our Founding Fathers, Mr. Leader, formed a House representing a diverse American public, from many regions of this country, many areas of every State. Every State has differences within that State. My State does. Your State does.

To say that the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) is only going to talk to those that he perceives as interested in improving that legislation is to say that a bill that passed this House by one vote after the roll was kept open for some 45 minutes is to say that at least half of this House will be excluded.

Mr. Leader, that is not in my opinion and in the opinion of this side of the aisle, and I believe in the opinion of the American people, the way they expect this House to run. It is not the gentleman from California's (Mr. THOMAS) view of what improves or does not improve this bill that counts. It is each of us who are elected to represent our constituents and put on the table the alternatives we believe improve that bill. They ought to be considered. We do not believe that is being done, Mr. Leader.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield, I just have to say to the gentleman, I know the gentleman is trying to change the process of the House. We are not operating any differently than this House has always operated.

Every Member that wants to have input on this bill can find ways to have input. It has been expressed time and time again by the leadership on your side of the aisle and others that they do not want this bill. They want a different kind of bill and a different approach.

You have had that opportunity in presenting that approach and in presenting an alternative and a substitute for the will of the House, and the gentleman made a grand attempt to do that. He failed. He did not have the votes to do it.

In that process we went to conference committee. Those Members that are willing to work with, instead of obstruct, the process of getting a Medicare bill to this floor have been consulted on both sides of the aisle by many different people, not just the chairman of the conference committee. So the process is open and available to those who are willing to work with us and be constructive and productive in getting a bill so that the House can vote on it. That is the way this place works. It is the way it has always worked.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Leader, you and I may have a different perspective obviously. You recall, as I have discussed in the past, the Patients' Bill of Rights. Everybody was for the Patients' Bill of Rights. In fact, in the 106th Congress, as the leader will well recognize, when he was the whip and responsible for counting votes, the Patients' Bill of Rights passed this House with over 250 votes of people who saw it in a way that ought to pass, ought to be the law of the land.

As you will recall, the Speaker appointed eight out of the nine Republican conferees who had opposed the bill. Now, maybe that is the way the House in your recollection has always worked where 250 people vote for something. It never came out of conference, not surprisingly, when you had eight out of nine of the Republican conferees in the majority that opposed the bill that were in the conference. So apparently if it is on your side of the aisle and you oppose something, locking it up in conference is okay. If you are on our side of the aisle and you want to see a Patients' Bill of Rights or you want to see a Medicare prescription bill and you want to see a prescription drug bill that does not eliminate Medicare, that provides for affordable and accessible health care at a price that can be afforded by all of our seniors, then somehow you are perceived as not wanting to improve the bill and, therefore, is not worth being included.

As you know, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), one of the senior Members of this House, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) tried to have arrested not too long ago and thrown out of the Committee on Ways and Means by the Capitol Police.

You will recall that the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) has now gone to where the conferees, theoretically, were meeting and was asked to leave. The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Ways and Means, one of the seniors.

Now, I will remind the chairman that Mr. Rostenkowski chaired this committee and invariably made sure that Republicans were, in fact, included, and invariably when bills came to the floor, he had Republicans supporting those bills and they worked with him. And you will recall that he worked with the President of the United States when we were in the majority to pass the 1986 tax bill. So that may be your recollection, Mr. Leader, of how the House runs.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield, my recollection is completely different than yours.

I can remember serving in the minority, too, and having the same frustrations that you have had. It is part of the frustrations of being in the minority.

As the gentleman understands, we are not operating in this regard any differently than the gentleman operated when you were in the majority. You work with people that want to get a bill. You do not waste a lot of time with people that do not want a bill. And then you give everybody the opportunity through the Rules of the House to participate either in the full committee, formal conference committee meetings or here on the floor of the House, and certainly ultimately expressing themselves with their vote.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I agree with the leader. We disagree. Our recollections are not the same. Our experiences are not the same.

Now, I have been here a little longer than the leader, but we have both been here a long time, and when we were in charge you complained as well. Therefore, you can empathize, as you say, with the pain that we feel in the minority.

□ 1245

But it is not the pain that we feel is so important, we want a bill. We may want a slightly different kind of bill than we think that the majority will report out on prescription drugs, but we want a bill. And the people who supported us want a bill, and they may want a bill that is slightly different; and democracy works when all sit down together and discuss their perspectives and try to forge a bill which accomplishes their objective. I do not think we are doing that. I lament that, and I do not think it is in the best interests of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, it is not in the quality of legislation that both the gentleman from Texas and I want to pass, even if we see that quality somewhat differently. I thank the gentleman for the information he has given us.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday, November 10, 2003.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT FROM MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2003 TO WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, November 10, 2003, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2003.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF OFFICIAL OBJECTORS FOR PRIVATE CALENDAR FOR 108TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. On behalf of the majority and minority leaderships, the Chair announces that the

official objectors for the Private Calendar for the 108th Congress are as follows:

For the majority:
Mr. COBLE of North Carolina;
Mr. CHABOT of Ohio; and
Mrs. BLACKBURN of Tennessee.
For the minority:
Mr. BOUCHER of Virginia;
Mr. SCHIFF of California; and
Mr. GRIJALVA of Arizona.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

(Mr. PEARCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of entering into the RECORD how I would have voted on issues before the House on which I was unavailable to vote on Wednesday, October 29; Thursday, October 30; and Friday, October 31.

