authorities. Not only was the FBI reluctant to become involved, but the U.S. Attorney’s Office has declined to enforce existing laws, claiming that this series of crimes involving interstate and international air transport and the use of the Internet to lure a child away from home into international sexual servitude is not a matter of federal jurisdiction.

In response to this failure and the failure of the FAA and the Department of Transportation to use their rule-making authority to address any of these issues, I have filed legislation that would clarify the power of the Federal Government to bring such predators to justice.

The Children’s Air Travel Protection Act and the Parental Rights Protection Act would require that airlines get a written certification that a minor has parental or guardian’s permission and would forbid the use of the Internet to interfere with a parent’s authority or induce a minor to run away from home.

I would encourage my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring H.R. 2590 and 2601.

PATIENTS’ BILL OF RIGHTS
(Ms. SANCHEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.
Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to voice my strong support for a real Patients’ Bill of Rights, H.R. 2563, which is sponsored by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the general counsel to the Medical Society (Mr. NORWOOD), and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY).

In working to craft patient protection, we must ask ourselves, are we really helping the patient? One of the biggest concerns raised by the proponents of the competing bill is that the liability limit on punitive damages is too high in the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood-Berry bill.

But I ask the Members, can anyone put a price tag on someone’s life? If an HMO is found guilty of negligence, they should be held accountable for their actions; and HMOs exist to help patients, not to harm them. Opponents of the legislation argue that employers will be hurt by the liability provisions in this bill. This is misleading. Employers who do not directly participate in making medical decisions are protected from liability. Employers are also protected by language in the bill which allows them to name a designated decision-maker to make decisions on their behalf.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2563, the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood-Berry bill.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2590, TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL, FISCAL YEAR 2002

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 206 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 206
Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2590) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with and consideration of the bill and amendments thereto to be made with a summary of the bill and amendments thereto to be made with a summary of the bill and amendments thereto to be made with a summary of the bill shall be considered for the purpose of making appropriations for the operation of the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Bush administration’s budget. It is important this bill is to the American people. It funds such diverse agencies as Customs and the Postal Service. It increases funding for the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the National Archives.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the programs and agencies of national interest that I just alluded to, this bill contains...
a number of significant projects important to my home State of Florida that I would like to highlight briefly.

I am pleased that this bill contains $15 million for the completion of the new Federal courthouse in Miami. I cannot overemphasize the importance to our region that this facility will have. I know full well the burdens that our courts and judges face today. They have a difficult job in ideal circumstances. However, when these jurists are not given adequate facilities and resources, their job is made that much more difficult.

For the very same reasons, it is worth noting that this bill continues significant funding for the proposed new United States Courthouse in Orlando. I am especially pleased to see that the Committee on Appropriations has heard that the courthouse must complement the historic community and the future Florida A&M college of law.

As an alumnus of the law school, I am certain that the new facility in Orlando will continue the proud tradition of FAMU.

Additionally, this bill contains funding for improvements to the Federal building in Jacksonville and to the Federal Courthouse in Tallahassee. Let me be perfectly clear, these are necessary funds; and, frankly, they are needed throughout the country.

As the ranking member, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the others note in the report that accompanies this bill, this is not an issue of luxury for the judiciary. The courthouse requests represent an effort to keep up with the skyrocketing judicial workload while ensuring a safe environment for employees, detainees, and the public. I could not agree more.

Mr. Speaker, very soon in this debate my colleague and neighbor, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK), will seek time to explain a very worthy program that she has fought tirelessly for.

Let me briefly extend my support to the First Account program. While the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) will go into more detail, suffice it to say that this is one of the few programs in this bill which specifically targets low-income Americans. I wholeheartedly support the program and urge its full funding and authorization.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss what I perceive to be one major omission of this otherwise good bill. This bill funds the Federal Election Commission. It has now been 240 days since our last Federal election, 240 days since we discovered what problems exist in this country when it comes to elections.

