

House rules but would be given no special protection by being printed.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SOLOMON. I am glad to yield to the gentleman from Florida, chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from New York for yielding. As chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I would like to advise all Members that we hope that the authorization bill which has now been marked up will be brought forward next week, subject to a rule.

I would like to advise Members that there is a procedure for any Member who would like to look at the material in that legislation to contact the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence staff, and arrangements can be made for Members to review classified material.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON HR. 3579, 1998 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND RESCISSIONS ACT

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 416 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 416

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3579) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), my good friend, pending which I yield myself such time as I might consume. During the consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a customary rule for the consideration of conference reports. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report to accompany H.R. 3579, which makes emergency supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 1998, and against its consideration. The rule also provides that the conference report would be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this rule would provide much-needed funding to thousands of disaster areas around this Nation as well as crucial funding for our Nation's defense. The conference report responsibly provides resources for our military operations in Southwest Asia and in Bosnia to ensure that our men and women in uniform have

the best equipment and resources that money can buy.

Furthermore, the conference report also provides for \$179 million for the Ballistic Missile Defense Program.

The conference report also includes crucial paid-for funds for the disaster areas in the northeast who were burdened by heavy ice storms earlier this year, for the Southeast and Plains States devastated by tornados, floods, and other natural disasters, and also for the Southwestern and Western States that were hit by El Nino weather disasters.

□ 1630

Mr. Speaker, in my part of the country, up in upper State New York, we were hit hard by an ice storm that literally wiped out power and energy to residents for as long as 2 and even 3 weeks. Passage of this bill today will ensure that all of these areas will receive this much-needed relief.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this conference report provides much-needed increases for veterans' compensation and pensions to prevent any expected shortfalls in this important account.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON), the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and the members of the Committee on Appropriations certainly are to be commended for their vigorous defense of the House's position that this supplemental not include funding for the IMF or the United Nations and that the nondefense disaster-related funding be offset. These Members also did yeoman work in protecting our Defense Department from any further cuts.

Our Nation has endured 14 straight years of inflation-adjusted cuts in defense spending. That is a 40 percent real decline in defense dollars, and it is beginning to hurt everywhere in our military.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fiscally responsible and much-needed measure before the House this afternoon; and I would urge all my colleagues to support the conference report and support this rule.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I want to thank the chairman of the Committee on Rules (Mr. SOLOMON) for yielding me this time.

As the gentleman from New York has described, this is a rule that waives all points of order against the conference report on H.R. 3579. The report makes emergency appropriations for U.S. military operations in Bosnia, peace-keeping operations in Iraq, and domestic disaster relief. It also makes non-emergency appropriations.

The conference agreement contains many improvements from the House bill. In particular, I am pleased that the conferees dropped a provision which would have shut down the AmeriCorps program.

However, the bill actually deepens the cuts in the reserves for the Section 8 program, which helps make housing affordable to low-income people and the elderly. Once again, we are reducing aid to the people who can least protect themselves from these cuts.

The bill fails to include funding for the International Monetary Fund. I believe that we should fund the IMF for humanitarian reasons because it will help bolster the economies of nations not as well off as we are. It is also in our Nation's self-interest to support the IMF to maintain international economic stability.

The emergency funding in this bill is desperately needed by our troops abroad. The emergency disaster assistance is also important. However, we do not have to make these cuts in programs to help the poor and needy.

The Committee on Rules reported this bill on a recorded vote with all Democrats opposed.

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

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER).

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this supplemental.

Thanks to the diligent efforts of the appropriators, this bill now includes a provision that continues to throw money at one of this administration's better-known foreign policy fiascoes, our partnership with Russia to build the International Space Station.

I am chairman of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics that oversees this effort, and that provision that we are talking about was not in either House or Senate bill but was inserted over the strong objection of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics and the Committee on Science chairman, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

This bill contains and continues to give money to pay for Russia's failures; and by covering up those failures, the President and the Vice President can continue to pretend that everything is fine in this grand partnership with Boris Yeltsin. In other words, this bill spends tens of millions of dollars to hide the administration's mistakes.

The space station is now estimated to be \$7 billion over budget and another 2 to 4 years late. NASA's own independent analysts suggest that Russia's defaults are the biggest problem. The Committee on Science has worked on a bipartisan basis to get the administration to focus on this problem. Instead, the administration keeps dancing away from the tough decisions, and now the appropriators are letting them off the hook by giving them this extra money.

Specifically, this supplemental provides \$63 million in directed transfer, totaling \$90 million in Band-aids for a patient that needs surgery. We need to focus on these problems with Russia or they will continue to drain money and continue to bring the space station down. That is not what this supplemental does.

Secondly, I oppose the supplemental because it again represents the shoveling of money at an enduring quagmire that drains our resources and makes us weaker and does not face the decisions that are necessary to get our country unstuck from this situation. I am, of course, referring to almost a half billion dollars in this bill to keep our troops in Bosnia.

