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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CLAY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 11, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Hon. WILLIAM LACY CLAY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

IRAQI REFUGEE CRISIS

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the largest humanitarian crisis in the world continues to unfold in Iraq. Over 4 million displaced people, more than the crisis in Darfur, two million or more, have fled their country; and the rest are displaced within. They have fled to Syria, to Jordan, throughout the Middle East and beyond. It is brutal, not just for the refugees themselves, and the displaced people, but it places a great strain on the host country.

NOTICE

If the 110th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 21, 2007, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 110th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Friday, December 28, 2007, in order to permit Members to revise and extend their remarks.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT–60 or S–123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Thursday, December 27. The final issue will be dated Friday, December 28, 2007, and will be delivered on Wednesday, January 2, 2008.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster/secretary/cong__record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

Members of the House of Representatives' statements may also be submitted electronically by e-mail, to accompany the signed statement, and formatted according to the instructions for the Extensions of Remarks template at http://clerk.house.gov/forms. The Official Reporters will transmit to GPO the template formatted electronic file only after receipt of, and authentication with, the hard copy, and signed manuscript. Deliver statements to the Official Reporters in Room HT–60.

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

ROBERT A. BRADY, *Chairman.*

Late last summer, Ambassador Ryan Crocker pointed out the problems that this refugee crisis is posing for the United States itself when he expressed deep concerns that if we don't do a better job of helping to protect the people whose lives are at risk because they have worked for the United States, if we turn our back on them when they flee the country, than people will be less willing to work with us, and we won't be able to rely on those who make such a difference in terms of services of interpreters and guides and others providing essential services for United States activities in Iraq.

I have been deeply concerned about this problem over the course of the last year, finding out how far we have fallen short of the mark when I was working with a group of high school students in Oregon and returning U.S. Oregon National Guard troops. They were fighting to bring to the United States their interpreter, a young woman who had been marked for death in Iraq because of her cooperation with the United States. It was frustrating over the course of the months that we worked with them because I really had no good explanation for these young people, the Guard and the high school students, about why it should be so hard for the United States to help people who helped us.

It is not just people who had helped the United States who have fled the country, it is not just those that are concerned about Sunni and Shia violence; the Mandean, an ancient people, a small Christian sect, are caught in the crossfire of this civil war in Iraq, and they are at risk of being wiped out in their entirety for all time.

Having been inspired by these young Oregonians, having been inspired, by other dedicated advocates, for example, Kirk Johnson, a former AID staff member, who chronicled the plight of over 600 people at risk, of whom less than 10 had been resettled, we introduced legislation to deal with the mismatch between the scope of the problem and the limited resources the United States Government has put into addressing it.

Indeed, after we ''won the war in Iraq,'' the situation became worse on the ground, and we witnessed the explosion of this crisis. For 2005 and 2006, the numbers of people we helped were miniscule. Out of the 4 million people who have left their homes, we allowed 198 Iraqis in the United States in 2005, and 202 last year, almost entirely people who were being reunited with their families, who had been made refugees in 1991.

There were glimmers of hope this year, with the administration promising, to allow 25,000 people into the United States, which was the same number of refugees that the Prime Minister of Sweden told me that Sweden was willing to accept. Later, the U.S. number fell to 7,000, and then ultimately we only let 1,800 Iraqis in throughout the entire last fiscal year. Even that was after a last-minute rush, because the first 6 months we had only allowed 69 Iraqi refugees.

There is good news, however, because due to an amendment by Senator KENNEDY that was adopted in the Senate for the Defense authorization bill, largely taken from provisions in our House legislation, we are actually going to be able to make some real progress. We will be able to process some of these refugees in their own country. Until now, people had been forced to leave Iraq. Even though we have the largest embassy in the history of the planet, they had to leave Iraq before they could apply for refugee status. We have an opportunity to increase to 5,000 a year those people who are at risk because they have helped us. These are important steps, and I hope they are approved.

But much more needs to be done. First, we have to actually do what is authorized. Second, we need to put some real money into it, not just the $250 million for refugee assistance that is currently pending. That is rounding error, given the billions that we have spent in Iraq that we can't even account for.

It is important for us to scale our commitment to make sure that we meet the humanitarian crisis in the aftermath of our war in Iraq.

''TECHNICALITIES''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized during morning-hour debate for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to my colleagues' remarks from last week that ''technically, the troops are funded right now,'' as if the bottom line on the budget report is sufficient for some in this chamber to ensure that our war fighters have all the resources that they need.

Well, war is a serious business, Mr. Speaker, and we are indeed a Nation at war. Our men and women in harm's way don't have time for our political games or ''technicalities.'' Clever word play isn't going to turn DOD ink from red to black. There is nothing ''technical'' about the risk our war fighters face every day. They are not fighting an enemy that ''technically'' wants to do us harm. Instead, they are fighting a lethal terrorist network actually bent on spreading real Islamist totalitarianism in Iraq and across the globe.

Mr. Speaker, the success of the surge strategy in Iraq is not making things ''technically'' better. We are seeing actual results and real improvement on the ground. Even the most liberal newspapers admit that the improvement is real. IED attacks are not ''technically'' down; they are actually fewer in number, fewer bombs being placed to attack our troops and Iraqi allies. Casualties rates are not ''technically'' down. We are actually losing fewer Americans as the security conditions improve.

These improving conditions are not ''technically'' creating reconciliation. Iraqis across the country are really beginning to bridge age-old divides as they unite to secure their future. By playing political games with vital war funding, we are not ''technically'' sending a message to our war fighters in harm's way, we are actually putting all of the progress that they have made in very real jeopardy. Mr. Speaker, is that a message we choose to send?

My own constituents, civilian and soldiers alike, work at Fort Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne. This holiday season, two brigades of the 101st are serving in Afghanistan and two more in Iraq. They are supported by the men and women at Fort Campbell, and their families are embraced by the citizens of Clarksville and Montgomery County, Tennessee.

This Christmas, if we don't actually provide DOD the funding they need, my constituents will begin to get furlough letters in the mail. There is nothing ''technical'' about being laid off. There is nothing ''technical'' about being told that in 60 days you won't get a paycheck. It is very real.

Before this Chamber actually adjourns so that we can spend happy and comfortable holidays with our families, I would ask my colleagues to please remember these constituents of Clarksville, Tennessee, who are actually in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan and who are actually worried about being laid off next year.

I urge my colleagues not to return home until we actually give the troops the very real funding that they need. Our men and women are not ''technicalities,'' they are indeed our sons, our daughters, our neighbors, our constituents. They are the bravest among us. They need our support and they deserve a Congress who will honor their service and who will do our job.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, Founders of this Nation destined for greatness called upon Your Divine Providence to guide their efforts to establish freedom under the governance of law.

In our own day, we call upon Your Holy Name for the divine light of truth and wisdom.

Heal our wounds, protect us from evil, forgive our sins, and rebuild the walls of justice and integrity that identify Your goodness in the Nation.

May this end time of this session of Congress as well as the approaching celebration of holidays and holy days bring joy and peace to this Nation and allow the world to witness anew the advent prophesied by Isaiah: ''Open the gates to let a righteous nation in, a nation that keeps faith.''

For this we long and pray both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

BELIEF UNDER SIEGE IN BRITAIN

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the freedom of religion is under attack in Great Britain.

Last week British news reported that the daughter of a British Imam, we will call her Hannah, is living under police protection after receiving death threats from her father and brother because she converted to Christianity.

Hannah was born in Britain to immigrant Pakistani parents. She renounced the Muslim faith when she was a teenager and has been in hiding for over 10 years.

After multiple death threats and an attempt on her life by 40 men, led by her father, brandishing axes, hammers, and knives, Hannah has sought protection from the British Government.

According to her, her father believes that the Koran teaches that anyone who walks away from Islam should be killed. Well, murder is bad enough, but murder in the name of religion is worse, and it's legal, at least in a free state where all religions are to be tolerated, even Christianity.

Democracy values the freedom of other people's faith; it does not restrict it. That is the difference in a democracy and a government that is controlled by a religion.

And that's just the way it is.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS COVENANT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3079) to amend the Joint Resolution Approving the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3079

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

TITLE I—NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS IMMIGRATION, SECURITY, AND LABOR ACT

SECTION 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act''.

SEC. 102. STATEMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL INTENT.

(a) IMMIGRATION AND GROWTH.—In recognition of the need to ensure uniform adherence to long-standing fundamental immigration policies of the United States, it is the intention of the Congress in enacting this title—

(1) to ensure that effective border control procedures are implemented and observed, and that national security and homeland security issues are properly addressed, by extending the immigration laws (as defined in section 101(a)(17) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 (a)(17)), to apply to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (referred to in this title as the ''Commonwealth''), with special provisions to allow for—

(A) the orderly phasing-out of the nonresident contract worker program of the Commonwealth; and

(B) the orderly phasing-in of Federal responsibilities over immigration in the Commonwealth; and

(2) to minimize, to the greatest extent practicable, potential adverse economic and fiscal effects of phasing-out the Commonwealth's nonresident contract worker program and to maximize the Commonwealth's potential for future economic and business growth by—

(A) encouraging diversification and growth of the economy of the Commonwealth in accordance with fundamental values underlying Federal immigration policy;

(B) recognizing local self-government, as provided for in the Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union With the United States of America through consultation with the Governor of the Commonwealth;

(C) assisting the Commonwealth in achieving a progressively higher standard of living for citizens of the Commonwealth through the provision of technical and other assistance;

(D) providing opportunities for individuals authorized to work in the United States, including citizens of the freely associated states; and

(E) providing a mechanism for the continued use of alien workers, to the extent those workers continue to be necessary to supplement the Commonwealth's resident workforce, and to protect those workers from the potential for abuse and exploitation.

(b) AVOIDING ADVERSE EFFECTS.—In recognition of the Commonwealth's unique economic circumstances, history, and geographical location, it is the intent of the Congress that the Commonwealth be given as much flexibility as possible in maintaining existing businesses and other revenue sources, and developing new economic opportunities, consistent with the mandates of this title. This title, and the amendments made by this title, should be implemented wherever possible to expand tourism and economic development in the Commonwealth, including aiding prospective tourists in gaining access to the Commonwealth's memorials, beaches, parks, dive sites, and other points of interest.

SEC. 103. IMMIGRATION REFORM FOR THE COMMONWEALTH.

(a) AMENDMENT TO JOINT RESOLUTION APPROVING COVENANT ESTABLISHING COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.—The Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (Public Law 94–241; 90 Stat. 263), is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 6. IMMIGRATION AND TRANSITION.

''(a) APPLICATION OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSITION PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), effective on the first day of the first full month commencing 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act (hereafter referred to as the 'transition program effective date'), the provisions of the 'immigration laws' (as defined in section 101(a)(17) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(17))) shall apply to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (referred to in this section as the 'Commonwealth'), except as otherwise provided in this section.

''(2) TRANSITION PERIOD.—There shall be a transition period beginning on the transition program effective date and ending on December 31, 2013, except as provided in subsections (b) and (d), during which the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of the Interior, shall establish, administer, and enforce a transition program to regulate immigration to the Commonwealth, as provided in this section (hereafter referred to as the 'transition program').

''(3) DELAY OF COMMENCEMENT OF TRANSITION PERIOD.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in the Secretary's sole discretion, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Governor of the Commonwealth, may determine that the transition program effective date be delayed for a period not to exceed more than 180 days after such date.

''(B) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall notify the Congress of a determination under subparagraph (A) not later than 30 days prior to the transition program effective date.

''(C) CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW.—A delay of the transition program effective date shall not take effect until 30 days after the date on which the notification under subparagraph (B) is made.

''(4) REQUIREMENT FOR REGULATIONS.—The transition program shall be implemented pursuant to regulations to be promulgated, as appropriate, by the head of each agency or department of the United States having responsibilities under the transition program.

''(5) INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of the Interior shall negotiate and implement agreements among their agencies to identify and assign their respective duties so as to ensure timely and proper implementation of the provisions of this section. The agreements should address, at a minimum, procedures to ensure that Commonwealth employers have access to adequate labor, and that tourists, students, retirees, and other visitors have access to the Commonwealth without unnecessary delay or impediment. The agreements may also allocate funding between the respective agencies tasked with various responsibilities under this section.

''(6) CERTAIN EDUCATION FUNDING.—In addition to fees charged pursuant to section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356(m)) to recover the full costs of providing adjudication services, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall charge an annual supplemental fee of $150 per nonimmigrant worker to each prospective employer who is issued a permit under subsection (d) of this section during the transition period. Such supplemental fee shall be paid into the Treasury of the Commonwealth government for the purpose of funding ongoing vocational educational curricula and program development by Commonwealth educational entities.

''(7) ASYLUM.—Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1158) shall not apply during the transition period to persons physically present in the Commonwealth or arriving in the Commonwealth (whether or not at a designated port of arrival), including persons brought to the Commonwealth after having been interdicted in international or United States waters.

''(b) NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS FOR NONIMMIGRANT WORKERS.—An alien, if otherwise qualified, may seek admission to Guam or to the Commonwealth during the transition program as a nonimmigrant worker under section 101(a)(15)(H) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)) without counting against the numerical limitations set forth in section 214(g) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(g)). This subsection does not apply to any employment to be performed outside of Guam or the Commonwealth. Not later than 3 years following the transition program effective date, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall issue a report to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives projecting the number of asylum claims the Secretary anticipates following the termination of the transition period, the efforts the Secretary has made to ensure appropriate interdiction efforts, provide for appropriate treatment of asylum seekers, and prepare to accept and adjudicate asylum claims in the Commonwealth.

''(c) NONIMMIGRANT INVESTOR VISAS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the treaty requirements in section 101(a)(15)(E) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(E)), during the transition period, the Secretary of Homeland Security may, upon the application of an alien, classify an alien as a CNMI-only nonimmigrant under section 101(a)(15)(E)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(E)(ii)) if the alien—

''(A) has been admitted to the Commonwealth in long-term investor status under the immigration laws of the Commonwealth before the transition program effective date;

''(B) has continuously maintained residence in the Commonwealth under long-term investor status;

''(C) is otherwise admissible; and

''(D) maintains the investment or investments that formed the basis for such long-term investor status.

''(2) REQUIREMENT FOR REGULATIONS.—Not later than 60 days before the transition program effective date, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall publish regulations in the Federal Register to implement this subsection.

''(d) SPECIAL PROVISION TO ENSURE ADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT; COMMONWEALTH ONLY TRANSITIONAL WORKERS.—An alien who is seeking to enter the Commonwealth as a nonimmigrant worker may be admitted to perform work during the transition period subject to the following requirements:

''(1) Such an alien shall be treated as a nonimmigrant described in section 101(a)(15) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)), including the ability to apply, if otherwise eligible, for a change of nonimmigrant classification under section 248 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1258) or adjustment of status under this section and section 245 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1255).

