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Madam Speaker, as we watch the ebb and flow here in Washington, DC, the controversies, the complexities, there has never been a more important time for the thought-provoking service that is supplied by Public Broadcasting. The educational, cultural and community awareness, together with the politics and policy formats, form the framework for citizens to cope with the myriad of challenges and demands of today's modern living, much as we are struggling with them here in Washington, DC.

If there has never been a more important time for public broadcasting, there has never been a worse time for Congress to be part of a campaign against public broadcasting. We formed the Public Broadcasting Caucus 5 years ago here on Capitol Hill to help promote the exchange of ideas surrounding public broadcasting, to help equip staff and Members of Congress to deal with the issues that surround that important service.

There are complexities in areas of legitimate disagreement and technical matters, make no mistake about it, and our caucus is a great platform for Congress to explore these items and to be heard by the various public broadcasting constituencies, their boards and staff.

Cutting funding, especially the proposals from the subcommittee, are the worst approach in dealing with public broadcasting. President Bush has requested over \$413 million in his budget for fiscal year 2006. The subcommittee has recommended that that be slashed to \$300 million, cutting by almost 2/5, this year's funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and eliminating entirely the President's \$23 million request for Ready-To-Learn.

Madam Speaker, these are as Draconian as they are unjustified. Every week, 82 million people demonstrate the worth of public broadcasting by viewing public television and over 30 million people a week listen to NPR.

But the cuts are not only cutting at the fabric of the programming; they will devastate small rural markets that are hard to serve without the extra resources provided by the Federal Government. Larger metropolitan areas will be hurt as well. The area that I represent in

Oregon will suffer about a 25 percent cut, but ultimately they will still have some service. In many small rural areas, public broadcasting, which is expensive to provide, is likely to disappear altogether, because the sparsely populated communities are not able to make up the gap.

The good news is that the public outcry is being heard. Already the full committee has voted to reverse its decision to completely eliminate the advanced funding for fiscal year 2008. That reversal is an important step to provide certainty and continuity, to give a hint of stability for Public Broadcasting and keeping our commitments.

There will be an amendment to reverse the \$100 million rescission for fiscal 2006, and I strongly support that effort. In the meantime, I would urge my colleagues to become involved with the public broadcasting issues, to join over 100 other Members of Congress who are members of the Public Broadcasting Caucus and engage in its activities. It is important to show the same bipartisan support for public broadcasting as we have in other controversial matters in recent weeks. The American public deserves no less.