has lost population. Like most big cities, the difference is, if one loses population from Chicago or Baltimore, if one loses population from Atlanta or New York, there is a State to back one up. We have nobody but ourselves. We are orphans.

Therefore, we do not pretend that we are permanently in the best shape. We know we are now with the good economy. We also know that we are going to have to find other revenue sources.

But the mayor agrees with me that the first thing that the new mayor should do is, not come to the Congress and say give me some money; that if I believe the mayor needs to have a track record in order for the Control Board to sunset early, I also believe the mayor has to have a track record and has to devise an approach before he can come here and say he needs more money.

He was the first to agree with this. He had no intention of coming to ask for more money. Even though, in order to get the State functions taken back by the Federal Government, we had to turn in our Federal payment. So we do not get any Federal payment, which means that the 25 million visitors who come to the District of Columbia every year have the services paid for essentially out of the pockets of the people I represent. They are in a city with a declining population.

At some point, we have got to design an approach to make sure that the District is able to handle this as it is handling it now. The importance of the revitalization package which took the State functions cannot be underestimated.

The mayor is not asking for more money at this time. I am sure that we will have conversations over the next few years with how to increase revenue in the District.

Meanwhile, look at what the mayor has just done this week. He has come forward with a very bold budget that is itself a policy document that is a paradigm for what a budget ought to be. Whether one agrees with this budget or not, the fact is it is a budget unlike budgets the District of Columbia has seen for a long time, because it points to new directions and does not simply indicate where money will be spent. If that is all a budget document is, it simply plugs in dollar signs for what is already there, that is not what the District needed.

Some parts of it are already very controversial, like the proposal to sell the existing campus of the University of the District of Columbia, Northwest, and move that campus to Southeast, use the money as an endowment for the University of the District of Columbia and put it beside a new technology

high school and Department of Employment Service office.

All of that looks like it is an interesting idea. There is great concern in the university about moving them to a part of the city which has had some crime and other problems. There is also a problem because the land is not owned by the District of Columbia. So I am not sure if this is feasible.

I am sure of this, it is the counter-proposal that the District of Columbia ought to be debating. It is proposals that are bold that it ought to be debating, even if it decides that is not what they ought to do.

What we do not need is simply to put forward budgets like we have put forward in the last 10 years, budgets that one year look like they did before and the year before. We have got to wake up and smell the coffee and say, yeah, now that I have seen that, I like it or I do not like it.

In the democratic exchange between the counsel, the mayor, and the public, this matter will be settled, and there and only there must it be settled. This body, I am sure, does not want to have anything to do with a proposal that is as complicated as that. It is not for us to say I have no idea where I stand on it.

Do my colleagues know what I am waiting for, I am waiting for the hearings in the city council so I can find out whether it is feasible, whether it does make sense, in the same way that I wait for hearings in this body before I know where I stand on important breakaway issues.

The mayor's budget is full of such breakaway proposals. He wants D.C. agencies to compete with private sector for city contracts. He knows he must work with city unions and city workers in order for that to work.

I am sure I do not need to tell him that no one can support it unless he brings the workers in because he is an expert in management and bringing management and policy together.

I am sure that the two will come together because this kind of composition, where it has worked in other cities, and, very often, if not most often, indeed, the public workers who know the job have in fact won the contract. So there is nothing to fear but fear itself if we have a level playing field and if everybody gets around the table and designs the process together.

The mayor has put a priority on increasing funding for D.C. public schools and youth programs. I love the part of the mayor's program that says he wants to increase after-school programs.

□ 1900

I cannot think of anything the mayor could do that could be more important. There we get youngsters and we capture them so they do their homework, we capture them so that they are not

latchkey kids, we capture them so that they are in a safe and productive place between the hours of 3 and 6, or whatever they turn out to be, and those are the hours when youngsters get into trouble or commit crimes. So it takes care of so many things at one time, and he has put a priority there.

He has a bold proposal to provide health insurance for almost 40,000 poor uninsured residents so that they do not cost the city money by going to emergency rooms, and so that, in fact, they get health care early rather than later, at much greater expense to the city.

He wants to restructure the city's debt using the savings to cut taxes on small businesses. To do that, of course, would begin to reinvigorate our small business sector.

The mayor has one budget request that, thus far, I believe, is being received well. I do not have a specific indication from the appropriators yet, because I am sure they want to study it, but somehow we got into our appropriation a requirement that the District have two reserve funds. Now, the District does not mind having one, but having two is a bit much.

There is a provision that the District have a reserve fund of up to \$250 million. A lot of money, but I think it is right to do so, so that we carry that reserve fund so that we can use it on a rainy day. Then there is something else that, probably, Congress did not mean to be in there. The two never, it seems to me, never came together. And that is a reserve fund for \$150 million put away for each year. So that would just build up. The District would have \$350 million the second year and so forth.