''(2) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish, administer, and enforce a system for allocating and determining the number, terms, and conditions of permits to be issued to prospective employers for each such nonimmigrant worker described in this subsection who would not otherwise be eligible for admission under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.). In adopting and enforcing this system, the Secretary shall also consider, in good faith and not later than 30 days after receipt by the Secretary, any comments and advice submitted by the Governor of the Commonwealth. This system shall provide for a reduction in the allocation of permits for such workers on an annual basis, to zero, during a period not to extend beyond December 31, 2013, unless extended pursuant to paragraph 5 of this subsection, and shall take into account the number of petitions granted under subsection (i). In no event shall a permit be valid beyond the expiration of the transition period. This system may be based on any reasonable method and criteria determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security to promote the maximum use of, and to prevent adverse effects on wages and working conditions of, workers authorized to be employed in the United States, including lawfully admissible freely associated state citizen labor. No alien shall be granted nonimmigrant classification or a visa under this subsection unless the permit requirements established under this paragraph have been met.

''(3) The Secretary of Homeland Security shall set the conditions for admission of such an alien under the transition program, and the Secretary of State shall authorize the issuance of nonimmigrant visas for such an alien. Such a visa shall not be valid for admission to the United States, as defined in section 101(a)(38) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(38)), except admission to the Commonwealth. An alien admitted to the Commonwealth on the basis of such a visa shall be permitted to engage in employment only as authorized pursuant to the transition program.

''(4) Such an alien shall be permitted to transfer between employers in the Commonwealth during the period of such alien's authorized stay therein, without permission of the employee's current or prior employer, within the alien's occupational category or another occupational category the Secretary of Homeland Security has found requires alien workers to supplement the resident workforce.

''(5)(A) Not later than 180 days prior to the expiration of the transition period, or any extension thereof, the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Governor of the Commonwealth, shall ascertain the current and anticipated labor needs of the Commonwealth and determine whether an extension of up to 5 years of the provisions of this subsection is necessary to ensure an adequate number of workers will be available for legitimate businesses in the Commonwealth. For the purpose of this subparagraph, a business shall not be considered legitimate if it engages directly or indirectly in prostitution, trafficking in minors, or any other activity that is illegal under Federal or local law. The determinations of whether a business is legitimate and to what extent, if any, it may require alien workers to supplement the resident workforce, shall be made by the Secretary of Homeland Security, in the Secretary's sole discretion.

''(B) If the Secretary of Labor determines that such an extension is necessary to ensure an adequate number of workers for legitimate businesses in the Commonwealth, the Secretary of Labor may, through notice published in the Federal Register, provide for an additional extension period of up to 5 years.

''(C) In making the determination of whether alien workers are necessary to ensure an adequate number of workers for legitimate businesses in the Commonwealth, and if so, the number of such workers that are necessary, the Secretary of Labor may consider, among other relevant factors—

''(i) government, industry, or independent workforce studies reporting on the need, or lack thereof, for alien workers in the Commonwealth's businesses;

''(ii) the unemployment rate of United States citizen workers residing in the Commonwealth;

''(iii) the unemployment rate of aliens in the Commonwealth who have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence;

''(iv) the number of unemployed alien workers in the Commonwealth;

''(v) any good faith efforts to locate, educate, train, or otherwise prepare United States citizen residents, lawful permanent residents, and unemployed alien workers already within the Commonwealth, to assume those jobs;

''(vi) any available evidence tending to show that United States citizen residents, lawful permanent residents, and unemployed alien workers already in the Commonwealth are not willing to accept jobs of the type offered;

''(vii) the extent to which admittance of alien workers will affect the compensation, benefits, and living standards of existing workers within those industries and other industries authorized to employ alien workers; and

''(viii) the prior use, if any, of alien workers to fill those industry jobs, and whether the industry requires alien workers to fill those jobs.

''(6) The Secretary of Homeland Security may authorize the admission of a spouse or minor child accompanying or following to

join a worker admitted pursuant to this subsection.

''(e) PERSONS LAWFULLY ADMITTED UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH IMMIGRATION LAW.—

''(1) PROHIBITION ON REMOVAL.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), no alien who is lawfully present in the Commonwealth pursuant to the immigration laws of the Commonwealth on the transition program effective date shall be removed from the United States on the grounds that such alien's presence in the Commonwealth is in violation of section 212(a)(6)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(6)(A)), until the earlier of the date—

''(i) of the completion of the period of the alien's admission under the immigration laws of the Commonwealth; or

''(ii) that is 2 years after the transition program effective date.

''(B) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent or limit the removal under subparagraph 212(a)(6)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(6)(A)) of such an alien at any time, if the alien entered the Commonwealth after the date of the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act, and the Secretary of Homeland Security has determined that the Government of the Commonwealth has violated section 103(i) of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act.

''(2) EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION.—An alien who is lawfully present and authorized to be employed in the Commonwealth pursuant to the immigration laws of the Commonwealth on the transition program effective date shall be considered authorized by the Secretary of Homeland Security to be employed in the Commonwealth until the earlier of the date—

''(A) of expiration of the alien's employment authorization under the immigration laws of the Commonwealth; or

''(B) that is 2 years after the transition program effective date.

''(3) REGISTRATION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may require any alien present in the Commonwealth on or after the transition period effective date to register with the Secretary in such a manner, and according to such schedule, as he may in his discretion require. Paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection shall not apply to any alien who fails to comply with such registration requirement. Notwithstanding any other law, the Government of the Commonwealth shall provide to the Secretary all Commonwealth immigration records or other information that the Secretary deems necessary to assist the implementation of this paragraph or other provisions of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act. Nothing in this paragraph shall modify or limit section 262 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1302) or other provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act relating to the registration of aliens.

''(4) REMOVABLE ALIENS.—Except as specifically provided in paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, nothing in this subsection shall prohibit or limit the removal of any alien who is removable under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

''(5) PRIOR ORDERS OF REMOVAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may execute any administratively final order of exclusion, deportation or removal issued under authority of the immigration laws of the United States before, on, or after the transition period effective date, or under authority of the immigration laws of the Commonwealth before the transition period effective date, upon any subject of such order found in the Commonwealth on or after the transition period effective date, regardless whether the alien has previously been removed from the United States or the Commonwealth pursuant to such order.

''(f) EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.—The provisions of this section and of the immigration laws, as defined in section 101(a)(17) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(17)), shall, on the transition program effective date, supersede and replace all laws, provisions, or programs of the Commonwealth relating to the admission of aliens and the removal of aliens from the Commonwealth.

''(g) ACCRUAL OF TIME FOR PURPOSES OF SECTION 212(A)(9)(B) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.—No time that an alien is present in the Commonwealth in violation of the immigration laws of the Commonwealth shall be counted for purposes of inadmissibility under section 212(a)(9)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(9)(B)).

''(h) REPORT ON NONRESIDENT GUESTWORKER POPULATION.—The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Governor of the Commonwealth, shall report to the Congress not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act. The report shall include—

''(1) the number of aliens residing in the Commonwealth;

''(2) a description of the legal status (under Federal law) of such aliens;

''(3) the number of years each alien has been residing in the Commonwealth;

''(4) the current and future requirements of the Commonwealth economy for an alien workforce; and

''(5) such recommendations to the Congress, as the Secretary may deem appropriate, related to whether or not the Congress should consider permitting lawfully admitted guest workers lawfully residing in the Commonwealth on such enactment date to apply for long-term status under the immigration and nationality laws of the United States.''.

(b) WAIVER OF REQUIREMENTS FOR NONIMMIGRANT VISITORS.—The Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 214(a)(1) (8 U.S.C. 1184(a)(1))—

(A) by striking ''Guam'' each place such term appears and inserting ''Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands''; and

(B) by striking ''fifteen'' and inserting ''45'';

(2) in section 212(a)(7)(B) (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(7)(B)), by amending clause (iii) to read as follows:

''(iii) GUAM AND NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS VISA WAIVER.—For provision authorizing waiver of clause (i) in the case of visitors to Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, see subsection (l).''; and

(3) by amending section 212(l) (8 U.S.C. 1182(l)) to read as follows:

''(l) GUAM AND NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS VISA WAIVER PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The requirement of subsection (a)(7)(B)(i) may be waived by the Secretary of Homeland Security, in the case of an alien applying for admission as a nonimmigrant visitor for business or pleasure and solely for entry into and stay in Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for a period not to exceed 45 days, if the Secretary of Homeland Security, after consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of State, the Governor of Guam and the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, determines that—

''(A) an adequate arrival and departure control system has been developed in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and

''(B) such a waiver does not represent a threat to the welfare, safety, or security of the United States or its territories and commonwealths.

''(2) ALIEN WAIVER OF RIGHTS.—An alien may not be provided a waiver under this subsection unless the alien has waived any right—

''(A) to review or appeal under this Act an immigration officer's determination as to the admissibility of the alien at the port of entry into Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; or

''(B) to contest, other than on the basis of an application for withholding of removal under section 241(b)(3) of this Act or under the Convention Against Torture, or an application for asylum if permitted under section 208, any action for removal of the alien.

''(3) REGULATIONS.— All necessary regulations to implement this subsection shall be promulgated by the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of State, on or before the 180th day after the date of the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act. The promulgation of such regulations shall be considered a foreign affairs function for purposes of section 553(a) of title 5, United States Code. At a minimum, such regulations should include, but not necessarily be limited to—

''(A) a listing of all countries whose nationals may obtain the waiver also provided by this subsection, except that such regulations shall provide for a listing of any country from which the Commonwealth has received a significant economic benefit from the number of visitors for pleasure within the one-year period preceding the date of the enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Immigration, Security, and Labor Act, unless the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that such country's inclusion on such list would represent a threat to the welfare, safety, or security of the United States or its territories; and

''(B) any bonding requirements for nationals of some or all of those countries who may present an increased risk of overstays or other potential problems, if different from such requirements otherwise provided by law for nonimmigrant visitors.

''(4) FACTORS.—In determining whether to grant or continue providing the waiver under this subsection to nationals of any country, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of State, shall consider all factors that the Secretary deems relevant, including electronic travel authorizations, procedures for reporting lost and stolen passports, repatriation of aliens, rates of refusal for nonimmigrant visitor visas, overstays, exit systems, and information exchange.

''(5) SUSPENSION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall monitor the admission of nonimmigrant visitors to Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands under this subsection. If the Secretary determines that such admissions have resulted in an unacceptable number of visitors from a country remaining unlawfully in Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, unlawfully obtaining entry to other parts of the United States, or seeking withholding of removal or asylum, or that visitors from a country pose a risk to law enforcement or security interests of Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or of the United States (including the interest in the enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States), the Secretary shall suspend the admission of

nationals of such country under this subsection. The Secretary of Homeland Security may in the Secretary's discretion suspend the Guam and Northern Mariana Islands visa waiver program at any time, on a country-by-country basis, for other good cause.

''(6) ADDITION OF COUNTRIES.—The Governor of Guam and the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may request the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Homeland Security to add a particular country to the list of countries whose nationals may obtain the waiver provided by this subsection, and the Secretary of Homeland Security may grant such request after consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of State, and may promulgate regulations with respect to the inclusion of that country and any special requirements the Secretary of Homeland Security, in the Secretary's sole discretion, may impose prior to allowing nationals of that country to obtain the waiver provided by this subsection.''.

(c) SPECIAL NONIMMIGRANT CATEGORIES FOR GUAM AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.—The Governor of Guam and the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (referred to in this subsection as ''CNMI'') may request that the Secretary of Homeland Security study the feasibility of creating additional Guam or CNMI-only nonimmigrant visas to the extent that existing nonimmigrant visa categories under the Immigration and Nationality Act do not provide for the type of visitor, the duration of allowable visit, or other circumstance. The Secretary of Homeland Security may review such a request, and, after consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Interior, shall issue a report to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives with respect to the feasibility of creating those additional Guam or CNMI-only visa categories. Consideration of such additional Guam or CNMI-only visa categories may include, but are not limited to, special nonimmigrant statuses for investors, students, and retirees, but shall not include nonimmigrant status for the purpose of employment in Guam or the CNMI.

(d) INSPECTION OF PERSONS ARRIVING FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS; GUAM AND NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS-ONLY VISAS NOT VALID FOR ENTRY INTO OTHER PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES.—Section 212(d)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(d)(7)) is amended by inserting ''the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,'' after ''Guam,''.

(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Governor of the Commonwealth, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Commerce, and as provided in the Interagency Agreements required to be negotiated under section 6(a)(4) of the Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (Public Law 94–241), as added by subsection (a), shall provide—

(A) technical assistance and other support to the Commonwealth to identify opportunities for, and encourage diversification and growth of, the economy of the Commonwealth;

(B) technical assistance, including assistance in recruiting, training, and hiring of workers, to assist employers in the Commonwealth in securing employees first from among United States citizens and nationals resident in the Commonwealth and if an adequate number of such workers are not available, from among legal permanent residents, including lawfully admissible citizens of the freely associated states; and

(C) technical assistance, including assistance to identify types of jobs needed, identify skills needed to fulfill such jobs, and assistance to Commonwealth educational entities to develop curricula for such job skills to include training teachers and students for such skills.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In providing such technical assistance under paragraph (1), the Secretaries shall—

(A) consult with the Government of the Commonwealth, local businesses, regional banks, educational institutions, and other experts in the economy of the Commonwealth; and

(B) assist in the development and implementation of a process to identify opportunities for and encourage diversification and growth of the economy of the Commonwealth and to identify and encourage opportunities to meet the labor needs of the Commonwealth.

(3) COST-SHARING.—For the provision of technical assistance or support under this paragraph (other than that required to pay the salaries and expenses of Federal personnel), the Secretary of the Interior shall require a non-Federal matching contribution of 10 percent.

(f) OPERATIONS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—At any time on and after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Secretary of Labor may establish and maintain offices and other operations in the Commonwealth for the purpose of carrying out duties under—

(A) the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.); and

(B) the transition program established under section 6 of the Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (Public Law 94–241), as added by subsection (a) of this section.

(2) PERSONNEL.—To the maximum extent practicable and consistent with the satisfactory performance of assigned duties under applicable law, the Attorney General, Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Secretary of Labor shall recruit and hire personnel from among qualified United States citizens and national applicants residing in the Commonwealth to serve as staff in carrying out operations described in paragraph (1).

(g) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC LAW 94–241.—

(1) AMENDMENTS.—Public Law 94–241 is amended as follows:

(A) In section 503 of the covenant set forth in section 1, by striking subsection (a) and redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (a) and (b), respectively.

(B) By striking section 506 of the covenant set forth in section 1.

(C) In section 703(b) of the covenant set forth in section 1, by striking ''quarantine, passport, immigration and naturalization'' and inserting ''quarantine and passport''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the transition program effective date described in section 6 of Public Law 94–241 (as added by subsection (a)).

(h) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than March 1 of the first year that is at least 2 full years after the date of the enactment of this title, and annually thereafter, the President shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that evaluates the overall effect of the transition program established under section 6 of the Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (Public Law 94–241), as added by subsection (a) of this section, and the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.) on the Commonwealth.

(2) CONTENTS.—In addition to other topics otherwise required to be included under this title or the amendments made by this title, each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include a description of the efforts that have been undertaken during the period covered by the report to diversify and strengthen the local economy of the Commonwealth, including efforts to promote the Commonwealth as a tourist destination. The report by the President shall include an estimate for the numbers of nonimmigrant workers described under section 101(a)(15)(H) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)) necessary to avoid adverse economic effects in Guam and the Commonwealth.