Mr. Speaker, I am embarrassed to report to the American people that, since the last election, Congress has done nothing, nothing in the area of appropriations. While we are spending millions of dollars on the Salt Lake Olympics and billions on a tax cut for the wealthy, we have not spent one penny to fix the problems that plague the last election, not one cent.

Columnist E.J. Dionne said yesterday, “Some problems are genuinely difficult to solve. Some problems are easy. When the solutions are clear, a failure to act is irresponsible, the result of a lack of will.”

I submit to my colleagues and to the American people that the solutions to our disgraceful election systems are abundantly clear. Congress’ failure to act is worse than irresponsible, it is shameful. The amendment I will offer today is the first step toward fixing the problems that our States face in updating and modernizing their election equipment.

In fact, to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, this will be the first time that Congress discusses this issue in the context of floor consideration of a relevant appropriations measure. Sure, Members have spoken in special orders, in travel around the country, or in hearings. They have been here on the floor. But, until today, we have been unable to discuss dollars and cents. I look forward to the candid debate that I am certain the amendment will generate.

With that aside, Mr. Speaker, let me again say that this is a reasonably good bill, and the rule is fine as far as it goes. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Chairman ISTOOK) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), for bringing this bill to the House.

This is a mostly bipartisan bill that helps millions of Americans from coast to coast, and I urge passage of the bill and adoption of the rule.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4½ minutes to my friend, the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, Mr. Speaker, and I rise in support of the rule. I think the rule is a fair rule that gives opportunity to debate this bill and protects some of the more controversial items that are within the bill for full debate. I also want to say that I agree with the member of the Committee on Rules, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), who has observed that this is a good bill and deserves passage. He is correct on that. I will be speaking more to that in the course of general debate.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to rise to comment on the amendment that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) will offer at the time of the bill’s consideration. He will offer an amendment that will provide $600 million, as I understand it, to the FEC, for the purposes of effecting reforms in our election process throughout the United States.

It is clear that we need to invest in democracy. We invest a lot of dollars in national defense. We invest a lot of dollars in health care, education, and drug spending. We invest dollars in entitlement programs. All of those dollars, in my opinion, are well invested, for the most part. But the Federal Government, Mr. Speaker, has never invested dollars in Federal elections. Never.

We have always allowed that to be a burden that we place on the States and local subdivisions. We assumed, correctly in most instances, incorrectly in some, that those elections would be held in a manner that would serve our democracy well. But, Mr. Speaker, our democracy is not served well when some Americans go to the polls, having registered to vote, and are held up at the polling place, in the first instance, may find that their name is not on the list and, therefore, they are not allowed to vote, but are told that someone will try to get on the telephone and see if it can be straightened out, but find that in this high-tech age in which we find ourselves happily that lo and behold they cannot get through to the central office and cannot find out whether that individual is allowed to vote.

Too many jurisdictions do not have the ability to provide a provisional ballot to say, here, go ahead and vote, and then when tomorrow comes we will have some time and we will check to see whether or not this individual is a valid voter; and if they are, because they are entitled to vote, they will also ensure that that person’s vote is counted. Every American that goes to the poll assumes that they go to the poll for the purposes of expressing their opinion in this, the greatest democracy on the face of the earth. They expect to play a role in the decision-making process of their country. And if their vote is not counted, they are discriminated against, they are precluded from participating fully in our democracy.

Happily, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, and myself and many others, including the ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), have sponsored legislation which will do what the gentleman from Florida seeks to do, and that is, A. provide resources; with certain requirements; that they will ensure at least that technology does not undermine the voter’s intent and constitutional right. In addition, it will say to States who take any Federal dollars that they need to comply with certain requirements; that they need to have a registration system that works; that they need not disqualify, they must not disqualify otherwise totally qualified Americans from voting.
by some inadvertent or mistaken or perhaps conscious effort to undermine the ability to vote of some Americans. In any event, if we are suggesting we award money to correct problems that exist around here on fleas knees studies. So going to cost? And my reply has been reference to our election system. problems in this country with ref-

I am not sure what the disposition will be today, but in the final analysis we ought to adopt the gentleman’s proposal. It is a proposal for democracy for our Nation’s ideals and for our objectives.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consummately be allowed to respond to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) because I know of his sincerity in proposing measures that will assist in remedying the many problems in this country with reference to our election system.