I had strong reservations about the Bosnian mission to begin with. We were told it would last 1 year and cost \$2 billion. Now our troops have been there almost 3 years, and it has already cost between \$8 and \$10 billion. The mission has escalated from a 1-year mission to now what appears to be an open-ended commitment with no end in sight.

The huge financial drain that this represents is coming right out of our taxpayers' hide but also the hides of our defenders who are finding they cannot even maintain their airplanes and ships and ground weaponry because money is being drained away from them for these foolish missions that have nothing to do with our national security, like Bosnia.

By passing supplementals like this, what we are doing is permitting the government and this administration to ignore these fundamental problems and not make the decisions that are necessary to do things like ending the Bosnian situation that goes on and on, or correcting the problem with Russia that is putting us behind the eight ball when it comes to the International Space Station. That is why this supplemental should be defeated.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the supplemental appropriations rule for a number of reasons, but for the moment I would like to talk about one special interest rider that was added in conference at the last minute that its supporters should be ashamed of. It is an amendment that allows big oil companies to pay lower royalties for oil extracted from federally-owned, taxpayer-owned land at the expense of our Nation's schoolchildren.

Oil companies should pay royalties to the Federal Government based on the market price, but they are not doing that. They have been paying to the Federal Government based on what they call posted price. Of course, that is a lower price than what they pay each other for this same oil. What they are doing is keeping two sets of books, one to record their profits for what they pay each other and one to profit off the American people and the American taxpayer by paying a lower price for oil extracted from taxpayer-owned land.

Oil royalties help pay for our children's education. Each year, big oil is

taking \$100 million out of our classrooms and putting it into their own pockets. The Washington Post and Rollcall both report that the companies are putting plenty of money into certain congressional campaigns. I guess it is paying off.

This is poor policy. We should vote against the supplemental. The President should veto it on just this rip-off that was added at the last minute alone.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill for the simple reason that it cuts over \$2.3 billion from the housing budget.

It is remarkable that the leadership would bring forth a bill which slashes housing funding just 2 days after the HUD issued a major study documenting a record number of low-income households with severe housing problems. HUD's worst-case housing report concludes that there are 12.5 million Americans living in low-income households; including 4.5 million children, 1.5 million elderly people, and 1.1 million disabled people who are without affordable housing. They have been untouched by the economic boom.

When the Republicans took over the Congress in 1995, they slashed the housing budget by 25 percent without a hearing. They then took it upon themselves to cut the homeless budget by 26 percent. What this budget does, and I think many people, including many people on the Republican side, will give great credit to some of the reforms that have taken place at HUD over the course of these last couple of years.

I was very delighted to see that the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON) mentioned in his press release today the fact that the money, this \$2.3 billion that is being cut, is going to be vitally necessary to fund housing problems that we face in the future. The way the government accounts for housing money requires us every once in a while to put a lump sum figure in the budget authority requirements of the government's budget. That lump sum figure is coming up this coming year. We are cutting this money within the very year that we are going to need the dollars.

The chairman, I hope, will commit himself to making certain that the funding will continue next year, despite the fact that he has had to grab this money this year.

I see the chairman has just walked on to the House floor, and I would very much appreciate it if he would consider making a commitment to funding that housing need into the future.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I heard the gentleman's statement, and I would be happy to tell the gentleman

that in fiscal year 1999 we are certainly going to address this. Matter of fact, I have made the commitment to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) that many of these funds are going to have to be replenished. But for the balance of fiscal year 1998, these are excess funds and will not be needed.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I very much appreciate the Chairman's commitment, and I hope he means he was not going to be cutting those funds from other parts of the HUD budget. And I very much appreciate his clarification.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO).

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and opposition to this supplemental appropriation.

This concern is that certainly we need to deal with disaster assistance and the other funds requested here. Of course, we are not dealing with the important money for the International Monetary Fund because of the, I think, the misrepresentations and the lack of responsibility that was demonstrated last week on the floor in discussing or addressing that particular topic.

But with regards to the main issue in terms of what we are voting here for, what we are voting for is to take money with one hand and distribute it to those with the disaster assistance and the other domestic needs, and with the other hand we are taking it away from the communities with regard to the housing assistance that is necessary.

This bill, in and of itself, does not provide the type of help. This action is the wrong action. We ought to be addressing this problem right now. The fact is that commitments had been made, good intentions before, which in fact took \$3.6 billion out of this particular fund, this permanent fund for assisted housing in 1997, with commitments that they were going to place that entire money back into the budget. It is still not there. And the fact is that putting this off until tomorrow, with the assurances, does not, in fact, put the money in place.