(3) GAO REPORT.—The Government Accountability Office shall submit a report to the Congress not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this title, to include, at a minimum, the following items:

(A) An assessment of the implementation of this title and the amendments made by this title, including an assessment of the performance of Federal agencies and the Government of the Commonwealth in meeting congressional intent.

(B) An assessment of the short-term and long-term impacts of implementation of this title and the amendments made by this title on the economy of the Commonwealth, including its ability to obtain workers to supplement its resident workforce and to maintain access to its tourists and customers, and any effect on compliance with United States treaty obligations mandating nonrefoulement for refugees.

(C) An assessment of the economic benefit of the investors ''grandfathered'' under subsection (c) of section 6 of the Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (Public Law 94–241), as added by subsection (a) of this section, and the Commonwealth's ability to attract new investors after the date of the enactment of this title.

(D) An assessment of the number of illegal aliens in the Commonwealth, including any Federal and Commonwealth efforts to locate and repatriate them.

(4) REPORTS BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The Governor of the Commonwealth may submit an annual report to the President on the implementation of this title, and the amendments made by this title, with recommendations for future changes. The President shall forward the Governor's report to the Congress with any Administration comment after an appropriate period of time for internal review, provided that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to require the President to provide any legislative recommendation to the Congress.

(5) REPORT ON FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this

Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, after consulting with the Secretary of the Interior and other departments and agencies as may be deemed necessary, shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources, the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, on the current and planned levels of Transportation Security Administration, United States Customs and Border Protection, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and United States Coast Guard personnel and resources necessary for fulfilling mission requirements on Guam and the Commonwealth in a manner comparable to the level provided at other similar ports of entry in the United States. In fulfilling this reporting requirement, the Secretary shall consider and anticipate the increased requirements due to the proposed realignment of military forces on Guam and in the Commonwealth and growth in the tourism sector.

(i) REQUIRED ACTIONS PRIOR TO TRANSITION PROGRAM EFFECTIVE DATE.—During the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the transition program effective date described in section 6 of Public Law 94–241 (as added by subsection (a)), the Government of the Commonwealth shall—

(1) not permit an increase in the total number of alien workers who are present in the Commonwealth as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) administer its nonrefoulement protection program—

(A) according to the terms and procedures set forth in the Memorandum of Agreement entered into between the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, executed on September 12, 2003 (which terms and procedures, including but not limited to funding by the Secretary of the Interior and performance by the Secretary of Homeland Security of the duties of ''Protection Consultant'' to the Commonwealth, shall have effect on and after the date of the enactment of this Act), as well as CNMI Public Law 13–61 and the Immigration Regulations Establishing a Procedural Mechanism for Persons Requesting Protection from Refoulement; and

(B) so as not to remove or otherwise effect the involuntary return of any alien whom the Protection Consultant has determined to be eligible for protection from persecution or torture.

(j) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.—The Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 101(a)(15)(D)(ii), by inserting ''or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands'' after ''Guam'' each time such term appears;

(2) in section 101(a)(36), by striking ''and the Virgin Islands of the United States'' and inserting ''the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands'';

(3) in section 101(a)(38), by striking ''and the Virgin Islands of the United States'' and inserting ''the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands'';

(4) in section 208, by adding at the end the following:

''(e) COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.—The provisions of this section and section 209(b) of this Act shall apply to persons physically present in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or arriving in the Commonwealth (whether or not at a designated port of arrival and including persons who are brought to the Commonwealth after having been interdicted in international or United States waters) only on or after January 1, 2014.''; and

(5) in section 235(b)(1), by adding at the end the following:

''(G) COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize or require any person described in section 208(e) of this Act to be permitted to apply for asylum under section 208 of this Act at any time before January 1, 2014.''.

(k) AVAILABILITY OF OTHER NONIMMIGRANT PROFESSIONALS.—The requirements of section 212(m)(6)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(m)(6)(B)) shall not apply to a facility in Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands.

SEC. 104. FURTHER AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC LAW 94–241.

Public Law 94-241, as amended, is further amended in section 4(c)(3) by striking the colon after ''Marshall Islands'' and inserting the following: '', except that $200,000 in fiscal year 2009 and $225,000 annually for fiscal years 2010 through 2018 are hereby rescinded; Provided, That the amount rescinded shall be increased by the same percentage as that of the annual salary and benefit adjustments for Members of Congress''.

SEC. 105. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this title.

SEC. 106. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as specifically provided in this section or otherwise in this Act, this title and the amendments made by this title shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this title.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.—The amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act made by this Act, and other provisions of this Act applying the immigration laws (as defined in section 101(a)(17) of Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(17))) to the Commonwealth, shall take effect on the transition program effective date described in section 6 of Public Law 94–241 (as added by section 103(a) of this Act), unless specifically provided otherwise in this Act.

(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to make any residence or presence in the Commonwealth before the transition program effective date described in section 6 of Public Law 94–241 (as added by section 103(a) of this Act) residence or presence in the United States, except that, for the purpose only of determining whether an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence (as defined in section 101(a)(20) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(20))) has abandoned or lost such status by reason of absence from the United States, such alien's presence in the Commonwealth before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act shall be considered to be presence in the United States.

TITLE II—NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS DELEGATE ACT

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Northern Mariana Islands Delegate Act''.

SEC. 202. DELEGATE TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall be represented in the United States Congress by the Resident Representative to the United States authorized by section 901 of the Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union With the United States of America (approved by Public Law 94–241 (48 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.)). The Resident Representative shall be a nonvoting Delegate to the House of Representatives, elected as provided in this title.

SEC. 203. ELECTION OF DELEGATE.

(a) ELECTORS AND TIME OF ELECTION.—The Delegate shall be elected—

(1) by the people qualified to vote for the popularly elected officials of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and

(2) at the Federal general election of 2008 and at such Federal general election every 2d year thereafter.

(b) MANNER OF ELECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Delegate shall be elected at large and by a plurality of the votes cast for the office of Delegate.

(2) EFFECT OF ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMARY ELECTIONS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, acting pursuant to legislation enacted in accordance with the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, provides for primary elections for the election of the Delegate, the Delegate shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast in any general election for the office of Delegate for which such primary elections were held.

(c) VACANCY.—In case of a permanent vacancy in the office of Delegate, the office of Delegate shall remain vacant until a successor is elected and qualified.

(d) COMMENCEMENT OF TERM.—The term of the Delegate shall commence on the 3d day of January following the date of the election.

SEC. 204. QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE OF DELEGATE.

To be eligible for the office of Delegate a candidate shall—

(1) be at least 25 years of age on the date of the election;

(2) have been a citizen of the United States for at least 7 years prior to the date of the election;

(3) be a resident and domiciliary of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for at least 7 years prior to the date of the election;

(4) be qualified to vote in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands on the date of the election; and

(5) not be, on the date of the election, a candidate for any other office.

SEC. 205. DETERMINATION OF ELECTION PROCEDURE.

Acting pursuant to legislation enacted in accordance with the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may determine the order of names on the ballot for election of Delegate, the method by which a special election to fill a permanent vacancy in the office of Delegate shall be conducted, the method by which ties between candidates for the office of Delegate shall be resolved, and all other matters of local application pertaining to the election and the office of Delegate not otherwise expressly provided for in this title.

SEC. 206. COMPENSATION, PRIVILEGES, AND IMMUNITIES.

Until the Rules of the House of Representatives are amended to provide otherwise, the Delegate from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall receive the same compensation, allowances, and benefits as a Member of the House of Representatives, and shall be entitled to whatever privileges and immunities are, or hereinafter may

be, granted to any other nonvoting Delegate to the House of Representatives.

SEC. 207. LACK OF EFFECT ON COVENANT.

No provision of this title shall be construed to alter, amend, or abrogate any provision of the covenant referred to in section 202 except section 901 of the covenant.

SEC. 208. DEFINITION.

For purposes of this title, the term ''Delegate'' means the Resident Representative referred to in section 202.

SEC. 209. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS REGARDING APPOINTMENTS TO MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES BY DELEGATE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.

(a) UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY.—Section 4342(a)(10) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking ''resident representative'' and inserting ''Delegate in Congress''.

(b) UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.—Section 6954(a)(10) of such title is amended by striking ''resident representative'' and inserting ''Delegate in Congress''.

(c) UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY.—Section 9342(a)(10) of such title is amended by striking ''resident representative'' and inserting ''Delegate in Congress''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 3079 is legislation which I introduced, along with Natural Resources Chairman NICK RAHALL, on July 18 of this year. The Insular Subcommittee held two hearings on the matters addressed in this bill.

The first, in April, was an oversight hearing on the current economic, social, and security conditions in the Northern Marianas. The second, in August, was a legislative field hearing held in the CNMI. It was the first time a congressional committee convened officially in the U.S. territory.

H.R. 3079 responds to a number of outstanding issues that have been a concern of this Congress, the people of the CNMI as well, and successive administrations beginning with President Reagan. It is no secret that beginning in the 1990s, the CNMI came under great criticism for its immigration policies which left the territory with a nationwide, if not also an international, reputation.

Undercover investigations by national media, reports by human rights organizations, complaints received from foreign governments, and a report issued by the former chairman and ranking member, GEORGE MILLER, detailed a miscarriage of CNMI immigration policy which left foreign guest workers open to abuse by their employers.

Though congressional efforts to reform local immigration control throughout the 1990s were unsuccessful, Congress was able to establish a Federal ombudsman office in the islands to educate foreign guest workers of their rights under both Federal and local laws and to liaison between such populations and the CNMI government.

Today, national security is prominent to the argument to extend Federal immigration laws to the CNMI. Located just 40 miles to the south of the CNMI is Guam, her sister territory. As we know, since the end of World War II, Pacific islands have played a significant role in our strategy to secure our Nation. Most notable, however, amongst all such islands is Guam, as it is the home to many military bases.

Currently, an agreement between the U.S. and Japan would add $15 billion to Guam's existing multi-billion-dollar military infrastructure and would relocate to the island the Third Marine Expeditionary Forces, comprising 8,000 active-duty soldiers, as well as the stationing of a Global Hawk surveillance unit, the establishment of a U.S. Army air defense battalion, and other operations critical to U.S. Naval regional presence.

Guam has been described by military officials as the ''tip of the spear.'' As both Guam and the CNMI make up the Mariana Islands chain, if Guam is the ''tip of the spear,'' then the CNMI is part of the same blade. If one would be interested in preserving national security, then you would want to support this legislation.

Lastly, this legislation would provide a nonvoting delegate for the only U.S. jurisdiction in our country without any form of representation in Congress. Similar legislation has been favorably reported by the Natural Resources Committee in three previous Congresses and received no further consideration by the House. It is time that we provide the same level of representation afforded to other U.S. territories.

In closing, H.R. 3079 is legislation necessary on several fronts. The bill would provide a stable immigration policy to rebuild the CNMI economy, augment current efforts to diversify and strengthen the future economy, increase the opportunities and skills of local residents to fill private sector employment needs, safeguard the existing foreign guest worker population from employer abuse, and secure the region in the interest of national security and give the CNMI representation in Congress.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3079, as amended, has received much support from the Bush administration, as well as the Northern Marianas elected resident representative, a Republican, Pedro Tenorio. Mr. Tenorio has worked hard to bring forth a bill which has consensus from both sides of the aisle.

This bill brings about unified border control and immigration to the Marianas region, which will benefit our national security. In addition, the bill will foster economic development on the islands by providing local businesses and the military with ready access to labor to support the tourist industry and military base construction.

I appreciate the assistance of our colleagues from the Judiciary Committee. I believe that their efforts have helped to improve the bill.

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD Chairman CONYERS' letter on behalf of the Judiciary Committee and Chairman RAHALL's letter on behalf of the Natural Resources Committee regarding this legislation.

DECEMBER 10, 2007.

Hon. NICK J. RAHALL II,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RAHALL: This is to advise you that, as a result of your agreeing to make requested revisions to provisions in H.R. 3079, the Northern Mariana Islands Covenant Implementation Act, that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, we are able to waive any sequential referral of the bill to our committee in order that the bill may proceed without delay to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with the understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 3079 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this important legislation, and request your support if such a request is made.

I would appreciate your including this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor. Thank you for your attention to this request, and for the cooperative relationship between our two committees.

Sincerely,

JOHN CONYERS, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary.

DECEMBER 10, 2007.

Hon. JOHN CONYERS,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your recent letter regarding provisions of H.R. 3079, the Northern Marianas Islands Covenant Implementation Act, that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. I appreciate your willingness to waive sequential referral of the bill so that it may proceed to the House floor for consideration without delay.

I understand that this waiver is not intended to prejudice any future jurisdictional claims over these provisions or similar language. I also understand that you reserve the right to seek to have conferees named from the Committee on the Judiciary on these provisions, and would support such a request if it were made.

This letter will be entered into the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 3079 on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

NICK J. RAHALL II,

Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

Ms. BORDALLO. I want to thank my good friend, the distinguished gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, for her hard work on this legislation and for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 3079. The bill represents a very important opportunity for this Congress to advance the political relationship between the United States and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and its U.S. citizens, to strengthen homeland security in the Western Pacific region, and to bring about needed economic and labor reforms for the benefit of both the people of Guam and the CNMI.

Mr. Speaker, I especially thank the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and the ranking member, Mr. FORTUÑO, as well as Chairman NICK RAHALL and Ranking Member DON YOUNG of the full committee, for working with me throughout this process to address concerns important to my constituents and my district. I also thank the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, Mr. CONYERS, and the Immigration Subcommittee chairwoman, ZOE LOFGREN, for the assistance that they have provided in addressing the bill's immigration provisions. I also want to thank my dear friend ENI FALEOMAVAEGA of American Samoa for his assistance.

Guam is geographically a part of the Mariana Islands chain, and we share, Mr. Speaker, a common Chamorro heritage and culture. The Northern Marianas is comprised of the 14 islands north of Guam, and Guam is the southernmost of the Mariana Islands. I have traveled to the Northern Marianas many times over the years and have witnessed our communities on Guam and the CNMI advance both politically and economically. I listened intently to the concerns and the views of the community during the subcommittee's hearing held on Saipan in August. Revisions were made to this bill based upon the input the subcommittee received at the hearings on Guam and Saipan this summer and from stakeholders in the weeks since those hearings.

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I want to highlight a few provisions important to Guam.

First is the establishment of a unified, regional visa waiver program for both Guam and the CNMI. This program is to be modeled off of the highly successful Guam-only visa waiver program which Congress authorized in 1986. Our islands are marketed together in Asia as a regional destination, and a unified program makes sense from a homeland security and marketing viewpoint. Additionally, the bill allows for sufficient flexibility to expand participation under the program in future years.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the bill provides for important relief in terms of ability to authorize entry of temporary skilled and unskilled workers to Guam and the CNMI to meet the demands associated with the military buildup and economic growth in the civilian sector in the years ahead.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to underscore my emphatic and strong support for title II of this bill, which would provide for representation for the people of the CNMI in this House of Congress. A delegate from the CNMI would help Congress respond to the needs and concerns of the people of the CNMI. A delegate or representative from the CNMI is in keeping with the traditions of this House of Congress and our American democratic form of government. A delegate from the CNMI would aid us in our work to legislate on matters affecting the CNMI and the insular areas. Up to this point, Mr. Speaker, I have been representing the CNMI. This is long overdue, and it's unfair. We have U.S. citizens living in a U.S. commonwealth without a voice in Congress.

