Mr. BUECHNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced the Drug Free America Act of 1988 to help combat the war on drugs. H.R. 4822 would aid greatly in fighting the drug problem in our Nation. There are three areas where we need to focus our attention—user accountability, drug interdiction at the source, cutting the production and supply of illicit drugs at the country of origin. This legislation will meet these three major objectives.

First, it is time to start toughening up on first offenders. Under current law, all first offenders convicted of possession, but merely placed on probation, would be sentenced to community service. Our prisons are clogged and as a result, rarely the place for first offenders. Let's not give offenders a slap on the wrist, but a sense of what they did wrong. If judges decide that mere probation is the appropriate sentence, community service sentence would make them think long and hard about using drugs again.

It is vital that these users be held accountable. As the Wall Street Journal stated in its editorial: "What About the Users?" (June 21, 1988), "Anyone guilty of a drug crime should receive mandatory punishment. . . . By targeting users—raising the risk of their crimes with the promise of certain punishment—policy makers can seriously dent demand." I agree, and it's time we address the problem of first offenders.

Second, far too often we in Congress devise new programs without thinking about funding. Our war on drugs is a top priority for all of Members of Congress. It is, therefore, important for us to provide funding mechanisms without increasing taxes. In its frenzy to enact popular antidrug legislation, Congress may fail to consider the budgetary impact of new multimillion-dollar programs. Yes, more funding for drug interdiction may be needed, but let's be cognizant of how to pay for it.

This legislation would impose a special landing or customs fee on all passengers arriving in the United States. This fee, which I have designated as $10, would be added to each airline ticket and would go toward Customs drug interdiction efforts. On the basis of last year's statistics, this would raise over $250 million.

This fee is important because it would require non-American citizens as well as American who land in the United States from a foreign country to help finance our war on drugs. In addition, while drug interdiction money is falling—the House cut appropriations for the Coast Guard during the week of June 13—we need to find more funds to curb the flow of drugs into the United States.

In 1987, more than 300 million passengers entered the United States. Customs seizures amounted to over $741 million. If additional funds can be wisely spent in furtherance of drug interdiction efforts and if these funds can be allocated without resulting in a tax, then a fee such as this should be considered.

Finally, the legislation mandates the President to devise two multinational strike forces for the Western Hemisphere and NATO. The purpose of the strike forces shall be to combat illicit narcotics production and trafficking through military or paramilitary actions, coordination of intelligence activities, and such other means as agreed to by the participating countries.

A CBS/New York Times poll, Americans indicated that the most important foreign policy issue facing the Nation is drug trafficking. It is time for Members of Congress to tell their constituents, "we've heard you and now we're serious about doing something to stop this terrible problem." While H.R. 4822 is not the last word for our drug war, I believe it could serve as a major impetus in stemming drug abuse in our country.