

amended, the approximately 70 employees enrolled in OPIC's health insurance plan would be allowed to transfer to the FEHBP. OPIC will bear the costs associated with transfer.

Finally, this legislation would reauthorize the Merit Systems Protection Board, MSPB, and the Office of Special Counsel, OSC. Established in 1978 by the Civil Service Reform Act, MSPB's mission is to ensure that Federal employees are protected against abuses by Federal agency management, that executive branch agencies make employment decisions in accordance with merit systems principles, and that Federal merit systems are kept free of prohibited personnel practices such as discrimination and coercion.

OSC is an independent Federal investigative prosecutorial agency. It safeguards the merit system by protecting Federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing. OSC also serves as a safe and secure channel for Federal workers who wish to disclose violations of laws, gross mismanagement or waste of funds, and abuse of authority. This legislation will provide a variety of benefits for Federal employees, and I urge its adoption.

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

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

At the time that we began work on this bill, the markets had not imploded. This bill has assumed far greater importance since, and I just want to spell out something of what it means. We are now living in a country where people over 50 years of age have lost their shirts. The catastrophic effects of the market on baby boomers and older people is pouring out now in stories, in the newspapers about people going back to work, about people selling their homes, and the rest of it. Do not think that this does not apply as well to Federal employees.

Allowing us, those of us who work in the Federal Government, to catch up, as it were, with what is already the case in the private sector could not come at a more opportune time. In the first place, one does not have to put their money into the traditional stock market. The TSP is very conservative. They could put all of their money into bonds. They could in fact decide that this might be an important way to make up for some of the losses almost all of us have incurred in the market over the past year, 18 months.

And what this means is very important. In the first year, in addition to what someone already contributes, they can put in an additional \$1,000. The next year they can put in an additional \$2,000, until of course they reach

\$5,000 and then they will be able to contribute, as private employees do, an additional \$5,000 a year to the TSP.

The reason that this is important, it seems to me, for everybody but especially for the employees to whom this is directed, employees 50 or older, is that there is almost no way to even begin to make up for the kinds of losses people have had, and people have got to begin thinking through how we do that. We do not want to say to what has become an investment public, stop investing in anything, they could have happen to them what has now happened to people in all ages and backgrounds. They could lose it all. There are safe investments. We are very fortunate that the TSP allows us to spread our investments, encourages us to do so, and I believe that for those who are very numerous, and I am sure are included among them are many government employees who want to begin to reinvest, this opportunity to reinvest in more conservative investments will be a very welcome opportunity. At the very least, it would be unconscionable to leave those in the public sector, the Federal sector behind what we ourselves have already granted to those in the private sector.

So I appreciate that the gentlewoman has brought this bill forward, a bill we worked very hard on and, fortuitously, a bill which I think will be appreciated more than when the bill was originally in committee.

□ 1530

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

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, H.R. 3340 with the amendment accomplishes many goals, including catch-up contributions for the Thrift Savings Plan contributors, reauthorization of the OSC and the Marriage System Protections Board.

Finally, H.R. 3340 would allow employees, retirees and near-retirees of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that I introduced the bill because it was very important. It took a lot of time, and we had the approval of the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON); the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN); the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON); the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS); some great sponsors and some great staff that helped to move this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an affirmative vote.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentlewoman from Maryland for the introduction and processing and passage of this legislation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CANTOR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3340, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 4 p.m.

□ 1603

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 4 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS TRADE AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2002

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5385) to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to modify temporarily certain rates of duty, to make other technical amendments to the trade laws, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:]

H.R. 5385

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2002".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents

TITLE I—TARIFF PROVISIONS

Sec. 1001. Reference; expired provisions.

Subtitle A—Temporary Duty Suspensions and Reductions

CHAPTER 1—NEW DUTY SUSPENSIONS AND REDUCTIONS

Sec. 1101. Bitolylene diisocyanate (TODI).