So, I urge my colleagues to right this wrong, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, at this time I don't have anyone coming down to speak on the bill, but I anticipate they may. So, until the gentlelady is finished, I will continue to reserve my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the former Chair and former ranking member of the Committee on Natural Resources, GEORGE MILLER.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I want to congratulate her on this legislation.

This is an important piece of legislation, and I'm delighted that we were able to work it out in the committee on a bipartisan basis. And I want to thank all of the Members on both sides of the aisle.

Since the early 1990s, I've tried to bring legislation to the floor of this Congress to reform the abusive labor practices and the broken immigration policies of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, an American territory in the Pacific.

I sought these changes so that we could put a stop to the well-documented and widespread abuse of poor men and women in the garment and tourism industry in the CNMI and to better secure America's borders. But for more than a decade, a lobbyist by the name of Jack Abramoff joined then-Majority Leader Tom Delay and others here in Congress to block my reform efforts, even though they passed on a bipartisan basis in the Senate and in the Senate committee twice.

Ten years ago this month, in fact, Tom Delay visited the Mariana Islands and declared that our Federal reforms ''had no future'' as long as he was in control of the House of Representatives, but there is a new Congress in town. We have new Republican leadership and we have new Democratic leadership, and we're moving quickly under the leadership of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands to right the wrongs of the past.

Earlier this year, we raised the minimum wage across the country, and for the first time in almost a decade we gave the workers of the Northern Marianas a raise as well. Thanks to that minimum wage increase, workers in the Marianas make $3.55 an hour, up from barely $3 that workers were paid for these past years. And what's more, the minimum wage will continue to rise in the CNMI until their wage is equal to that of other American territories.

Today, my friend and committee colleague from the Virgin Islands has brought this legislation to the floor to fix the other long-standing problem in the CNMI. The broken local immigration program in the CNMI has allowed unscrupulous recruiters to exploit and abuse thousands of workers and their families, and it helped the CNMI's sweatshop-based economy to persist for decades. The legislation we are considering today brings the CNMI within the Federal immigration system so that we can put an end to that exploitation and abuse. The bill was drafted by the Bush administration and improved by the Natural Resources Committee.

I want to congratulate Chairman RAHALL and Chairwoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN for bringing this legislation to the floor. As I said earlier, I also want to thank Congressman CONYERS, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for helping to improve this. And I thank the cooperation of the Republicans, DON YOUNG, and the subcommittee of the Resources Committee.

Today, Jack Abramoff is in prison and Tom Delay has resigned in disgrace. And today we pass a bill that restores the human rights to those individuals working in the CNMI. And today we strengthen the borders of America.

With these two pieces of legislation soon to become law, the minimum wage, which is already the law, and this legislation, to repair the immigration, I think now we can comfortably consider and support the notion of a delegate from the CNMI to the Congress. And I want to thank the gentlewoman for her persistence, the gentlewoman from Guam, and the gentleman from American Samoa for that effort. As they know, this is legislation that I have been deeply concerned about for a

very, very long time that unfortunately brought about a lot of bad practices in the CNMI. But I am convinced with this legislation that we're doing the right thing, and we can open a new chapter, hopefully, of economic prosperity and of representation for the CNMI in the Congress of the United States.

And again, I thank the gentlewoman very much for your tireless effort on this legislation.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Chairman MILLER.

Mr. Speaker, might I inquire as to how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 8 minutes remaining.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I want to thank the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, our distinguished chairman of our Insular Affairs Subcommittee, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, for allowing me to speak concerning this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 3079, and I want to commend the chairman of our committee, Mr. NICK RAHALL, and also the chairlady of our Insular Affairs Subcommittee, Mrs. DONNA CHRISTENSEN, for their leadership and service, and above all, their commitment and willingness to go through some of the provisions in the bill which I have concerns with.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the gentleman, former chairman of the Natural Resources Committee and now chairman of our Education and Labor Committee, the gentleman from California, my good friend, Mr. MILLER, not only for his leadership, but throughout the years that he has been very diligent in bringing attention to our colleagues and our Nation about the serious problems involving the situation there in the Northern Mariana Islands.

I recall distinctly that because of the violations of Federal labor laws, the garment factories that were instituted by this one gentleman that was fined by some $9 million, just to show without even questioning or even taking the matter to court some of the problems that we had faced within the CNMI.

Mr. Speaker, I support the concerns of the administration and House Members supporting the bill, but we should also be mindful that there is a GAO study currently under way in reviewing CNMI's immigration problems that hopefully will shed more light on the current situation in CNMI. It is my sincere hope that the GAO study will give us more information on CNMI's overall economic and political development, and the bill we're about to pass will complement the findings of the GAO report that will be completed in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, we ought not to put the blame on the current administration, Governor Ben Fitial, for the failures and misdeeds of his predecessors. Since becoming Governor of CNMI, Governor Fitial has addressed several concerns that had plagued previous administrations. For example, with the closures of most of the government factories in CNMI, the number of alien guest workers has declined from its peak of about 30,000 now to about 20,000 by the end of this year. This will further decrease to about 15,000 by next year.

Governor Fitial has instituted an effective and fair system for handling complaints by alien guest workers. The new system implemented by the Governor has eliminated a backlog of some 3,400 pending labor cases carried over from previous administrations.

Under Governor Fitial's administration, the CNMI Government has implemented a new computerized system for tracking arrivals and departures of alien guest workers, leading to a more effective control of CNMI's immigration problems.

I am especially pleased, Mr. Speaker, for the removal of a certain provision that would have legalized the status of illegal overstayers in CNMI. I want to thank Chairman RAHALL, Chairwoman CHRISTENSEN and Ranking Member DON YOUNG for the spirit of bipartisanship that has authorized CNMI to also have a delegate in the U.S. Congress, as stated in the bill. I cannot stress enough the importance of the unique political relationship between the United States and CNMI, especially in the interest of our national security. The significance of this political relationship has elevated since the closures of the Clarke Air Force Base and our Naval Base in Subic Bay in the Philippines.

I cannot help but mention the name of the late Congressman Phil Burton, Mr. Speaker, who played a most critical role in the development of this unique political relationship between CNMI and the United States. Furthermore, the pending transfer of some 9,000 U.S. marines and their families from Okinawa to Guam, and likely also to CNMI, has made this relationship even more critical and important to our strategic and military interests in this region of the world.

Overall, we have a very important military interest in these islands, and our Nation is grateful that Guam and CNMI are members of our American family.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3079 is supported by the administration and also received bipartisan support during consideration by the Natural Resources Committee. In addition, since reporting the measure, our committee has worked very closely with the House Judiciary Committee, as you've heard, to address other concerns.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Chairman RAHALL for making this issue a priority at the start of this Congress, as well as thank our ranking member, Mr. YOUNG. And we appreciate the collaboration of our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, Chairman CONYERS, Ranking Member SMITH and Subcommittee Chairman LOFGREN and Ranking Member KING, as well as the Judiciary Committee staff.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I understand that we have another speaker who wishes to come here, so I appreciate this opportunity just to say a short word on behalf of this bill. And I appreciate the many speakers who have spoken already who have spoken to the bipartisan nature in which this bill has proceeded.

At this time, I think we need to thank the Judiciary Committee, and I believe the chairman wishes to say something about this particular bill, for the way in which they've worked in a bipartisan way. I am also very grateful to be a part of the Natural Resources Committee, which I think has worked in a bipartisan way to present this bill.

I have to admit that the only thing that would really make me happier is if we were discussing this bill in October rather than this close to Christmas. But other than that, I am very much appreciative of those people who worked for this bill, especially the administration, who is supportive of it, and the resident representative from this particular area.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. I thank the Speaker and the leaders, the floor managers on this provision. I want to thank first of all the ranking member, LAMAR SMITH; the Chair of the Immigration Subcommittee on the Judiciary Committee, ZOE LOFGREN; and in particular, my friend, Chairman NICK RAHALL of the Natural Resources Committee because we have all worked together in making important refinements to the bill. There was a great deal of cooperation.

As it is now clear, what we are dealing with now is the fact that the minimum wage question, the immigration standards, and the taxes to the islands are of great consequence. I commend all of my colleagues here this afternoon for the tremendous work that has occurred.

Labor unions and human rights groups have long called attention to these abuses. And both the Clinton and Bush administration Justice Departments have brought prosecutions under the 13th amendment.

I do also want to commend this administration for the excellent work they have done in this regard.

The decision in the 1976 Covenant establishing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to leave decisions on minimum wages, immigration standards, and

taxes to the Islands has had tragic consequences.

Wide-open guestworker programs, and utter lack of basic labor protections, turned the Northern Marianas into a haven for sweatshops. But modern slavery didn't just occur by day, in the garment factories. It also occurred by night, as cruel brothel owners used deceit and brutality to gratify the demand for prostitutes.

Labor unions and human rights groups have long called attention to these abuses, and both the Clinton and Bush Administration Justice Departments have brought prosecutions under the Thirteenth Amendment against some of the most notorious offenders. But these efforts have been blunted at every turn by the factory owners and their high-paid lobbyists.

A more fundamental effort is clearly needed, and long overdue, and this legislation will finally provide it. It brings the Commonwealth under the Immigration and Nationality Act, with a balanced approach that will help the Islands through the transition. Workers in the Islands will no longer be kept in the shadows, where they have been too readily prey to abuse.

We can see how this effort is already having a result. Just this weekend on Saipan, as many as 15,000 workers and their supporters marched for unity and justice. Fifteen thousand marched on an island of only 60,000 people. We owe it to them to act.

The fundamental immigration policy and human freedom issues at stake are of obvious importance to the Judiciary Committee, and I deeply appreciate the openness of the Natural Resources Committee, under the leadership of Chairman RAHALL, in working with us on important refinements to the bill.

Immigration Subcommittee Chair ZOE LOFGREN and I have also had tremendous help from Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH, in making these improvements in a bipartisan fashion. Finally, I would like to thank the Administration for its constructive role in bringing us to this point.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3079 would apply the Nation's immigration laws to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). For too long, the CNMI has managed its own immigration system outside of the constraints and protections of Federal law. The result has been a massive influx of exploited workers and victims of human trafficking, with concomitant increases in sex slavery and other abusive labor practices.

Recent investigations and prosecutions have uncovered terrible stories of enslavement and forced labor. Thousands of young women and girls lured to the CNMI with promises of good jobs with good pay only to be enslaved and forced into prostitution. Others forced to toil in harsh conditions and for little money in garment sweatshops, made profitable by their ability to exploit cheap labor yet still use the ''Made in the USA'' label.

And to understand the depth of the problem, one only has to look at the statistics. For years, foreign workers have actually outnumbered the indigenous population. It is like the United States bringing in over 300 million foreign workers to the mainland, without giving them any rights or protections.

We have known about these problems since the 1990s, but we have done nothing about them. It is time to change that. H.R. 3079 would extend the protections of the country's immigration laws to the CNMI, using a balanced approach that takes into account the CNMI's vulnerable economy as well as past abuses. It would reign in the islands' lax immigration policies while appropriately considering the labor needs of legitimate businesses. It would also provide for a regional visa waiver program along with Guam, which would provide both increased security and the tourists needed to help sustain the economies of both territories.

This bill is strongly needed to break from the abuses of the past. It is backed by the Administration, and it has bipartisan support in the House and Senate.

I want to thank Chairman RAHALL of the Natural Resources Committee and Chairwoman CHRISTENSEN of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs for caring deeply about this issue and shepherding this bill through Congress. I also want to thank Chairman CONYERS for his leadership, as well as Mr. LAMAR SMITH, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, for working with us in a bipartisan fashion to improve the bill. I urge its passage.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3079, a bill which would extend U.S. immigration laws to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and also authorize a non-voting Delegate from the Northern Marianas to the U.S. House of Representatives.

At the start of the 110th Congress, as the Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, I set out an agenda which included revisiting the CNMI's control and enforcement over immigration policy. Many in this House will recall that for at least two decades, our government and this Congress expressed our concerns with how immigration policy in the CNMI was envisioned and implemented.

When the Northern Marianas was transitioned from being a trust territory of the United Nations to a U.S. territory under our stars and stripes, temporary control over immigration and minimum wage laws were placed in the hands of the new local government. This was done in light of their small, mostly indigenous, population and their undeveloped economy. Their control was never meant to be a permanent fixture of their government.

Throughout the 1990s the CNMI economy grew by taking advantage of its control over immigration and wage policy. A garment industry, much of it owned by nationals of China, saw fit to make the CNMI their new home. In so doing, the industry was able to fill practically every position in their operations with a foreign worker at a minimal cost to their operations.

In 2000, garment exports from the CNMI to the U.S. were estimated to be worth about $1 billion annually. To support this industry, the U.S. Census estimated the foreign guest worker population at 40,000 outnumbering the local population by at least 10,000 and because of lax protections of foreign guest workers under CNMI law many were subject to abuses by their employers. Much of this abuse had been documented by our national media, human rights organizations, and our Committee's former Chairman GEORGE MILLER.

In that decade of the 90s and into the 21st century, despite the clear need to reform the system in the CNMI, any attempts at extending U.S. immigration law or minimum wage laws were met with resistance in Congress.

I loathe thinking that Members of this body would want such a system to flourish. Or that anyone would view what occurred in the CNMI as an economic experiment, grown in a ''petri dish'' because of the CNMI's distance and relative isolation from the U.S. mainland.

Mr. Speaker, with the enactment of H.R. 3079, the dismal and degrading decade of the 90's will be put to rest—never to repeat itself again.

H.R. 3079 would also authorize a non-voting Delegate from the CNMI to be a Member of the House of Representatives. In previous Congresses, similar legislation has passed the Natural Resources Committee more than once and with broad bipartisan support. This goodwill and collaboration has continued in this Congress with the inclusion of the Northern Mariana Island Delegate Act as Title II of H.R. 3079.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentle lady from the Virgin Islands, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, for her leadership throughout this process. As the chairman of Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, she took on this very complex issue at the start of this Congress. Her Subcommittee has been very active on this issue and made every attempt to address concerns raised by different interests in the CNMI before bringing this legislation to the Floor.

I would also like to thank the leadership of the Judiciary Committee who collaborated with us on this legislation. We do appreciate their involvement with this bill and their constructive input as we prepared to have it considered under the suspension calendar.

I support H.R. 3079 and urge its passage.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Having no other speakers on our side, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 3079.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3079, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend the joint resolution that approved the covenant establishing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1230

SAN GABRIEL BASIN RESTORATION FUND AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 123) to authorize appropriations for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 123

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

SECTION 1. SAN GABRIEL BASIN RESTORATION FUND.

