

Chairman Lincoln Diaz-Balart
Subcommittee on Legislative and Budget Process
H.R. 4890 – Legislative Line Item Veto Act of 2006
Opening Statement
March 15, 2006

Good morning and thank you for attending our Subcommittee hearing this morning. I would like to welcome Ranking Member Hastings and thank him for his continued assistance and diligence as this Subcommittee moves forward with its work.

I appreciate the flexibility of our witnesses as we strive to hold this hearing before the House adjourns for the recess next week. I believe that it is important that we discuss the proposal by the President and the subsequent legislation by Congressman Ryan.

The Line Item Veto is not a foreign subject to this Subcommittee. As Chairman of this Subcommittee, Porter Goss held hearings in 1998 and 1999 on the topic. Both hearings spent a considerable amount of time looking at the Line Item Veto Act of 1996 and the implications of the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the law.

In the 1999 hearing, former Congressional Budget Office Director, Dan Crippen stated, "Strengthening the President's role in the rescission process could also serve as a deterrent to lawmakers who might insert provisions of little benefit to the general public interest into larger legislation."

Expedited rescission, or the accelerated consideration of Presidential rescission proposals, is clearly within the jurisdiction of the Rules Committee. However, the functions of this Committee, under the leadership of the Speaker, in preparing legislation for floor debate, are not something that we part with easily.

And yet, I do believe that change must be considered to control certain aspects of discretionary spending. It is possible that a return to the types of budget reforms of the mid-1990's could restrict spending in a sufficient manner. "Pay-Go" and spending caps were both influential reforms that gave us guidelines that allowed us to pass annual budget and appropriations bills and balance the budget for the first time in 30 years. I believe that what is most important is that any legislation we embrace must not only garner enough votes, but be the genuine will of the House.

I believe that the legislation before the subcommittee today deserves our serious consideration as we strive to manage the people's tax dollars efficiently. Coupled with Legislative budget reforms such as "Pay-Go" and spending caps, this legislation may be an important piece of the reform process to reduce deficit spending and to foster a return to balanced budgets.

I am looking forward to listening to our distinguished panel's testimony so I will yield back my time and recognize my good friend, Ranking Member Hastings, for any opening remarks he may have.