Mr. Speaker, I am listening to the debate here today, and I hope that we have some degree of context as we are moving forward dealing with what I think is a very important program for America and for people in the State that I represent, Oregon.

I have been trying to understand the gist behind the amendments from the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Terry). I have talked to OPIC; I have tried to get a feeling for what it is, in fact, we should be doing.

Along with the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Bereuter) I had the opportunity to spend some time earlier this year in Indonesia, and as we hear the two speakers that have addressed themselves to this amendment now and where it takes us, I feel that it is important to take a deep breath. I have no objection I guess per se to the language that has been offered, but there is the subtext here that somehow OPIC is not being responsive; that somehow that these things can simply be moved along very slick and easy; and that somehow someplace off in the bureaucracy there is somebody who is inappropriately holding things up.

It seems to me that when we are dealing with OPIC's ability to process claims, which is the concern, I think, that has prompted the gentleman from Nebraska's amendment, or maybe there may be more here, that one has to appreciate what OPIC has to do in order to be fair to the businesses that are involved, to be fair to the taxpayer, because as has been pointed out by our other friend from Nebraska, this is an operation that, in fact, has not lost any taxpayer money at all, and in fact this year is going to be surplusing money.

Mr. Chairman, part of what they have done in terms of hitting the balance has been careful processing of claims of this nature. They have got something like a 95 percent recovery rate. I think it is important that we not assume that the people in the organization are not, in fact, processing these in an orderly fashion, that dealing with a country like Indonesia where we have multiple interests and our friends at OPIC are not just dealing with one company, but they are dealing with fashioning a record in a country that is in turmoil, and I am sure they are being pushed on by people from other agencies, from the State Department or from Treasury. We have issues that people on this floor have been concerned with, and we have other national interests that we are trying to do in stabilizing the situation in Indonesia to try and play that in a sophisticated and thoughtful fashion.

Mr. Chairman, I would just hope that, as we are dealing with this language that people are making assertions about the behavior of our friends at OPIC, that taking a step back, taking a deep breath, appreciating the difficult position they are in, caught between people on one hand who refuse to acknowledge the positive contributions that this makes to our economy and

economies around the world and then interfering with an appreciation of what they have to do to try and be a loyal soldier and an arm of the United States Government and advancing others of our interests.

I will be prepared to talk at greater length about that at another time. Mercifully, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to yield back the balance of my time at this point, but I do hope that we do not have sort of cardboard cut outs when we are considering amendments like this and appreciate the difficult task that they have been given and some appreciation for the balancing of the interests that they have to have.

DEBATE ON THE ROHRABACHER (R-CA) AMENDMENT

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I am trying to understand the impact in terms of the loss of a single job. May I give an example and ask how it would apply. Mr. Chairman, there is a small lumber company in my State, Ochoco Lumber, that has used OPIC to set up a mill in the former Soviet Union; Lithuania, I believe, is the country. As a result of this manufacturing process, they have been able to get product that they cannot get in Oregon because of some of the environmental and supply problems.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Chairman, the Rohrabacher amendment would not allow that.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, what I was trying to clarify is that this has created hundreds of jobs in depressed central Oregon. It may theoretically have displaced one job someplace in the United States. I understand the Rohrabacher amendment would kill what we have done in this small mill.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman is correct.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, the notion that somehow because there are people that are lumberjacks that are unemployed because there is not access to timber supply means that mill workers should not be allowed to process timber and use materials to build that mill from Oregon escapes me. It seems to me that we are better off having those people using Oregon

products, Oregon companies thriving, and that it does not do anything to affect the timber supply or lack thereof in the Northwest. Maybe I am missing something.

FURTHER DEBATE ON THE ROHRABACHER (R-CA) AMENDMENT

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to inject a small note of what I think is reality in the discussion in terms of what difference it will make for hundreds and thousands of small businesses around the country. The gentleman offers an amendment, and people think it is well intended. I do not know that it is necessarily well intended because I think we have already had a perfecting amendment that has been offered that clearly states how existing policy can be reaffirmed.

We already know that OPIC is constrained by its statutory framework and by its own internal operations from the result that the gentleman is talking about. He dismissed the example, a real-life example, of a struggling timber company in eastern Oregon as that is just 1 percent or half a percent, while arguing that, well, why do not we just go ahead and give money to the Burmese Junta to cut down teak forests?

Well, what is lacking in this discussion is any concrete example of where there is, in fact, a specific area of abuse, where the existing law and the protections thereof are not being followed, where there is a massive loss, where we are giving money for the leveling of teak forests by the brutal dictatorship in Burma. It is thrown off. I am not aware of any example. Nothing specific has been brought forward.

But he dismisses something that results in American jobs, American products in an area that is hard hit in my community. And I just think that that is what is fundamentally wrong with the debate that we have before us today, Mr. Chairman, that we do not have specifics in areas of real abuse; and we take the hundreds and thousands of a tenth of a percent here or 1 percent there that are real successes for American companies and for countries overseas like in Latvia, where they are struggling to recover from the yoke of Soviet oppression, where they are trying to modernize and refine their economies, where they are trying to enter the world stage, and we have a classic win-win. And that is just dismissed out of hand as that is just 1 percent or 2 percent.