Section 110 of division B of the Miscellaneous Appropriations Act, 2001 (114 Stat. 2763A–222), as enacted into law by section 1(a)(4) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106–554, as amended by Public Law 107-66), is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3)(B), by inserting after clause (iii) the following:

''(iv) NON-FEDERAL MATCH.—After $85,000,000 has cumulatively been appropriated under subsection (d)(1), the remainder of Federal funds appropriated under subsection (d) shall be subject to the following matching requirement:

''(I) SAN GABRIEL BASIN WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY.—The San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority shall be responsible for providing a 35 percent non-Federal match for Federal funds made available to the Authority under this Act.

''(II) CENTRAL BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT.—The Central Basin Municipal Water District shall be responsible for providing a 35 percent non-Federal match for Federal funds made available to the District under this Act.'';

(2) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

''(4) INTEREST ON FUNDS IN RESTORATION FUND.—No amounts appropriated above the cumulative amount of $85,000,000 to the Restoration Fund under subsection (d)(1) shall be invested by the Secretary of the Treasury in interest-bearing securities of the United States.''; and

(3) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Restoration Fund established under subsection (a) $146,200,000. Such funds shall remain available until expended.

''(2) SET-ASIDE.—Of the amounts appropriated under paragraph (1), no more than $21,200,000 shall be made available to carry out the Central Basin Water Quality Project.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 123 was introduced by our colleague and good friend, Congressman DAVID DREIER of California, to provide additional funds for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund. This bill, which is a very important bill for my whole area, has worked to clean up a contamination, a Superfund site, that has cleaned up much of the contamination in an area that comprises probably around 30 cities, and as amended will raise the appropriation ceiling by an additional $61.2 million.

We need this to further continue to provide the cleanup on this water to millions of people in dozens of cities. This bill has been worked on in a bipartisan basis. Both my colleague, Mr. DREIER, myself, our staffs have worked diligently for a long time to carry this bill to where it is.

When H.R. 123 was introduced earlier this year, it only included funds for cleanup in the San Gabriel Basin. Since then, my staff, committee staff and Congressman DREIER's staff have worked together to amend the bill to include additional funds for cleanup in the central basin as well. While this legislation provides a central basin with access to much-needed additional funds, all funds left under the original authorization should remain dedicated to the Water Quality Authority, the entity which is responsible for coordinating cleanup efforts in the San Gabriel Basin.

Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to this noncontroversial, bipartisan bill and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 123, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 123 was introduced by our distinguished colleague, the gentleman from California, the distinguished ranking member of the Rules Committee, DAVID DREIER; and it extends a highly successful water cleanup effort in Southern California. This legislation as amended authorizes additional Federal dollars for groundwater remediation aquifers that provide drinking water to the Los Angeles area residents.

As explained by the Democrat bill manager, this amended bill will allow the central basin water authorities to pursue their own appropriations while not harming what remains of the original San Gabriel Restoration Fund. This aspect of the bill is very important when it comes to protecting the San Gabriel water supply. This bill has enjoyed bipartisan support and dialogue throughout the legislative process, and I urge my colleagues to support this result-oriented bill.

I will reserve at this moment.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers waiting. I still remain committed to reserving my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. It is only right that I yield as much time as he chooses to consume to the gentleman from California, the sponsor of this wonderful piece of legislation, Mr. DREIER.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by rising to compliment my distinguished California colleague, the Chair of the subcommittee, for her amazing and festive outfit which includes shoes and earrings which I hope very much our colleagues will seize the opportunity to see during this holiday season.

The importance of stating that is matched by my praise for her work and the work of her staff on this important legislation. It has been nearly a decade, actually back in 1999, that we were able to first pass legislation designed to deal with a horrendous tragedy that came in the aftermath of the Cold War. It was during the Cold War that we had a wide range of defense contractors, some of which are in business today, and some of which no longer are in business; but during that period of time, they legally disposed of spent rocket fuel. They did it legally. No one knew what the ramifications of that would be at the time.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what happened? Well, in the mid-1990s there was this discovery of perchlorate which was a byproduct of the disposal of that spent rocket fuel. Unfortunately, it created the potential to contaminate the water for as many as 7 million Californians.

That is why I want to join in praising Mrs. NAPOLITANO for her work in expanding this cleanup effort, and I want to thank all the members of her staff. I also want to express appreciation to our colleague, CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, who also has worked very hard on this. And I know that the discovery of perchlorate is something that has hit other parts of the country.

Well, we in the San Gabriel Valley have put together what clearly is the best model for not only our area, Mr. Speaker, but for other parts of the country, Dallas, Texas, other parts of California, where this has been found. What does that partnership consist of? It is the Federal Government, and there was a lot of litigation that was initiated in the 1990s over this problem. I decided back then in the 1990s, why should we wait for litigation to go through the courts when perchlorate was seeping into the groundwater when it was very clear that the Federal Government had contracted with these people and we won the Cold War.

And so it was obvious that this was a Federal responsibility for us to step up to the plate. But there, obviously, were a lot of others who did want to take on some of the responsibility, so companies like Aerojet and other companies did agree to participate in the cleanup effort. And the State of California and local governments as well have been part of this process.

Again, our bipartisan staffs have worked so closely together on this issue that to me, Mr. Speaker, it is a great demonstration of the willingness of Chairwoman NAPOLITANO to reach out and work on an issue where we could find areas of agreement. Again, I can't thank her enough for that. And I will say that as we look at this challenge down the road, we hope very much that it is taken care of. But I am well aware of the fact that we will see further environmental difficulties in the future, and I believe that this legislation, H.R. 123, will be a model that can be utilized for many of the other environmental challenges that we face beyond the issue of water in the future.

So again I thank all of my colleagues who have been involved, Mr. Speaker,

and I thank those in our local area, the Water Quality Authority and other entities that have stepped up and are working with us, because they really were key in putting together this model; and I urge my colleagues to support the gentlewoman's resolution here.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, my colleague has very well outlined the background of the bill. Due to his vision, this started over a decade over ago, brought all the parties together, had many hurdles that were accomplished only when people were brought to the table and were able to seek the solution to be more expediently cleaning up that area. And I can tell you that this has been, as he has outlined, a very hard-worked, joint effort, not only at the local level with the State, the locals, the Fed, the EPA, all the water districts, but also our staffs who have run into difficulties and had been able to work to iron them out. So kudos also, Mr. Speaker, to Chairman DREIER's staff in being willing to work with our staff in bringing this to the solution where we are now.

I have no further speakers, Mr. Speaker, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. We have no other speakers, Mr. Speaker. I did not have the opportunity of giving my life history on the last bill, and I really am disappointed Mr. DREIER didn't give his life history in his bill; but beside that disappointment, I also am grateful to be here with the distinguished subcommittee chairwoman who is dressed in as festive an outfit for this time of year as is possible to do, and we simply yield back the balance of our time in urging my colleagues to approve this piece of legislation.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments about my dress and demeanor. I only feel that we are hoping to wrap it up this week and not be here through Christmas.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill's passage. H.R. 123 is an important continuation of the successful federal–state–local partnership that already exists in providing one of the most basic necessities of life—clean drinking water. The bill extends the current authorization of the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund by a total of $61.2 million—$50 million for the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA), and $11.2 million for the Central Basin Municipal Water District (Central Basin).

The San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund was created because of the critical need to quickly implement a plan that would address the contaminated groundwater in the San Gabriel Valley. Before important environmental laws were put into place, the Federal Government had contracted with defense companies that were, at that time, legally permitted to dispose of spent-rocket fuel without proper safeguards for groundwater. There had already been clean-up efforts in the region for other contaminants but in 1997, perchlorate contamination was discovered in the groundwater in the San Gabriel Valley. Unfortunately, at the time of discovery, many of those contractors and other responsible parties had either moved their businesses to other locations, or had simply gone out of business. The region's groundwater remained threatened while mounting litigation between the Environmental Protection Agency and private parties potentially responsible for the contamination delayed any hope for a solution.

In 1999, the Federal Government rightfully stepped in with the creation of the Restoration Fund to provide a mechanism for those responsible for the contamination to partner with local, state and federal agencies to solve the crisis and immediately implement the cleanup. The willingness of the Federal Government to partner with local and state agencies proved to be the impetus for private investment and participation in the ongoing cleanup efforts.

I am proud to say that this partnership is an example of good stewardship of taxpayer money. Initially in 1999, when we first began the process for creating the Restoration Fund, the total cost of cleaning up the basin was estimated at $320 million. Congress created the Restoration Fund in 2000, with an initial authorization of $85 million, or a 25 percent investment. To date, a little over $70 million has been appropriated, with approximately 83 percent of the cleanup provided by local sources and responsible parties, with about 12 percent federal funding.

After recent evaluation of the total project, accounting for increased levels of detected contamination, increased energy costs and inflation, the total cost of cleanup now, almost a decade later, is approximately $1 billion. With a modest increase of $61.2 million, bringing the total federal investment to $146.2 million, or approximately 14 percent, the WQA and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation can continue jointly administering this cleanup program.

Their outstanding work is why this project is cost effective and such a huge success. In working with the WQA and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation over the past decade on this regional solution, there is no doubt that this increase is warranted and will be utilized in the most effective way to continue to provide safe drinking water.

The cost-effectiveness of the original authorization of the Restoration Fund is clear. And without a doubt, that cost-effective use of the federal investment will be continued in this new authorization. The federal partnership will continue to hold the coalition of local water agencies and private parties together to finish the job that we started a decade ago.

It is important to note that this bill, while originally introduced to authorize additional funds for the WQA, was amended to include additional funding for the Central Basin. The WQA and Central Basin were jointly authorized to implement the cleanup by the original Restoration Fund. These two agencies have worked side by side for many years to ensure that the millions of residents in our region have safe drinking water. While the Central Basin has realized its full authorization under the Restoration Fund, there are funds yet to be appropriated to the WQA under the original authorization. Therefore, the WQA is not responsible to provide the Central Basin with any further appropriations that are secured under the original $85 million ceiling.

However, we all recognize Central Basin's desire to seek additional funds beyond what they have already been fully provided under the original authorization to ensure the safety of the region's groundwater. Central Basin has stepped forward in committing to providing the 35 percent local cost share on any future appropriations they secure. Once the WQA receives its full appropriation under the original authorization, should the WQA and Central Basin decide to pursue and split a single appropriation as they've done in the past, then the WQA and the Central Basin have mutually agreed that the WQA will receive 90 percent, and Central Basin will receive 10 percent of any annual appropriation to the Restoration Fund under the new authorization ceiling outlined in this bill. I want to commend the cooperation between these two agencies in working out the details of the implementation of this bill and for their continued service to the residents of the San Gabriel Valley.

This bill is a product of strong bipartisan cooperation with the Chair of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, Ms. NAPOLITANO, an original cosponsor of the bill and great partner throughout the years in addressing the very serious challenge of keeping our groundwater supply safe for southern Californians. I am very proud to have the support of our friends GARY MILLER, LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, ADAM SCHIFF, HILDA SOLIS and LINDA SÁNCHEZ. I also want to thank Ranking Member CATHY MCMORRIS-RODGERS for her support throughout the legislative process as well as recognize the hard work of the very able Majority and Minority subcommittee staff including Steve Lanich, Kiel Weaver, Emily Knight and from Chairwoman NAPOLITANO's personal office, Daniel Chao.

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

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 123, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT MODIFICATION

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3739) to amend the Arizona Water Settlements Act to modify the requirements for the statement of findings.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3739

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

SECTION 1. MODIFICATION TO REQUIREMENTS FOR STATEMENT OF FINDINGS.

Section 302 of the Arizona Water Settlements Act (Public Law 108–451; 118 Stat. 3571) is amended as follows:

(1) In subsection (b)(5), by striking ''proceedings,'' and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting ''proceedings;''.

(2) In subsection (c), by striking ''subsection (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 3739, as introduced by our friend and colleague, Congressman RAUL GRIJALVA of Arizona, our colleague on the Natural Resources Committee and chairman of the subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, amends the 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act to modify one technical, enforceability condition necessary to implement the water settlement for the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we support this bill. It was passed through our committee on a bipartisan basis, and we look forward to working with other tribes who have similar concerns in the future; and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. My colleague from the majority has adequately described this technical correction bill. We have no objection. We urge its passage.

I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, having no further speakers, I will only mention that it was a pleasure working with my ranking member, CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS, and some of my colleagues on the other side to get this very important piece of legislation for the tribe.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3739.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1245

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO THE VICTIMS OF CYCLONE SIDR IN SOUTHERN BANGLADESH

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 842) expressing sympathy to and pledging the support of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 842

Whereas on November 15, 2007, Cylcone Sidr hit the coast of southern Bangladesh with 155 mile-an-hour winds that smashed tens of thousands of homes, damaged roads and buildings, and caused a 15-foot tidal surge that ruined thousands of hectares of crops;

Whereas early reports have branded the destruction from Cyclone Sidr as the worst in Bangladesh in 16 years;

Whereas the resulting damage from the cyclone affected more than 8,000,000 people through loss of their homes and livelihoods;

Whereas over half of the affected internally displaced population are children;

Whereas Bangladesh's Disaster Ministry estimates that the cyclone damaged or destroyed 1,500,000 houses;

Whereas the death toll from the cyclone stands at more than 3,000;

Whereas as the 4 districts in southern Bangladesh that were most drastically affected by the cyclone are Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Barisal, and Pirojpur;

Whereas one relief worker commented that Bagerhat looked like a ''valley of death'' in the days after the storm;

Whereas an entire island in Barisal, another district of southern Bangladesh, was submerged under at least 6 feet of water and houses were blown away by winds;

Whereas the capital, Dhaka, which is located over 130 miles away from the devastated southern coastline, was also impacted by the storm, losing access to power and water for days;

Whereas a massive tidal wave that was caused by Cyclone Sidr hit the Sunderbans, the world's biggest mangrove forest that is home to the endangered Royal Bengal tiger, leaving a wake of death and destruction that have caused experts to declare the forest an ''ecological disaster'';

Whereas officials at the United Nations World Food Program have appealed for international aid to help save lives in Bangladesh, noting that food supplies have been severely disrupted by the cyclone; and

Whereas, due to the limited access to water supply and sanitation facilities that millions of Bangladeshis will face, health officials have warned against the possibility of cholera, dysentery, and other waterborne diseases: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the victims of Cyclone Sidr, which has affected southern Bangladesh;

(2) conveys its sincere support to the people of Bangladesh;

(3) supports the United States Government's efforts to immediately make available all appropriate assistance requested by Bangladeshi authorities; and

(4) reaffirms its commitment to provide relief aid to the victims as the effects of the cyclone continue to unfold.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank my good friend and colleague, Mr. ROTHMAN from New Jersey, for introducing this timely resolution. More than 2 years ago, Hurricane Katrina struck our gulf coast with a fury rarely seen. Katrina caused severe loss of life and property to the citizens of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and our Nation continues to deal with the enormous human and financial consequences of this devastating storm.