It is very likely, based on the type of performance that has gone on with regards to assisted housing, is that we have continually rolled these contracts over for 1 year, not making the commitment in the budget process to assure the type of stability that is necessary for low-income persons that live in this housing.

□ 1645

This is nothing more than a pea and shell game that is going on with regards to assisted housing, and the end result is going to be that many elderly, disabled, and low-income persons, families with children, are going to be denied the type of assistance and supports that they need.

The fact is that that \$2.3 billion translates into taking support away

from 440,000 to 450,000 families that receive assisted housing support with this particular vote. That is what this vote will do. Yes, it will do some good in terms of the disaster assistance that we need in the Northwest and in the Pacific and with regards to the Northeast types of problems, but it, nevertheless, takes that money away from many communities across this country that need the money in terms of housing.

We are not facing up to it. No budget resolution this year, no issue, no blueprint is in place. And the fact is good intentions are fine to have, but they are not going to meet the tangible needs that we have with regards to housing. The fact is that we should not take this vote on a supplemental appropriation denying the types of funds that are necessary for the permanent assisted housing fund. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and in opposition to the bill, H.R. 3579, the emergency supplemental bill.

I, in particular, want to speak to my concerns about the \$2.3 billion in offsets for emergency funding for section 8 housing. There are people across this country who depend on section 8 housing for the roof over their heads; and when they learn that Congress would take action to take money away from that program next year, this will have a destabilizing effect on many households, because people rely on our good sense and our goodwill and our humanity to sustain them.

I also want to express my concern that we would have on one hand the offsets put in there and at the same time put in there the money for Bosnia. It is really giving people a cruel choice. We know the suffering and the inhumanity that has been expressed in Bosnia and how people have heroically tried to come back from it, and at the same time we are being told to make a choice between that, helping them and people who live in section 8 housing in this country.

I, regretfully, am going to have to vote against this bill, but I think that when similar bills come to this House, we ought not use it as a moment to prey on the disadvantaged, to destabilize their household, and to tell them even for a minute that America does not care about their concerns.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no request for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I mentioned early on where I heaped praise on the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON) chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

And, incidentally, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON) is sit-

ting next to me here; and for all my colleagues who may not know, today is his birthday. And I told him earlier that when I grow up, I want to be just like him.

But seriously, this measure before us has disaster in it. I have been here for 20 years, and we in the north country of New York State do not have to ask for aid like this very often. We do not have tornadoes. We do not have hurricanes. We do not have earthquakes. Sometimes we have some floods, we have terrible snowstorms, but we are geared up to handle those.

We have always welcomed the opportunity to help people in other parts of the country. So today they are helping us in the north country; and believe me, our people really appreciate it.

I hope everybody votes on the rule and the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3579, SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND RESCISSIONS ACT

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the rule, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3579) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 416, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see prior proceedings of the House of today.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. LIVINGSTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report to accompany H.R. 3579 and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. LIVINGSTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Speaker, I am pleased to bring to the floor the conference report on the Fiscal Year 1998 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3579). This conference report includes \$2.859 billion in emergency defense supplemental appropriations to provide for the peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Iraq and provide additional support for intelligence activities. It also provides \$2.588 billion in emergency supplemental appropriations for recovery from natural disasters that have occurred this winter and spring all over the country. There is also \$142 million in non-emergency supplemental appropriations mostly to help in fixing the "year 2000" computer problem in some of our agencies. Finally, there is a \$550 million appropriation for Veterans Compensation and Pensions in this bill as well.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that this conference report get passed today. The Secretary of Defense will be forced to issue furlough notices to some DOD employees if this bill does not reach the President's desk tomorrow. The extraordinary number of recent severe weather episodes is causing emergency accounts to be exhausted. Farmers, dairymen, road repairs, park repairs, flood control facility repairs, reforestation, utility repairs, and people who have had their place of residence damaged all are in dire need of these emergency supplemental appropriations.

I would like to point out that the emergency supplemental appropriations for recovery from national disasters and the non-emergency supplemental appropriations are, and I stress, are fully offset. We will hear concern expressed today about one of the rescissions used to pay for this emergency spending. This is the excess section 8 housing reserve rescission, as was mentioned on the floor previously during consideration of the rule.

The excess section 8 housing reserves that will be rescinded are unnecessary, stress "unnecessary," during the remaining portion of the current fiscal year. Currently, there are \$3.6 billion in excess section 8 housing reserve funds that will not be needed this year. The General Accounting Office identified excess funds when it reviewed the Department of Housing and Urban Development's various section 8 housing accounts at the request of the Committee on Appropriations.

Since 1997, HUD and GAO have found more than \$9.9 billion in excess section 8 housing funds. Of that amount, \$2.2 billion is being utilized for contingencies, and Congress has already rescinded \$4.2 billion. Subtracting these amounts from \$9.9 billion leaves a current balance of \$3.6 billion in excess, stress "excess," section 8 housing reserves.