

Mr. Speaker, I will vote against the Omnibus Budget Agreement because it continues a pattern of budgeting which I feel undermines the confidence and credibility of the American public in one of the most important congressional responsibilities we have--managing the people's money.

I opposed the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement because it was clear there was no intention of implementing it. It was a ruse. Last year, there was \$35 billion in excess spending at the last minute omnibus bill. This year, there is no more time for analysis, and the amount of money that is being gimmicked, manipulated and spent in violation of the budget rules is up to \$45 billion.

While there is much in the bill that I support, and while it has been made better due to heroic efforts on the part of the Administration and the House Democratic leadership, it still falls far short of the mark to which Congress should be accountable. I continue to hope that the day will come when the budget process is transparent, not larded with unfortunate spending decisions and is done in a fashion that both Congress and the people we represent can follow what we're doing. Until that day, I feel it appropriate to vote no.