Unfortunately, halfway across the world, our friends in Bangladesh are undergoing their own nightmare scenario in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr. Cyclone Sidr struck on November 15, with 155-mile-an-hour winds and 15-foot tidal waves. The destruction that this cyclone left in its wake is the worst Bangladesh has seen in 16 years, and that is not a trivial statement, considering that Bangladesh is a nation that suffered through horrific droughts, floods and other natural disasters on almost an annual basis.

The numbers from Cyclone Sidr are astounding: 3,300 dead, over 800 missing, and 1.5 million houses damaged or destroyed. All told, at least 8.7 million people have been affected, and the economic and social impacts will undoubtedly loom large for years to come.

Just as the world offered their help to us during Hurricane Katrina, Bangladesh needs immediate support from the international community. In that regard, I am proud of the way that the United States Government has responded to this disaster. The U.S. Agency for International Development has already dispatched millions in emergency assistance, and our United States Navy is busy airlifting necessary food and supplies to those that have been affected.

This resolution supports our efforts and reaffirms our commitment to our friends in Bangladesh. I strongly support this resolution and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 842, as amended, expressing sympathy and support for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh. At the outset, I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) for introducing this timely measure, and also extend my appreciation to Chairman LANTOS, as well as Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for helping to expedite its consideration before the House today.

As my colleagues may know, on the 15th of November a powerful, category five-equivalent tropical cyclone struck low-lying areas of Bangladesh from the Bay of Bengal. Mr. Speaker, in the West we call these tropical storms hurricanes, and in the Far East they call them cyclones. Be that as it may, they both have destructive power. Being from southeast Texas on the gulf coast, we call the area ''hurricane alley,'' and we are not unfamiliar with hurricanes. Even this year, Hurricane Humberto, and Hurricane Rita 2 years ago hit my area of the State of Texas.

So, the effects of hurricanes and cyclones are devastating. The effects of Cyclone Sidr has been extremely devastating to the people. Some 6.8 million people have been affected by this disaster, 3,000 people have died, 1,000 people are unaccounted for, and approximately 15,000 people have been injured. In the immediate aftermath of this storm, President and Mrs. Bush offered condolences to the victims, especially those who lost loved ones, people who lost homes and livelihoods in this tragedy.

The United States immediately conveyed to the authorities in Dhaka its willingness to assist in responding to this natural disaster. The United States Agency for International Development provided more than $19 million in emergency funds to support relief and early recovery activities, including shelter and water, sanitation, hygiene programs and emergency food assistance. The United States Department of Defense has also provided invaluable assistance, with 2,400 United States marines and sailors helping the Bangladesh Government provide clean water, medical aid, food, and other relief supplies to the victims of this cyclone. Indeed, more than 162,000 pounds of relief supplies have been delivered to Bangladesh by USS *Kearsarge* and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit as of early this month.

Mr. Speaker, Bangladesh and the United States have been close friends since 1971. Our hearts go out to those who have suffered so grievously during this disaster, and on behalf of the American people it is fitting that we reiterate our commitment to assist the people of Bangladesh as they recover from this devastating storm, and I urge support of this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 842, expressing sympathy to and pledging the support of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh, introduced by my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Representative ROTHMAN. This important resolution reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the people of Bangladesh in the wake of the devastation of Cyclone Sidr.

Mr. Speaker, Bangladesh has long been a valued ally of the United States; and a key Muslim democracy in a region where adherence to democratic principles is at a premium. Recently, I met with Mr. Don Haque, nephew of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. After listening to his concerns and insights, it is my hope that Bangladesh will move swiftly toward regaining its status as a thriving, emerging democracy and set an example for its neighbors and the rest of the world.

The region has been undergoing serious political and economic changes, with several nations undergoing significant political upheaval. Key among these is Bangladesh, where emergency rule was declared by President Iajuddin Ahmed following opposition protests during the run-up to the January 2007 elections. This military-backed caretaker government, currently headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed, is expected to continue to hold power through 2008, though some observers have estimated that elections will not actually take place until 2009 or later.

It is my sincere hope that the military-backed caretaker government currently in power in Bangladesh will promptly lift the state of emergency and move expeditiously toward holding free and fair elections. It would also be my expectation that the caretaker government will abide by internationally recognized standards of human rights and due process in its activities. I am personally concerned by reported events in Bangladesh, including the ban on political and union activity; the restrictions on free movement, free assembly, free association, free speech and a free press; and the denial of bail and other due process rights to more than 200,000 jailed individuals, according to some accounts.

In this key period of political change, one that will hopefully ensure a more free and fair democratic Bangladesh, the nation has been hit by an unthinkable natural disaster that has affected all ways of life. On November 15, the southern coast of Bangladesh was struck by Cyclone Sidr with raging winds of 155 miles-per-hour smashing tens of thousands of homes, damaging roads and buildings, and causing a 16 foot tidal surge that has destroyed thousands of hectares of crops.

This natural disaster is estimated to have affected over 4 million people thus far, with millions being evacuated from their homes due to loss or damage. The Bangladesh Disaster Ministry now estimates that some 750,000 homes were damaged or destroyed in the aftermath of Cyclone Sidr. As a Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am especially concerned by the internal displacement of millions of Bangladeshis, over 400,000 of whom are children below the age of five. The catastrophic death toll has already reached 3,500, though the Bangladesh Red Crescent has warned that the number of deaths may climb as high as 10,000 in what is being called the greatest destruction from a cyclone in Bangladesh in 16 years.

It appears we are only just beginning to see the effects of this great human catastrophe. While Cyclone Sidr is responsible for widespread destruction, the five provinces of Patuakhali, Barguna, Bagerhat, Barisal, and Pirojpur that sit on the southern coast of Bangladesh were the most drastically affected. The nation's capital, Dhaka, which is located over 130 miles away from the country's devastated coastline, still lost access to power and food for days following the storm. Hundreds of thousands of people in southern Bangladesh's remote areas have been cut off from relief operations leading to massive suffering and starvation due to the current lack of access to drinking water and medicines. One relief worker in Bagerhat went so far as to say that the region looked like a ''valley of death.'' Unfortunately, the worst may be yet to come. Health officials have begun to warn against the serious threat posed by cholera, dysentery, and other waterborne diseases as a result of the limited access to water supplies and sanitation facilities that millions of Bangladeshis will face.

As a member of the international community, the United States must offer its support and assistance to a nation that has been devastated by such a tremendous natural disaster. The United Nations World Food Program has appealed to the international community to provide aid to the peoples of Bangladesh, noting that food supplies have been severely disrupted by the cyclone leading to an increased and very real threat of famine. This resolution is significant because it reaffirms the commitment of the United States to provide relief aid to the victims of Cyclone Sidr as its effects continue to unfold. Furthermore, this resolution calls upon the United States to immediately make available any and all appropriate assistance that has been requested by the Bangladeshi authorities.

I believe that it is imperative that the United States government express its heartfelt sympathy and support to the people of Bangladesh in the wake of this terrific disaster, which is why I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me in strongly supporting this legislation, and to call for still more to be done.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 842, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. 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.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 708) honoring the life and accomplishments of Luciano Pavarotti and recognizing the significant and positive impact of his astounding musical talent, his achievement in raising the profile of opera with audiences around the world, and his commitment to charitable causes.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 708

Whereas Luciano Pavarotti was born on October 12, 1935, in the outskirts of Modena, Italy;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti first began singing in a church choir at the age of 9;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti was trained as a teacher and taught second grade in Italy before deciding to pursue his music full time;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti began serious voice training at the age of 19 under Arrigo Pola, a respected teacher and professional tenor in Modena, Italy;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti made his operatic debut on April 29, 1961, as Rodolfo in La Boheme by Giacomo Puccini, at the opera house in Reggio Emilia;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti made his American debut with the Greater Miami Opera in February of 1965 as a last minute replacement in Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti's February 17, 1972, performance in Donizetti's La Fille du Régiment at New York's Metropolitan Opera, included nine high C's during the signature aria and helped him break through to American audiences;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti made frequent television performances which attracted some of the largest audiences ever recorded for televised opera events;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti, with Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras, made their debut as ''The Three Tenors'' in Rome during the 1990 World Cup;

Whereas ''The Three Tenors'' recording from their debut concert became the biggest selling classical record of all time;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti earned five Grammy awards and a Grammy Legend Award;

Whereas on December 12, 1998, Mr. Pavarotti became the first and, so far, only opera singer to perform on ''Saturday Night Live'';

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti organized and hosted annual ''Pavarotti and Friends'' charity concerts in his home town of Modena in Italy, to raise money for worthy United Nations' causes;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti sang at numerous benefit concerts to help victims of natural and manmade tragedies;

Whereas in 1998 Mr. Pavarotti was named the United Nations Messenger of Peace;

Whereas in 2001 Mr. Pavarotti received the Nansen Medal from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees for his efforts raising money on behalf of refugees worldwide;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti received the Kennedy Center Honors in 2001;

Whereas on February 10, 2006, Mr. Pavarotti sang ''Nessun Dorma'' as the final act of the 2006 Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony in Turin, Italy;

Whereas Mr. Pavarotti's immense talent, and passion for his art encouraged people around the world to embrace opera; and

Whereas Luciano Pavarotti died on September 6, 2007 in a hospital in Modena, Italy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honors the life and accomplishments of Luciano Pavarotti and recognizes the significant and positive impact of his astounding musical talent, his achievement in raising the profile of opera with audiences around the world, and his commitment to charitable causes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my good friend and colleague from California, Representative LORETTA SANCHEZ, for introducing this timely resolution.

Mr. Speaker, there is literally no one who has done more to expand world audiences for opera than the late Luciano Pavarotti. He achieved this with a combination of inimitable talent, determination, and an untiring and affable manner. Just as important, he parlayed this fame into an international presence, which he used to push for a host of important causes. This resolution honors his life, his talent, his commitment to those causes.

Like many an Italian boy, Pavarotti dreamed of becoming a soccer star and was better at it than most of his later fans would ever know. But his father, himself an amateur singer, and his recording of the great Italian tenors soon put young Luciano on a path which would catapult him to fame.

From his operatic debut in 1961 to his U.S. debut a few years later opposite Joan Sutherland in Lucia di Lammermoor, Pavarotti soon became known for the sheer beauty of his voice. But the world was wowed in 1972 when Pavarotti struck nine unwavering high C's at New York's Metropolitan Opera House, earning him a title the ''King of High C's.''

Roughly 20 years later, he recorded the biggest selling classical music album of all time, when he teamed up with Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras as the Three Tenors. It must have caused the man who once dreamed of soccer stardom great joy to have debuted this project for the 1990 Soccer World Cup in Italy.

He shared the stage with rock stars, including U2's lead singer, Bono, Eric Clapton, and even pop stars like Celine Dion and the Spice Girls. Pavarotti also won humanitarian awards during the Bosnia war, as well worked alongside Diana, Princess of Wales, to raise money to ban land mines, was named a U.N. Messenger of Peace in 1998, and received the Nansen Medal from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in 2001. He never tired of bringing his voice to rally around causes that make us all proud. When he died this year, his wife, sister, four daughters, nephews, and close relatives and friends were all at his side.

Mr. Speaker, Luciano Pavarotti was a man blessed with an unusual talent, a talent he used to promote not only opera, but a myriad of other causes that helped men and women all throughout the world. This resolution seeks to cast a small light on a soaring life, and I urge its passage.

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

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

I am pleased to rise in support of H. Res. 708, which honors the life and accomplishments of Luciano Pavarotti and recognizes the significant and positive impact of his amazing and astounding musical talent, his achievement in raising the profile of opera with audiences around the world and his commitment to charitable causes.

On September 6th of this year, a legend of the opera would take his final curtain call. When the great Luciano Pavarotti passed away in September, the world lost one of its most beautiful voices. Those with a love of all kinds of music, everyone from opera singers to instrumentalists and pop singers, grieved at the loss of such a great talent. One of those musicians, the rock singer Bono of the group U2, described Pavarotti as, and I quote, ''a great volcano of a man who sang fire but spilled over with a love of life in all its complexity.''

From the time that he made his first debut in 1961, Luciano Pavarotti was an inspiration, not just for the unmatched quality of God-given voice and talent, but for his generosity. Indeed, he used immense talent to raise funds for many worthy causes, including his concerts on behalf of refugees throughout the world.

In 1998, he was named United Nations Messenger of Peace. In 2001, the same year that he received the Kennedy Center Honors, he received a medal from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for his fundraising efforts on behalf of refugees throughout the world.

In memory of this giant man of music, beloved by all those who enjoy the great opera, I ask my colleagues to join in supporting H. Res. 708, introduced by our colleague from California, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ.

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

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

□ 1300

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. I thank my good friend from New York.

I am pleased that today the House of Representatives is considering House Resolution 708, honoring the life and accomplishments of Luciano Pavarotti. As the sponsor of this legislation, I would like to thank the Committee on Foreign Affairs, especially the chairman, Mr. LANTOS, for his assistance in

bringing this before the end of the year, the year 2007, the year in which Mr. Pavarotti died.

He was born on October 12, 1935, and he died on September 6, 2007, in Modena, Italy. I know, because I was in the Veneto that day when his death was announced by his family. And during his life, Mr. Pavarotti shared his incredible talent and passion for opera with the entire world. During his life, he actually began as a second grade teacher before he decided to turn to his pursuit of music full time. After devoting himself to serious voice training for over 7 years, Mr. Pavarotti made his operatic debut in the role of Rodolfo in Puccini's ''La Boheme.''

From that initial performance, Pavarotti continued to follow his dream of performing opera around the world. And after many years of hard work, of course, he became really one of opera's premier performers. But in addition to his incredible voice and his talent on stage; Mr. Pavarotti made frequent television performances, and as a result he really opened up the world of opera to a whole new audience. Mr. Pavarotti, with Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras, entered into one of the most famous collaborations in music, and The Three Tenors continued to bring opera music to more and more people around the world. As an established opera star, he decided to use his talent and his connections to benefit charities, and he began hosting the annual Pavarotti and Amici, or Pavarotti and Friends, concerts in Modena, Italy, to raise money for worthy United Nations causes.

Mr. Pavarotti's appeal to opportunities, he got an opportunity to see things that are rarely enjoyed by most of us. He earned five Grammy Awards and a Grammy Legend Award, and he became the first and so far the only opera singer to perform on ''Saturday Night Live.'' Mr. Pavarotti also received numerous honors for his charitable work including being named the United Nations' Messenger of Peace and receiving the Nansen Medal from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in honor of his efforts to raise money on behalf of refugees around the world.

Mr. Pavarotti's career is an inspiration to aspiring young artists around the world, and it encourages them to continue to go after their dream. In addition, Mr. Pavarotti's commitment to charitable causes provides an important example of how artists can raise awareness in funding for people in need.

Mr. Speaker, since his death, the world has missed his talent and his passion. And although we will always have recordings of his beautiful music, we will continue to miss his presence and his love for life. And I know that in the last 10 years of his life he filled his life and was very fulfilled. But we should remember that Mr. Pavarotti once said: ''A life in music is a life beautifully spent, and this is what I have devoted my life to.''