I could stand here and give example after example in my State where not billions but tens of

millions of dollars have generated Oregon products that have created hundreds of jobs in our State and where the subcontractors of little tiny companies that nobody has heard of outside the boundaries of our communities that has made a difference. I think it is time for us to not use hyperbole and hypotheticals that are not proven, that, in fact, are contrary to practice and statute of OPIC and dismiss the good that is done by allowing American companies to be able to work in difficult situations, help emerging democracies, strengthen these economies. I think this is precisely what we should be doing.

DEBATE ON THE SANFORD (R-SC) AMENDMENT

Mr. Chairman, I, too, rise in opposition to this amendment. I have listened carefully. I do not think by any stretch of the imagination we should confuse long-term program stability with something that is operating on remote control.

I think one can look at the analogy to the family operating around the kitchen table, and it is true that sometimes there are some expenses that that family is going to look at over the course of the next year or maybe the next week or month if we are talking about grocery bills or entertainment. But that family rarely in a functional sense every week discusses whether or not they are going to move in front of the children, whether or not they are going to divorce, whether they are going to undermine the whole fabric of what that family is about. And I would respectfully suggest that that is what we are talking about here, moving from a longer term, 4-year operation to a shorter period of 1 year.

We are not talking about the kitchen table issues; we are not talking about next week's grocery bill. We are talking, as the gentleman from Illinois mentioned in great detail very eloquently, we are talking about fundamental business decisions involving investments of ten, sometimes hundreds of millions of dollars in areas that are potentially risky and difficult. People need stability in order to be able to make business-oriented long-term decisions.

As the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Menendez) pointed out, we routinely on the floor of this assembly vote for authorization for a program that is 3, 4, 5 years. The Surface Transportation Act is a 6-year authorization routinely because we are looking at long-term infrastructure investments, and communities need that stability in order to make those decisions. If anything, a decision of this magnitude might require more, rather than less, time because it combines the entrepreneurial activities along with the organizational governmental restraints.

The way that this has been able to be successful not using taxpayer dollars, has not lost a dime in terms of taxpayer dollars since 1971, and has surplused money in fact, is because it has been able to plan for the long term, been able to operate like a business, been able to even these things out. I would strongly suggest that we would be better off with a longer time frame than a shorter to keep that entrepreneurial long-term approach.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I would just make the point that in OPIC doing all of the things that the gentleman points out that in the last time it was authorized for 2 years, and it did not seem to cripple it then in its ability to produce those results; and, therefore, I just humbly suggest that if it was able to do it in 2 years then, why go to 4 years now? Why not keep it at that shorter span?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman, and I think it is inappropriate, but I was not happy at the time that we were shortening the time frame, and I think the events in the last couple years have shown that there are problems in order for them to be able to operate in a changing environment in an entrepreneurial sense. In fact, our colleague from Nebraska is concerned about a situation in the troubled state of Indonesia and suggesting recommendations here on the floor to change that.

I feel that that is not something that is made easier by the shorter time frame. I think the longer time frame enabled people to solve problems that arise processing claims. Trying to move forward rather than having a shorter and shorter time frame here, going from 4 to 2 did not help make that problem go away any faster in Indonesia. Going from 2 years to 1 is not going to make it any easier in the future, and I personally have great difficulty thinking that I would be back here trying to explain to our colleague from Southern California how getting a milled product to an Oregon company to manufacture things in Oregon is good for the Oregon economy. The prospect of doing that every year drives me to the point of distraction.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SANFORD. Then following that logic out, the gentleman would suggest we ought to go to a 4-year authorizing process in Congress as we authorize or appropriate?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I would make a distinction between an entrepreneurial, quasi-public business-oriented activity that is involved with long-term investments and what we do here, everything ranging from paper clips to annual salaries to infrastructure investment. I would support a multiyear capital budget for the United States Congress, and I would consider a 2-year fiscal reauthorization, for instance, but I certainly would not shorten this.

DEBATE ON THE TERRY (R-NE) AMENDMENT

Mr. Chairman, so far today we have not had any evidence on the floor of this Chamber that the people associated with OPIC are operating in bad faith. I have not heard that. My experience and the record before me, at least to this point, indicates that people are trying to do their best under difficult circumstances.

What our colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey, pointed out is that when we are operating in an area that is chaotic, in an area where we have multiple interests that we are trying to advance as a government, where the parties involved have entered into a contractual obligation under which they get the risk insurance, that we have a framework that is established.

This is a decision that is going to guide what the agency does in this case and in others that may be in fact similar. They are relied upon in areas of international law and in terms of people entering into other agreements with us to promote the objectives of this program.