I do not think the Congress really meant to have the District build up that kind of reserve. I think it meant to have the District do what every other city does, and that is to have a healthy reserve fund, the way the reserve fund of up to \$250 million would be. So the mayor is saying that he would like to be relieved of the second \$150 and do the first \$250.

I strongly support that. Because if the mayor is not able to produce something in investment to the city, if he is not able to say, I am giving some of this back to a city that has sacrificed so much during the hard fiscal crisis years, he is not going to be able to do the hard job of continuing to streamline the city and to make it a more efficient city.

I do not think anybody meant to have the District simply build up reserves that grow and grow and grow while no investment or little investment is made in the city itself. And given the mayor's own proven track record for fiscal prudence, I hope that this proposal will be given every consideration.

As it is now, because the mayor does not know and because of his own careful and honest budgeting, he has one

budget with the \$150 million in it and one budget without the \$150 million. We are going to ask the Congress to relieve us of this complication; take the \$150 million out, be satisfied with the \$250 million, and let the mayor do his job.

Mr. Speaker, I have today introduced a D.C. Budget Autonomy Act and a D.C. Legislative Autonomy Act that goes along with the mayor's budget, and I introduced it precisely because the mayor's budget came forward this week. It is a take-charge budget that I thought made the case for the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act.

The legislation simply says that, particularly because there is no Federal payment any longer, when the District passes its balanced budget, especially now with the control board in place, that should be it. It should not have to come here to an appropriation committee and to the Senate to an appropriation committee, which has no appropriation for the District of Columbia.

Remember, the District clause would still allow the Congress to intervene into the budgetary process in any way it saw fit. So it could still come to the floor and say, I want to change this or that, or I want to do whatever about it without the budget coming over here. Meanwhile, the District budget could go into effect when it was passed and would not hinge upon when we pass our appropriations.

This would save the District money; save it an inestimable amounts of time, and I have put that in today because I believe the mayor, in good faith, has come forward with the kind of prudent, exciting budgeting that the Congress wanted to see, and I believe the Congress ought to respond in kind by saying, it is his budget, we believe in devolution, we are going to show it by letting him do his budget his way without our intervention. Remember, we are talking about a city that has run a surplus for 3 years, when this body expected to have a balance only after 4 years.

The second bill is a Legislative Autonomy Bill, because I am sure most of the Congress is unaware that after a piece of legislation is passed it has to come here and sit for 30 or 60 days, depending on the kind of legislation it is. The problem with that is that these 30 or 60 days have to be legislative days, so that the District legislation cannot become final often for months, because the Congress does not sit in blocks of 30 legislative days at one time.

It creates havoc in the District government. It has to go through a Byzantine process just to get its laws to go into effect when passed, and then they are not truly in effect. Unnecessary all together since, again, Congress could, whenever it wanted to, simply come to the floor, introduce a bill to overturn a piece of legislation. Republican and

Democratic Congresses alike, out of over 2,000 bills only 3 have been overturned in 25 years of Home Rule.

The Congress has the power. It can always use it. Congress does not need the hold in order to effectively do so. The hold creates havoc in the District. It means that the District is streamlining its process, we are not streamlining our relationship to the District. We ought to respond to what the District is doing by letting the District's bills stay with the District, letting the District's budget stay with the District, unless we decide that we want to intervene, in which case the District clause of the Constitution gives this body every opportunity to come forward. That is all we ought to need. The congressional power is still intact.

I want to thank the leadership on both sides for the way in which the District, the new District, if I may be so bold, has been received. I know I speak for Mayor Anthony Williams and City Council Chair Linda Cropp when I say there is a great feeling of hope and very good feeling toward the Congress in the District. There is the very same, as we have already seen, here in the Congress, because the Congress has already passed very important legislation to return powers to the District.

I would hope that Members would come for just a few minutes on April 13 to the reception that I am having for the mayor. The chairman of our subcommittee, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), is joining me in sponsoring that reception. He is as pleased as I am with the way in which the city is proceeding, I think I can say without fear of contradiction. The reception will be held in Room 2226 Rayburn, and Members will be receiving an invitation.

Expect me to come back, sometimes in 5 minutes, occasionally for a full hour, to give my colleagues some real sense of what the city, where my colleagues all meet, is doing to meet its own expectations and, by doing so, to meet my colleagues' expectations.

THE 2000 CENSUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue of great importance to this country, and that is the upcoming 2000 census.

In 12 months we will be having forms in the mail to everybody in this great country to complete for the decennial census, something that has been conducted since Thomas Jefferson conducted the first census in 1790. The census is critical to the Democratic system that we have in this country. It is the DNA of our democracy. And we