Mr. Pavarotti's life was indeed a life beautifully spent, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting House Resolution 708 to honor his life and his achievements.

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

Mr. MEEKS of New York. 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 New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 708.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTMAS AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 847) recognizing the importance of Christmas and the Christian faith, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 847

Whereas Christmas, a holiday of great significance to Americans and many other cultures and nationalities, is celebrated annually by Christians throughout the United States and the world;

Whereas there are approximately 225,000,000 Christians in the United States, making Christianity the religion of over three-fourths of the American population;

Whereas there are approximately 2,000,000,000 Christians throughout the world, making Christianity the largest religion in the world and the religion of about one-third of the world population;

Whereas Christians and Christianity have contributed greatly to the development of western civilization;

Whereas the United States, being founded as a constitutional republic in the traditions of western civilization, finds much in its history that points observers back to its Judeo-Christian roots;

Whereas on December 25 of each calendar year, American Christians observe Christmas, the holiday celebrating the birth of their savior, Jesus Christ;

Whereas for Christians, Christmas is celebrated as a recognition of God's redemption, mercy, and Grace; and

Whereas many Christians and non-Christians throughout the United States and the rest of the world, celebrate Christmas as a time to serve others: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the Christian faith as one of the great religions of the world;

(2) expresses continued support for Christians in the United States and worldwide;

(3) acknowledges the international religious and historical importance of Christmas and the Christian faith;

(4) acknowledges and supports the role played by Christians and Christianity in the founding of the United States and in the formation of the western civilization;

(5) rejects bigotry and persecution directed against Christians, both in the United States and worldwide; and

(6) expresses its deepest respect to American Christians and Christians throughout the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank our colleague from Iowa, STEVE KING, for introducing this important and timely resolution.

Mr. Speaker, along with people of other faiths, our Christian friends and neighbors around the world mark this time of year as a special festive season. As Kwanzaa approaches and Hanukkah draws to a close, it is notably the Christmas season. We are in the midst of Advent, and this discussion today is bracketed by two holidays observed by many Catholics who make up the majority of Christiandom: the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and Our Lady of Guadalupe. There are approximately 2 billion Christians, making Christianity the largest religion of the world and the faith of about one-third of the global population.

On December 25, Christians will celebrate Jesus the Christ, whom they have embraced as their savior. For believers, this holiday is a recognition of God's redemption, mercy, and grace. For Christians and non-Christians alike, Christmas is also a time to serve others. The celebration of Christmas requires devotion to faith, community, and family, truly universal values we all can share.

It is both fitting and important for the United States House of Representatives to mark this event. This legislation expresses the deep respect we feel for Christians in the United States and throughout the world. The House must reject bigotry and persecution directed against Christians, both in the United States and worldwide. We must affirm the values of religious freedom in this country and abroad. I strongly support this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, as original cosponsor, to rise in support of this

timely resolution recognizing the significance of Christmas and the contribution of the Christian faith to the United States and to other nations throughout the world. While Christmas does not have the same religious meaning for all citizens, it nevertheless invokes the values of friendship and goodwill that are common to all nations.

December 25, or Christmas, as we say, commemorates a birth that influenced the world in an unmatched way. Christ's life, his teachings, his example, his sacrifice, and his death brought to life one of the great religions of the world, one which underpins the foundations of democracy in our own United States of America and even other countries throughout the world.

Even in complex times such as those in which we live at this time, the simple central message of Christianity endures: ''love thy neighbor as thyself.''

For many, Christmas invokes the images of Santa Claus and exchanging of gifts. This comes from the patron St. Nicholas, who helped poor children hundreds of years ago by giving them presents. But Christianity is more. It is the birth of the Christian religion and commemorates the birth of its founder, Jesus, on Christmas day.

At its core are the fundamental important ideals of ''Peace on Earth, Goodwill toward men.'' The poor, the suffering, those left alone or far from their families, and those departed who were dear to us whom we remember from time to time are all recognized in this great religion of Christianity, and, through it, all have been offered hope.

At this time of year in this season of Christmas, I ask my colleagues to join in supporting House Resolution 847 introduced by our colleague, Mr. KING of Iowa, recognizing the importance of Christmas and the Christian faith.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) such time as he may consume.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise today in support of House Resolution 847, which recognizes the importance of Christmas and the Christian faith.

While there may be some who bristle at the idea of the House of Representatives considering this resolution or any similar resolution, I would note that though the first amendment states that the Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, the first amendment also states that the Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

Mr. Speaker, our Founders had the foresight to realize that a state-run church of America would do more harm to the perseverance of faith and the hearts of our citizenry, and it would certainly lead to irreconcilable division. However, at the same time, the Founders and writers of the Constitution also recognized that the success of this great American experiment, this historic social contract, was contingent upon a moral and a religious people and the recognition that we had inalienable rights, because those rights are given to us by our Creator. If these rights are given to us by a Creator, then no human being can take them away. And this is the foundation of our system of justice, the foundation of our American society.

And so today we take just a few minutes to consider this resolution which respects the faith and the beliefs of a vast majority of this country and a plurality of the world, stating that, and I quote:

''Whereas Christians identify themselves as those who believe in the salvation from sin offered to them through the sacrifice of their savior, Jesus Christ, the son of God, and who, out of gratitude for the gift of salvation, commit themselves to living their lives in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Bible.''

So I hope that no Member of this Congress, no individual anywhere takes offense to this debate and this resolution, because none is intended. This resolution simply offers recognition to a faith and the values of that faith which has sustained hundreds of millions of people throughout the world, not just the United States. And after more than two millennia, we once again approach the commemoration of a birth that many recognize as holy but all recognize as historic.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that just this past weekend I took my granddaughters, 9-year-old, almost 10 they would want me to say, identical twin granddaughters with my wife, and we were in Representative MEEKS' great City of New York and we had an opportunity to take our grandchildren to the Radio City Music Hall to see that annual Christmas performance. That 1½ hour performance, Mr. Speaker, was absolutely wonderful and a great tribute to the city, a great tribute to Representative MEEKS and all of our colleagues from New York.

In that performance, Mr. Speaker, they had a nativity scene, the most beautiful nativity scene that I have had the opportunity to witness. And it meant so much to my granddaughters for me to explain about our Christian faith and heritage. So if it is good enough for New York City and Radio City Music Hall, it is good enough for this Congress. And, by golly, I want to encourage all my speakers to support the resolution of Representative KING from Iowa. He was detained because of inclement weather; otherwise, he would be on this floor. But I commend and thank my colleague from New York, Representative MEEKS, and also my colleague from Texas, Representative POE, for allowing me time.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the author of this resolution, Mr. KING from Iowa, is already having a white Christmas. He is stuck in Iowa because of the snow. He could not be here.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, this just shows how great our Nation is as we celebrate holidays, as we indicated Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, we look at other religions, Islam and Ramadan. It shows the diversity and it shows the tolerance that we have for all. And as we enter this great holiday season, this is the example I think that we show around the world, that we celebrate each other's religion in great joy here, recognizing with respect whom they worship.

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 New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 847, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. POE. 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.

□ 1315

BLOCK BURMESE JADE (JUNTA'S ANTI-DEMOCRATIC EFFORTS) ACT OF 2007

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3890) to amend the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 to waive the requirement for annual renewal resolutions relating to import sanctions, impose import sanctions on Burmese gemstones, expand the number of individuals against whom the visa ban is applicable, expand the blocking of assets and other prohibited activities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3890

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Burmese regime has continued and worsened its obstruction of democratic processes and mass violation of human rights identified in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–61; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note). In August and September 2007, Burmese people from all walks of life conducted their largest peaceful public protests since 1988. The peaceful public protests responded to a drastic increase in fuel prices, as well as the Burmese regime's ongoing denial of the democratic and human rights of

the Burmese people. On September 24, 2007, Buddhist monks actively participated and increasingly led these peaceful demonstrations, culminating in an estimated 100,000 people marching through Rangoon, Burma. The protesters peacefully demanded the release of 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD), marching past security barricades to her house in a show of support for Burmese democracy. The Burmese regime continues to refuse to recognize the results of the 1990 election, won by the NLD, which gave Aung San Suu Kyi's party the right to form a government.

(2) The Burmese regime, which calls itself the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), responded to these peaceful protests with a violent crackdown leading to the reported killing of some 200 people, including a Japanese photojournalist, and hundreds of injuries. Human rights groups further estimate that over 2,000 individuals have been detained, arrested, imprisoned, beaten, tortured, or otherwise intimidated as part of this crackdown. The Burmese regime continues to detain, torture, and otherwise intimidate those individuals whom it believes participated in or led the protests and it has closed down or otherwise limited access to several monasteries and temples that played key roles in the protests.

(3) The Burmese regime and its supporters finance their ongoing violations of human rights, undemocratic policies, and military activities through financial transactions, travel, and trade involving the United States, including the sale of gemstones. Despite the sanctions imposed in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, the Burmese regime seeks out ways to evade these restrictions. Millions of dollars in gemstones that are exported from Burma ultimately enter the United States but the Burmese regime attempts to conceal the origin of the gemstones in an effort to evade the sanctions in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003. For example, over 90 percent of the world's ruby supply originates in Burma but only three percent of the rubies entering the United States are claimed to be of Burmese origin. The value of Burmese gemstones is more than 99 percent a function of their original quality and geological origin, and not a result of the labor involved in cutting and polishing the gemstones.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003.

(a) PROHIBITION ON IMPORTATION OF JADEITE AND RUBIES FROM BURMA AND ARTICLES OF JEWELRY CONTAINING JADEITE OR RUBIES FROM BURMA.—The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–61; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended by inserting after section 3 the following new section:

"SEC. 3A. PROHIBITION ON IMPORTATION OF JADEITE AND RUBIES FROM BURMA AND ARTICLES OF JEWELRY CONTAINING JADEITE OR RUBIES FROM BURMA.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term 'appropriate congressional committees' means—

''(A) the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

''(B) the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

''(2) BURMESE COVERED ARTICLE.—The term 'Burmese covered article' means—

''(A) jadeite mined or extracted from Burma;

''(B) rubies mined or extracted from Burma; or

''(C) articles of jewelry containing jadeite described in subparagraph (A) or rubies described in subparagraph (B).

''(3) NON-BURMESE COVERED ARTICLE.—The term 'non-Burmese covered article' means—

''(A) jadeite mined or extracted from a country other than Burma;

''(B) rubies mined or extracted from a country other than Burma; or

''(C) articles of jewelry containing jadeite described in subparagraph (A) or rubies described in subparagraph (B).

''(4) JADEITE; RUBIES; ARTICLES OF JEWELRY CONTAINING JADEITE OR RUBIES.—

''(A) JADEITE.—The term 'jadeite' means any jadeite classifiable under heading 7103 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (in this paragraph referred to as the 'HTS').

''(B) RUBIES.—The term 'rubies' means any rubies classifiable under heading 7103 of the HTS.

''(C) ARTICLES OF JEWELRY CONTAINING JADEITE OR RUBIES.—The term 'articles of jewelry containing jadeite or rubies' means—

''(i) any article of jewelry classifiable under heading 7113 of the HTS that contains jadeite or rubies; or

''(ii) any article of jadeite or rubies classifiable under heading 7116 of the HTS.

''(5) UNITED STATES.—The term 'United States', when used in the geographic sense, means the several States, the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States.

''(b) PROHIBITION ON IMPORTATION OF BURMESE COVERED ARTICLES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, until such time as the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that Burma has met the conditions described in section 3(a)(3), beginning 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007, the President shall prohibit the importation into the United States of any Burmese covered article.

''(2) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President is authorized to, and shall as necessary, issue such proclamations, regulations, licenses, and orders, and conduct such investigations, as may be necessary to implement the prohibition under paragraph (1).

''(3) OTHER ACTIONS.—Beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall take all appropriate actions to seek the following:

''(A) The issuance of a draft waiver decision by the Council for Trade in Goods of the World Trade Organization granting a waiver of the applicable obligations of the United States under the World Trade Organization with respect to the provisions of this section and any measures taken to implement this section.

''(B) The adoption of a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly expressing the need to address trade in Burmese covered articles and calling for the creation and implementation of a workable certification scheme for non-Burmese covered articles to prevent the trade in Burmese covered articles.

''(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTATION OF NON-BURMESE COVERED ARTICLES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), until such time as the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that Burma has met the conditions described in section 3(a)(3), beginning 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007, the President shall require as a condition for the importation into the United States of any non-Burmese covered article that—

''(A) the exporter of the non-Burmese covered article has implemented measures that have substantially the same effect and achieve the same goals as the measures described in clauses (i) through (iv) of paragraph (2)(B) (or their functional equivalent) to prevent the trade in Burmese covered articles; and

''(B) the importer of the non-Burmese covered article agrees—

''(i) to maintain a full record of, in the form of reports or otherwise, complete information relating to any act or transaction related to the purchase, manufacture, or shipment of the non-Burmese covered article for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of entry of the non-Burmese covered article; and

''(ii) to provide the information described in clause (i) to the relevant United States authorities upon request.

''(2) EXCEPTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The President may waive the requirements of paragraph (1) with respect to the importation of non-Burmese covered articles from any country with respect to which the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees has implemented the measures described in subparagraph (B) (or their functional equivalent) to prevent the trade in Burmese covered articles.

''(B) MEASURES DESCRIBED.—The measures referred to in subparagraph (A) are the following:

''(i) With respect to exportation from the country of jadeite or rubies in rough form, a system of verifiable controls on the jadeite or rubies from mine to exportation demonstrating that the jadeite or rubies were not mined or extracted from Burma, and accompanied by officially-validated documentation certifying the country from which the jadeite or rubies were mined or extracted, total carat weight, and value of the jadeite or rubies.

''(ii) With respect to exportation from the country of finished jadeite or polished rubies, a system of verifiable controls on the jadeite or rubies from mine to the place of final finishing of the jadeite or rubies demonstrating that the jadeite or rubies were not mined or extracted from Burma, and accompanied by officially-validated documentation certifying the country from which the jadeite or rubies were mined or extracted.

''(iii) With respect to exportation from the country of articles of jewelry containing jadeite or rubies, a system of verifiable controls on the jadeite or rubies from mine to the place of final finishing of the article of jewelry containing jadeite or rubies demonstrating that the jadeite or rubies were not mined or extracted from Burma, and accompanied by officially-validated documentation certifying the country from which the jadeite or rubies were mined or extracted.

''(iv) With respect to re-exportation from the country of jadeite or rubies in rough form, finished jadeite or polished rubies, or articles of jewelry containing jadeite or rubies, a system of verifiable controls on the jadeite or rubies or articles of jewelry containing jadeite or rubies ensuring that no jadeite or rubies mined or extracted from Burma have entered the legitimate trade in jadeite or rubies.

''(v) Verifiable recordkeeping by all entities and individuals engaged in mining, importation, and exportation of non-Burmese covered articles in the country, and subject to inspection and verification by authorized authorities of the government of the country in accordance with applicable law.

''(vi) Implementation by the government of the country of proportionate and dissuasive penalties against any persons who violate laws and regulations designed to prevent trade in Burmese covered articles.