I have been asked often, as I travel about the country, how much is it going to cost? And my reply has been and will continue to be that democracy does not have a price. We spend money around here on fleas knees studies. So it would seem to me that what is being contemplated today, I want to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) because I know of his sincerity in proposing measures that will assist in remedying the many problems in this country with reference to our election system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON) is suggesting we award money to correct problems that exist around here on fleas knees studies. So going to cost? And my reply has been reference to our election system. problems in this country with reference to our election system.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consummately be allowed to respond to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) because I know of his sincerity in proposing measures that will assist in remedying the many problems in this country with reference to our election system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) that it is regrettable that it does not, because for one believe that we are deserving of a cost of living adjustment, just so I go on record.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) that it is regrettable that it does not, because for one believe that we are deserving of a cost of living adjustment, just so I go on record.

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Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify the situation. We have historically, on this bill, on the previous question, had a vote of Members of Congress. We have had a vote because we think the public is entitled to that. If the previous question were not passed, an amendment may be in order to preclude the cost of living adjustment for Members.

Long ago we decided, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Speaker of the House, and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the minority leader, that that was the fair and proper thing to do. Everybody in the leadership on both sides has agreed that cost-of-living adjustments that go to everybody in the Federal service are justified.

This is not in that sense a pay raise. It is what most Federal Government employees receive. We will receive less than, by about 1.2 percent, than Federal employees do.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield, and I will be glad to yield him a minute of my time?

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I would ask, does the gentleman from Maryland expect to vote for the previous question?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is suggesting we award money to correct problems that exist around here on fleas knees studies. So going to cost? And my reply has been reference to our election system. problems in this country with reference to our election system.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is suggesting we award money to correct problems that exist around here on fleas knees studies. So going to cost? And my reply has been reference to our election system. problems in this country with reference to our election system.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am humbled and privileged this morning to have been given time by a young man for whom I have civil services that most of us take for

I am pleased to be a member of the Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government of the Committee on Appropriations, serving with the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISERHOK) and my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER); and I rise in support of the rule for this bill. It is an open rule. The rule provides a self-executing amendment that I offered that will make the $10 million in fiscal year 2002 funding that the bill provides for the First Accounts program contingent upon the authorization of the program.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY), of the Committee on Financial Services, had asked on the Rules not to protect the First Accounts program from a point of order. The self-executing amendment is a means to address the concerns of the gentleman from Ohio, and I thank him and the Committee on Rules for supporting my amendment.

The First Accounts initiative is a demonstration program that is designed to help check-cashing ripoffs by improving the access of low- and moderate-income Americans to basic financial services that most of us take for granted. Most of us take for granted that we can go to the nearest corner at an ATM machine or to a bank and have our financial services needs met. That is not so in all communities in this country. It is one of the few programs in this Treasury, Postal Service that is specifically geared to helping low-income Americans.

It is estimated that 8.4 million low-income American families, 22 percent of all such families, do not have bank accounts. And, remember, families without bank accounts frequently resort to check-cashing services to pay bills and cash checks. My colleagues
may have read in the newspapers recently of one very large check-cashing firm which has now been sued for having 30 million of its customers who were charging very high interest to low-income people. It is a ripoff, it is a sham, and of course this First Ac-

counts services will allow people who do not have banks in their areas, who do not have credit unions in their areas to be able to cash their checks without having to pay such large interest on it.

We want to provide these “unbanked” families with low-cost access to financial services, and I think this will increase the likelihood that they will begin a savings program and accumulate some assets. It also will begin a savings program and also will allow people who do not have credit unions in their areas, who do not have banks in their areas, who do not have check or ATM cards. They get ripped off every week when they try to cash their check or when they need a little money to tide them over. It is a significant problem.

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counts services will allow people who do not have banks in their areas, who do not have credit unions in their areas to be able to cash their checks without having to pay such large interest on it.