The people who manage OPIC have every reason to do so in an expeditious and thoughtful manner. They are in the business of promoting the interests of American business in risky environments. That is why they are there. They have done a stellar job since 1971 of doing that.

They are caught in a situation in many cases where they are trying to find out what the true facts are and then lay the groundwork; not just to put the money back into the hands of maybe the person who has the risk insurance or the corporation, but then they also have to lay the foundation to get the money back.

The recovery rate, as the gentleman from New Jersey pointed out, is in excess of 90 percent. Ninety-three percent I believe is the number he recited. That is because a thoughtful and careful job is done. Many times it is an interactive process. Where we have some of the smaller businesses that are involved, maybe they do not have as much activity overseas, they do not have as much presence, it takes time for them to assemble their material, and this goes back and forth between OPIC and the insured.

Think for a moment what is going to happen if in fact we are going to change the contracts and the operation, where all of a sudden we are going to have an arbitrary time limit that kicks in and interest is going to be paid.

Two things are going to happen. One, I agree with the gentleman from New Jersey, the inclination, because they have to run as a business, they have to be accountable, the inclination is going to be to reject and deny more claims. That is common sense in terms of how the business operates.

To the extent that that does not occur and we end up paying out a lot of money, that means there are going to be fewer loans that are going to be granted, or it is going to be that maybe for the first time it will actually require that we are invading some of these reserves and it is not going to be surplusing money.

I would strongly suggest that the amendment that has been offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Terry) is undermining the notion of this being an entrepreneurial insurance-oriented approach that gives maximum flexibility to the agency to try and balance

the interests to the taxpayer and to the client, according to the contracts that they enter into.

I suggest that it is inappropriate for us to engage in micromanagement on this floor with arbitrary time limits that are going to get in the way of laying the foundation. Ultimately, we want to be successful. We want the Indonesian government to cough up money to cover this, and to be able to keep the taxpayer whole and get money back to an aggrieved party.

I strongly urge that we adopt the amendment of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Menendez) and reject the underlying amendment.

FURTHER DEBATE ON THE TERRY (R-NE) AMENDMENT

Mr. Chairman, I am a little troubled by the turn that the conversation has taken. I will be the first to admit that I think we put the cloak of secrecy too broadly over issues in this country. I think it is outrageous that the American public does not yet know what we did in Central America 20 or 25 years after the fact, destabilizing democratically elected governments.

I think it is outrageous some of the things that happened in Chile, in Central America, in Asia. I think that we far too broadly keep information from the American public, things that are not designed to keep information from our enemies, or past enemies. They already know what was in those files. It is to prevent, I am afraid, sometimes, embarrassment for some people here. I think, as a general rule, we ought to open up more, and I so voted.

But what this talks about is not sort of a sunshine. I just reject this concept that somehow we are turning the interests of America on its head by having the full range of information available to make these determinations.

I think representing the full range of American interests in the decisions that OPIC makes is not turning American interests on their head. They should not necessarily be disconnected from the best sources of information that we have.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Menendez) is suggesting that, if something is offered up for the purpose of merely impeding settlement, that that should be prohibited or should be made more difficult.

But this amendment that the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Terry) has offered does not distinguish between things that are somehow impeded, and operation of the information that comes from Treasury, that comes from State, not just the CIA, that from whatever source we have this information available, there would, because there are seven independent agency heads who function as trustees or directors of OPIC, it would very much confuse the deliberations.

If the information that they provided had the effect perhaps of delaying the processing of the claim as rapidly as maybe somebody would request, it may raise the obligation to put information in the record that, frankly, we do not want to have put in the Federal Registry. It would not be in America's best interest.

But why, if that be the case, would the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Terry) penalize either the taxpayer or the balance of OPIC in terms of the bottom line, in terms of having to pay more money. That seems to me to make no sense.

I think we are confusing here politics, to use the word from the gentleman from Nebraska, with having national interests and the best information available to treat the policy holder and the American taxpayer in the best interests.

I fear that if this amendment were adopted, not the Menendez perfecting amendment, but the amendment of the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. Terry), operation at OPIC would go on. The people in the bureaucracy would continue to function.

But it would raise questions for the board. It would make them harder to get the good information. They will not be able to do their job as well. That is only going to hurt the taxpayer, if it ends up costing taxpayer money in the long run, where OPIC does not surplus as much money. But because they operate in an entrepreneurial fashion, what it is going to mean is that it is going to mean that there is going to be less money available to loan. It is going to make it more cumbersome. It is going to make the processing of claims based on less accurate

information.

Ultimately, it may well mean that fewer people are insured. I do not think that that is necessarily in our best interest. We do not need this to solve a problem that somebody in Nebraska has.

I understand that we are moving forward with that claim, and something is happening. But we do not need to put a cumbersome process, freeze it into statute that is going to give less effective information and make the job of the director and OPIC harder.

I strongly urge the rejection of the Terry amendment and the adoption of what the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Menendez) has offered by way of a substitute.