

Mr. Speaker, part of why I am in Congress is because I believe that the Federal government has an opportunity to be a better partner with the rest of America to promote livable communities.

This is a very small item in the large scheme of things in the debate that is going on tonight, but I think it speaks volumes to the level of hypocrisy that goes on in Washington, D.C.

There was a provision that was inserted in the Committee on Appropriations by the gentleman from California (Mr. Farr) that would require a meaningful recycling program to be developed for the House of Representatives.

I have been stunned at what we do not do in the House. We have the worst performance of any agency in the Federal government. I have Boy Scout troops in my district that have made more money recycling cans, bottles, and Christmas trees than the House of Representatives has done in the last 3 years that I have been in Congress. There are homeless people within the sight of this Capitol that make more money in a day than the House of Representatives was able to surplus for all the tons of paper that pass through this place in the year 1997.

We are repeatedly assured that we have a recycling program. We have the funny little blue cans and cannisters, but it simply does not work. The Committee on Appropriations stepped forward to try and help encourage it in this bill.

I note that under this rule, the only provision that is not protected is this requirement that we get serious about recycling. It seems to me that we have an opportunity to lead by example, to try and promote more livable communities. This does not cost any money. In fact, if we would grow up and do what we ask the rest of America to do, it would mean tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in terms of increased money that we make to this House, and it would save disposal costs.

A little thing? I do not understand what is going on tonight with some of this folderol. Somebody will explain it to the reporters and I can read about it tomorrow. But I do know that it is embarrassing that we do not have a recycling program, that the House of Representatives is the worst performer in the Federal government; that we are being outperformed by homeless people and Boy Scout troops. We deserve to do better.

I would ask that people not play games with this provision, that it be not struck down under a point of order. I think that it would be an important signal for us to send to the rest of America that we are serious about promoting livable communities, and we are willing to lead by example and not be hypocritical about it.

If Members are going to do this, then for heavens sakes get rid of all the things that pretend to be recycling, throw them out. Do not have staff waste the time and money.