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I am pleased that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) and the gentle-

woman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) have reached an agreement on this; and I hope the Committee on Financial Serv-

ices will, in the very near future, au-

thorize this program so this money, which is now fenced, subject to author-

ization, can move forward and the Treasury Department can implement a program which is critically necessary.

Mr. MASTERS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LINDER, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the previous question.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA). The question is on ordering

the vote. I move the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evi-

dently a quorum is not present.

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the min-

imum time for electronic voting, if or-

dered, on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify ab-

sent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic de-

vice, and there were—yeas 293, nays 129, not voting 11, as follows:

YEA—293

YEAS—293

NAYS—129

NAY—129

YEA.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the committee and the people who are members of this committee. We will go forward cer-

tainly from this after passing this strong piece of legislation, the Treasury and General Government Appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) and the members of the Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentle-

man from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this amendment is consistent with the work of the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) and the chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, the gentle-

man from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY), is in-

cluded in the rule as self-executing, and I thank the Committee on Rules for doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I first of all congratulate the gentle-

woman from Florida for working on this issue. It is a critically important issue to millions of what the gentle-

woman referred to as the “unbanked,” those who are not in the banking sys-

tem. They do not have checks or ATM cards. They get ripped off every week when they try to cash their check or when they need a little money to tide them over. It is a significant problem.

I am pleased that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) and the gentle-

woman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) have reached an agreement on this; and I hope the Committee on Financial Serv-

ices will, in the very near future, au-

thorize this program so this money, which is now fenced, subject to author-

ization, can move forward and the Treasury Department can implement a program which is critically necessary.
The question is on the resolution to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order and ordered to be printed.

Mr. FRANK, L. AFALCE, and Ms. PELOSI, MOORE, and Ms. HART changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

POMEROY, STUMP, EVERETT, HILL, BILIRAKIS, TANCREDO, HILLEARY, MINNISOTA, PITTS, SHERWOOD, LEACH, and Ms. HART changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA). The question is on the resolution. The resolution was agreed to. A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2002

Mr. HOBSON, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107–159) on the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

Mr. Chairman, realizing that we have been favored with a positive allocation from the full committee chairman, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), it is a fair question how we have applied the extra $1 billion that has been made available. The short answer is we have sought to address some very significant needs, in particular in Federal law enforcement. Some 30 percent of Federal law enforcement is funded through this appropriation measure. We have also sought to address some very compelling needs regarding information technology.

Let me give an example, Mr. Chairman. We are all aware that the IRS has had significant problems dealing with the complexity of the Tax Code and in having a modern information system that will enable taxpayers to have correct information in the hands of the IRS and not be receiving incorrect notices. This allocates significant funding to accelerate the information technology advancement in Customs.

In particular, within the Customs Service, we have what might be fairly called, Mr. Chairman, a rickety computer system that is utilized for handling some $8 billion worth of trade each day that goes through ports of entry with the United States Customs Service. That system is, frankly, on the verge of collapse, and we do not need to be losing $8 billion daily in trade because of an antiquated information system in Customs.

Even beyond the pact set by the administration's budget, we have put the funding in for what is called the Automated Commercial Environment, which is the new Customs information technology system that ties together some 50 agencies that are involved in the imports and exports handled by the Customs Service to make sure that this trade that is so vital to the economy of the United States of America can flow unimpeded.

So those areas, law enforcement, trade, drug interdiction as a key component of law enforcement, and the information technology, are the main areas in which we have provided investments through the Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations bill.

As reported, the bill, of course, is within the agreed-upon balanced budget that has been agreed to by the House with the Senate and the President. The bill, compared to the current fiscal year operations, is $1.1 billion above the current operations. It is also some $340 million above the original request from the White House, although that number, Mr. Chairman, was amended somewhat. The supplemental request included funds for the 2002 Winter Olympics, which has been funded through the supplemental and has been reallocated accordingly within this bill.

As reported, Mr. Chairman, the spending allocation enables us to do a number of significant things regarding Federal law enforcement in particular.