that the step that we are taking today is appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER].

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO] for yielding me this time.

As I did earlier today, I rise in support of this resolution, which I think is an appropriate resolution. I congratulate the chairman of the Committee on House Oversight for bringing it to the floor and for moving this process forward.

However, as I did this morning, I take this opportunity to rise to consider legislation and resolutions which move the process forward of extending to employees protections to which I think they are entitled and which will enhance morale and the quality of our work force. I rise because I think that we have taken action in recent weeks to undermine both of those objectives.

I will not repeat the facts as I know them to be with reference to the nine employees who were removed by the Clerk just a few days ago, shortly before the Christmas holidays, some of whom have spent more than two decades as employees of this body. Suffice it to say that none of them were removed for cause.

The reason I rise is because the distinguished chairman of the Committee on House Oversight made some observations at the end of that debate which I want to comment on. The gentleman observed that the majority had not indicated that it would not take further actions after reorganization had been completed to eliminate redundant positions, to eliminate, in effect, featherbedding which might have been created, he did not use that term, but that was the implication, that had been created under the patronage-plagued system that the gentleman alleged existed under the Democrats. Not getting into that argument, let me say that the unfortunate implication was that any of these positions fall in that category.

None of them do, Mr. Speaker. Let me repeat, none of the nine fall into a category of being eliminated because they were described as was characterized by the chairman. I do not say that the gentleman form California [Mr. THOMAS] was characterizing these positions. I do not know that the gentleman was doing that at all. However, the implication could have been drawn that in fact that was the rationale for this action.

In my opinion, it was not. That opinion is drawn after personal conversations with the Clerk, Ms. Carle, and after correspondence from her.

I rise once again to discuss this issue simply because we are moving a process forward which in a bipartisan way we agree will accomplish an objective of depoliticizing and professionalizing the ministerial staff that serves this institution. When I refer to ministerial staff, I simply mean that staff which is not involved in the formulation or promulgation of policy, but simply involved in making sure that the day-to-day operations of the House of Representatives are as efficient and honest as they possibly can be.

That is, of course, the objective we want to both accomplish. When I say both, both the majority party and the minority party.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that as we go through this season, as we adopt, probably unanimously, perhaps without a vote, this resolution and the previous resolution, that the majority party will look once again at the actions that have been taken with respect to these nine individuals, and see if that might be reconsidered: see if very loyal, very hard-working, very effective employees might be reinstated to the duties that I think they have done so well.

Furthermore, within the course of that review, ensure that other employees equally talented, equally essential are not subjected to the same precipitous, and that is my word, not anybody else's termination of their services, not because of lack of performance, but simply because a decision is made that their services are no longer needed.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would reiterate that a manual has been distributed to the employees of the Office of the Clerk which sets forth that terminations will be done in a manner that will provide employees with an opportunity to be heard.

It does not imply, nor do I interpret it to mean, that termination at will has been changed. In fact, I believe that House employees should be in the status of being terminated at will. But in that context of professionalizing our staff, they ought to have a sense that it will not be an arbitrary or political determination that leads to that action. Rather, it should be based upon their professional performance on the job.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to oppose this resolution; indeed, I support this resolution, and I support the chairman and our committee's efforts to move this process forward.

I appreciate the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO] giving me this opportunity to again call to the attention of the House a matter that I think is important not from a political standpoint, but from the standpoint of professionalizing this House. That is the stated intent of the majority. I congratulate and applaud them for that effort. It is an effort in which I and many, I think all, of my colleagues join.

It is an effort, however, that needs to be more than rhetoric. It needs to be reality for each and every one of our employees. I hope we will accomplish that objective, and I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me the time.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

If anyone has watched the House of Commons, one of the things that goes on there is something that we might adopt; and I will see if we can work it today. I will refer the gentleman to comments the chairman made a few hours ago in response to his statement, but I will also say that the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is certainly entitled to his opinions.

The Clerk has indicated that the reorganization was not based upon arbitrary or political reasons, and I am not going to replace the Clerk's judgment with the opinions of the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on this side, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, 123.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

POSTPONING CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGE ON H.R. 2076, DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996, UNTIL WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1995

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent if the Chair lays before he House a veto message from the President on the bill, H.R. 2076 today, that the objections of the President be spread at large upon the Journal and that the message and bill be ordered printed as a House document; and that consideration of the veto message be postponed until tomorrow, December 20, 1995.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

□ 1730

POSTPONING CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGE ON H.R. 1058, SECURITIES LITIGATION REFORM ACT UNTIL WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1995

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent, if the Chair lays before the House a veto message from the President on the bill, H.R. 1058 today, that the objections of the President be spread at large upon the Journal and that the message and bill be ordered printed as a House document; and that consideration of the veto message be postponed until tomorrow, December 20, 1995.