On Wednesday, October 29, on rollcall No. 577, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 578, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 579, I would have voted ''yes.''

On Thursday, October 30, on rollcall No. 580, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 581, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 582, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 583, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 584, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 585, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 586, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 587, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 588, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 589, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 590, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 591, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 592, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 593, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 594, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 595, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 596, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 597, I would have voted ''yes.'' On rollcall No. 598, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 599, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 600, I would have voted ''no.'' On rollcall No. 601, I would have voted ''yes.''

Mr. Speaker, the reason for my absence and for not voting on these important issues was because I was a member of a congressional delegation that went to Iraq to visit our troops and to personally observe conditions there.

We were able to visit our troops in Landstuhl, Germany, who have been injured bringing freedom to Iraq. We saw the excellent job our forces are doing, simultaneously setting up a free and fair democracy while bringing evildoers to justice and establishing peace in Iraq. We saw the people working together regardless of ethnicity or religion, to restore businesses and hope to a country formerly under control of despots. Because of our troops and the freedom they are establishing in Iraq, the people there have hope, which they have not had since Saddam Hussein became dictator.

Mr. Speaker, while the business before this House is important, we must also realize that the foundation for all of our actions in this Chamber is the freedoms granted to us in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Our presence in Iraq is allowing the Iraqi people to, for the first time, establish a Constitution where the Iraqis will have the freedom to vote for a representative government, where the rule of law will prevail, where citizens will not fear for their lives, their property or their freedom. Let us not forget why we are able to participate in this body, and let us not deny that freedom to Iraq.

PEACE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to talk about the issue of peace for a very brief moment.

Just a few minutes ago, this House passed the defense authorization bill. As a strong opponent of the initial entry into Iraq of our troops in 2002 when the resolution was on the floor, my opposition stems from the fact that there was a question as to whether or not there were weapons of mass destruction and whether we were under imminent attack. I rise today to say that there is a very important role that our troops around the world can play. The United States has always had the high moral ground on the question of peace.

I would like to turn our attention in this Nation and this administration to the idea beginning to formulate plans for peacekeeping. That is not what is occurring in Iraq today. Primarily as we see the loss of life accelerate, we need to begin to work steadfastly to draw out collaborators and allies around the question of peace.

We were successful in Kosovo and Bosnia because we had the NATO allies. We were successful in Liberia because we had the work of President Obasajno of Nigeria and his peacekeeping efforts. It is imperative that this Nation begins to formulate a strategy for peace and utilize our troops to lift up peace in this world.

DISCOUNT DRUG CARDS

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, the Medicare conferees are about to wrap up their important work on providing a prescription drug coverage plan for America's seniors; and I am excited about the impact it will have on my district, the 16th Congressional District of Florida, which has the fifth largest population of Medicare-eligible seniors in America. Legislation I have worked on over 4 years with Senator HAGEL includes the drug discount card which is part of this historic landmark legislation which will provide for over 40 million seniors the opportunity to receive up to a 25 percent discount on their prescription drug costs.

This is good news for seniors, welcomed good news for our seniors in the 16th Congressional District, and I am hopeful as we continue our bipartisan negotiations that when we conclude our work on Medicare, it will not only be reformed, it will become cost effective, and it will also contain the vital new programs necessary to modernize for the first time in over 35 years this vitally important safety net, a medical delivery system for our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited about the drug discount card, I applaud the White House for their leadership in taking the idea of Senator HAGEL and myself to make it permanent law, and we welcome the opportunity to reach out to seniors with this good plan.

VETERANS ISSUES

(Mr. BALLANCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, next week we will honor our Nation's military veterans for their dedication and service to the Nation, and I take great pride in this day of remembrance. A little more than 30 years ago, I had the privilege of serving in our National Guard of North Carolina, and so it is with distinction today that we remember the veterans: the veterans of the allied engagement in the Persian Gulf War, the brave men of the 7th Cavalry at the battle of Ia Drang, the airmen of MiG Alley in Korea, the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, and so many others deserving of the highest honors. They all are brave men and women who are our United States veterans, and I am proud this morning to stand in honor of our veterans.

Next week we will honor our nation's military veterans for their dedication and service to the nation, and I take great pride in this day of remembrance.

A little more than 30 years ago, I service in the North Carolina Army National Guard, during the conflict in Vietnam. Times were uncertain then, soldiers were leaving the nation in droves, coming back seasoned veterans of a war. We did not honor our veterans in the way they deserved those many decades ago, and we have learned since that time.

And so it is with distinction today that we remember the veteran; the veteran of the allied engagement in the Persian Gulf War, the brave men of the 7th Calvary at the battle of Ia Drang, the airmen of MiG Alley in Korea, the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II, and so many others deserving of the highest honors. They all are our brave men and women who are the United States Veteran.

I am of the belief, Mr. Speaker, that the men and women who served our nation should be