''(vii) Full cooperation by the country with the United Nations or other official international organizations that seek to prevent trade in Burmese covered articles.

''(d) INAPPLICABILITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The requirements of subsection (b)(1) and subsection (c)(1) shall not apply with respect to the importation of Burmese covered articles and non-Burmese covered articles, respectively, that were previously exported from the United States and reimported into the United States by the same person, without having been advanced in value or improved in condition by any process or other means while outside the United States, if the person declares that the reimportation of the Burmese covered articles or non-Burmese covered articles, as the case may be, satisfies the requirements of this paragraph.

''(2) ADDITIONAL PROVISION.—The requirements of subsection (c)(1) shall not apply with respect to the importation of non-Burmese covered articles that are imported by or on behalf of an individual for personal use and accompanying an individual upon entry into the United States.

''(e) ENFORCEMENT.—Burmese covered articles or non-Burmese covered articles that are imported into the United States in violation of any prohibition of this Act or any other provision law shall be subject to all applicable seizure and forfeiture laws and criminal and civil laws of the United States to the same extent as any other violation of the customs laws of the United States.

''(f) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that the President should take the necessary steps to seek to negotiate an international arrangement—similar to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for conflict diamonds—to prevent the trade in Burmese covered articles. Such an international arrangement should create an effective global system of controls and should contain the measures described in subsection (c)(2)(B) (or their functional equivalent).

''(2) KIMBERLEY PROCESS CERTIFICATION SCHEME DEFINED.—In paragraph (1), the term 'Kimberley Process Certification Scheme' has the meaning given the term in section 3(6) of the Clean Diamond Trade Act (Public Law 108–19; 19 U.S.C. 3902(6)).

''(g) REPORT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report describing what actions the United States has taken during the 60-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of such Act to seek—

''(A) the issuance of a draft waiver decision by the Council for Trade in Goods of the World Trade Organization, as specified in subsection (b)(3)(A);

''(B) the adoption of a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, as specified in subsection (b)(3)(B); and

''(C) the negotiation of an international arrangement, as specified in subsection (f)(1).

''(2) UPDATE.—Not later than 180 days after the transmission of the report required under paragraph (1), and every 6 months thereafter, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees an update of the report describing the continued efforts of the United States to seek the items specified in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1).

''(h) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 14 months after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the effectiveness of the implementation of this section. The Comptroller General shall include in the report any recommendations or any modifications to this Act that may be necessary.''.

(b) VISA BAN.—Paragraph (1) of section 6(a) of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 is amended to read as follows:

''(1) VISA BAN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall deny the issuance of a visa and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall deny admission to the United States to a sanctioned person (as such term is defined in section 4(b)(8).

''(B) WAIVER.—The ban described in subparagraph (A) may be waived only if the President determines and certifies in writing to Congress that such is in the national interests of the United States.''.

(c) FREEZING ASSETS OF THE BURMESE REGIME IN THE UNITED STATES.—Section 4 of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsection (c) and (d); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection:

''(b) BLOCKING OF ASSETS AND OTHER PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall block all property and interests in property, including all commercial, industrial, or public utility undertakings or entities, that, on or after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007—

''(A) are owned, in whole or in part, by any sanctioned person; and

''(B) are in the United States, or in the possession or control of the Government of the United States or of any financial institution or financial agency organized under the laws of a State, territory, or possession of the United States, including any branch or office of such financial institution or financial agency that is located outside the United States.

''(2) PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES.—Any person who, on or after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007, engages in any of the following activities shall be subject to penalties described in paragraph (6):

''(A) Payments or transfers of any property, or any transactions involving the transfer of anything of economic value by any United States person, including any financial institution or financial agency organized under the laws of a State, territory, or possession of the United States and any branch or office of such financial institution or financial agency that is located outside the United States, to any sanctioned person.

''(B) Direct or indirect payments of any tax, cancellation penalty, or any other amount to the Burmese Government, including amounts paid or incurred with respect to any joint production agreement relating to the Yadana or Shwe gas fields or pipelines. Any such payment made by or on behalf of a United States person after the date of the enactment of the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007 shall be deemed a willful violation of this Act for purposes of penalties described in paragraph (6) and any other related provision of law.

''(C) The export or reexport to any entity owned, controlled, or operated by a sanctioned person directly or indirectly, of any goods, technology, or services by a United States person.

''(D) The performance by any United States person of any contract, including a contract providing a loan or other financing, in support of an industrial, commercial, or public utility operated, controlled, or owned by a sanctioned person.

''(3) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.—

''(A) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President may block all property and interests in property of the following entities and persons, to the same extent as property and interests in property of a foreign person determined to have committed acts of terrorism for purposes of Executive Order No. 13224 of September 21, 2001, (50 U.S.C. 1701 note) may be blocked:

''(i) The Burmese Government, the Burmese military, or a sanctioned person, including entities owned or effectively controlled by the Burmese Government, the Burmese military, or a sanctioned person.

''(ii) Persons otherwise associated with the Burmese Government, the Burmese military, or a sanctioned person.

''(B) CONDITIONS ON CERTAIN ACCOUNTS.—The President may prohibit or impose conditions on the opening or maintaining in the United States of a correspondent account or payable-through account by any financial institution or financial agency that is organized under the laws of a State, territory, or possession of the United States, if the President determines that such an account might be used—

''(i) by a person or entity that holds property or an interest in property belonging to the Burmese Government, the Burmese military, or a sanctioned person; or

''(ii) to conduct a transaction on behalf of or for the benefit of the Burmese Government, the Burmese military, or a sanctioned person.

''(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit any contract or other financial transaction with any nongovernmental humanitarian organization in Burma.

''(5) EXCEPTIONS.—The prohibitions and restrictions described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) shall not apply to medicine, medical equipment or supplies, food, or any other form of humanitarian assistance provided to Burma as relief in response to a humanitarian crisis.

''(6) PENALTIES.—Any person who violates any prohibition or restriction described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) shall be subject to the penalties under section 6 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as for a violation under that Act.

''(7) LISTING OF SANCTIONED PERSONS.—The Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury shall update and publish in the Federal Register new lists of sanctioned persons as additional information becomes available. The Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury shall devote sufficient resources to the identification of information concerning sanctioned persons to carry out the purposes described in this Act.

''(8) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNT; PAYABLE-THROUGH ACCOUNT.—The terms 'correspondent account' and 'payable-through account' have the meanings given such terms in section 5318A(e)(1) of title 31, United States Code.

''(B) FINANCIAL AGENCY.—The term 'financial agency' has the meaning given such term in section 5312 of title 31, United States Code.

''(C) FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term 'financial institution' has the meaning given such term in section 5312 of title 31, United States Code.

''(D) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term 'United States person' means—

''(i) any United States citizen or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States;

''(ii) any person in the United States;

''(iii) any entity organized under the laws of the United States, any State or territory thereof, or the District of Columbia, and any foreign branch or subsidiary of such an entity; or

''(iv) any entity organized under the laws of the United States, any State or territory thereof, or the District of Columbia, in which an individual or entity described in clauses (i), (ii), or (iii) owns, directly or indirectly, more than 50 percent of the outstanding capital stock or other beneficial interest in such entity.

''(E) SANCTIONED PERSON.—The term 'sanctioned person' means—

''(i) any individual who is a member of the former or present leadership of the SPDC or the union Solidarity Development Association;

''(ii) any member of the Burmese military involved in the violent repression of the public protests in Burma in August, September, and October 2007 (regardless of when such repression occurred);

''(iii) any Burmese official who has engaged in, ordered, or facilitated acts of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights (as defined in section 502B(d)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2304(d)(1)), either as an individual or as a member of a group or government; or

''(iv) any member of the immediate family of any individual described in clauses (i), (ii), or (iii).''.

SEC. 4. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN BURMA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to use all available resources to assist Burma democracy activists and humanitarian aid workers in their efforts to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights in Burma.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $20,000,000 to the Secretary of State for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for the following purposes:

(1) To provide aid to democracy and human rights activists and organizations inside and outside of Burma working to bring a transition to democracy inside Burma, including to individuals and groups that—

(A) promote democracy and human rights;

(B) represent the ethnic minorities of Burma;

(C) broadcast radio and television programs into Burma that promote democracy and report on human rights conditions inside Burma; or

(D) compile evidence of human rights violations by the SPDC and its civilian militia, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), and of the SPDC and its entities' efforts to repress peaceful activities.

(2) To provide aid to humanitarian workers who—

(A) provide food, medical, educational, or other assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons;

(B) assist women and girls after incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence; or

(C) assist in the rehabilitation of child soldiers.

(c) PREVENTING FUNDS FROM ENRICHING THE SPDC.—None of the funding made available under this section may be provided to SPDC-controlled entities, entities working with or providing cash or resources to the SPDC, including organizations affiliated with the United Nations, or entities requiring the approval of the SPDC to operate within the borders of Burma.

SEC. 5. REPORT ON MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE AID TO BURMA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report containing a list of countries, companies, and other entities that provide military or intelligence aid to the SPDC and describing such military or intelligence aid provided by each such country, company, and other entity.

(b) MILITARY OR INTELLIGENCE AID DEFINED.—For the purpose of this section, the term ''military or intelligence aid'' means, with respect to the SPDC—

(1) the provision of weapons, weapons parts, military vehicles, or military aircraft;

(2) the provision of military or intelligence training, including advice and assistance on subject matter expert exchanges;

(3) the provision of weapons of mass destruction and related materials, capabilities, and technology, including nuclear, chemical, or dual-use capabilities;

(4) conducting joint military exercises;

(5) the provision of naval support, including ship development and naval construction;

(6) the provision of technical support, including computer and software development and installations, networks, and infrastructure development and construction; or

(7) the construction or expansion of airfields, including radar and anti-aircraft systems.

(c) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 6. DENIAL OF FOREIGN TAX CREDIT WITH RESPECT TO BURMA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 901(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) SPECIAL RULE FOR BURMA.—In addition to any period during which this subsection would otherwise apply to Burma, this subsection shall apply to Burma during the period—

''(i) beginning on January 1, 2008, and

''(ii) ending on the date the Secretary of State certifies to the Secretary of the Treasury that Burma meets the requirements of section 3(a)(3) of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this subparagraph).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on January 1, 2008.

SEC. 7. WAIVER OF COMPETITIVE NEED LIMITATION UNDER GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES FOR CERTAIN ARTICLES OF INDIA AND THAILAND.

(a) WAIVER.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall waive the application of subsection (c)(2) of section 503 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2463) pursuant to subsection (d) of such section (relating to waiver of competitive need limitation) with respect to articles of Thailand and India classifiable under subheading 7113.19.50 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the President should—

(1) review any waiver of the application of subsection (c)(2) of section 503 of the Trade Act of 1974 pursuant to subsection (d) of such section with respect to any eligible article of any beneficiary developing country that is revoked pursuant to subsection (d)4)(B)(ii) of such section; and

(2) reinstate such waiver unless the United States International Trade Commission affirmatively determines that—

(A) revocation of such waiver will not reduce the current level of exports of such article from the beneficiary developing country to the United States; and

(B) revocation of the waiver will not benefit one or more countries that are not designated as beneficiary developing countries for purposes of title V of the Trade Act of 1974.

SEC. 8. OFFSETS.

(a) TIME FOR PAYMENT OF CORPORATE ESTIMATED TAXES.—The percentage under subparagraph (B) of section 401(1) of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act is increased by 0.25 percentage points.

(b) CUSTOMS USER FEES.—Section 13031(j)(3)(B)(i) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)(B)(i)) is amended by striking ''December 13, 2014'' and inserting ''January 24, 2015''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, just a few short months ago, Burma's Saffron Revolution unfolded before the eyes of the world. Buddhist monks draped in crimson robes peacefully marching through the streets of Rangoon. Tens of thousands of Burmese citizens joining the monks, echoing their calls for change. A chorus of world voices asking the Burma's ruling junta to respond peacefully and responsibly to cries for freedom and democracy.

The reaction of the ruling regime to these peaceful demonstrations was equally as unforgettable. Unarmed monks shot in the streets, in full view of the international community. Thousands of peaceful monks hauled off to detention centers to be tortured. Political dissidents tossed in jail, facing years behind bars simply for criticizing the government.

In recent days, loudspeakers across the country warn: ''We have video. We will find you,'' all in an Orwellian effort to intimidate Burma's people and deter them from their aspirations for democracy and a better life.

This crackdown on nonviolent protesters and Buddhist monks by Burma's military thugs sets a new low of brutality even for this regime of military dictators.

These brutal actions demonstrate the moral bankruptcy of the regime. Unfortunately, the regime is not economically bankrupt. It continues to take Burma's vast resources as its own while the vast majority of Burma's people suffer in dire poverty.

The legislation before the House today hits the regime where it hurts, in the wallet. By blocking the import of Burmese gems into the United States and expanding financial sanctions, the legislation will take hundreds of millions out of the pockets of the regime each year.

This legislation is supported by United States industry. The 11,000-store Jewelers of America supports a ban of Burmese gem imports to the United States. Major retailers like Tiffany's and Bulgari have also voluntarily implemented such a ban.

The bill before the House also cuts off tax deductions for Chevron's major gas investment in Burma. By closing this loophole, we can dramatically increase pressure on other civilized nations to similarly demand that their firms divest themselves of Burma holdings.

This bipartisan bill strengthens our goal of a coordinated, multilateral approach to sanctions against Burma. The European Union recently announced a similar ban on the import of Burmese gems, as have the Canadians. I hope our legislation will push other countries to reexamine their financial dealings with the regime and the investment their oil companies make in Burma.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer this legislation to strengthen the sanctions imposed by the 2003 Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act. In doing so, I am again joined by the ranking Republican member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. PETER KING of the Homeland Security Committee, both of whom have been strong voices for freedom in Burma.

Let me also express my appreciation to the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. RANGEL, and the chairman of the Trade Subcommittee, Mr. LEVIN, as well as their Republican counterparts, Mr. MCCRERY and Mr. HERGER, for their enormous help in moving this bill forward.

Finally, I would like to highlight the indispensable leadership of Speaker NANCY PELOSI on this legislation. Since the first shots were fired in Rangoon, the Speaker has firmly indicated the intention of House Democrats to significantly tighten sanctions on the ruling Burmese regime. And today, we fulfill that promise.

Mr. Speaker, Burmese freedom fighter and Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi memorably asked the world community, ''Use your liberty to promote ours.'' So today, we use our liberty in the United States Congress to dramatically increase the economic pressure on the Burmese regime to move towards freedom, democracy and respect for human rights.

We use our liberty to stop the flow of blood red rubies from Burma into American jewelry stores. The Burmese regime might have washed the blood from the streets of Rangoon, but they have not erased the images of peaceful protesters being shot down from our minds. Today, we act, and we act decisively.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the world was rightfully shocked and outraged this past fall by reports of midnight raids on temples in Burma and televised images of monks and other peaceful demonstrators being shot down on the streets and arrested.

Appeals for human decency and restraint have fallen on deaf ears with regard to Burma's generals. It is thus time to send them a message that they understand, a message that is loud and clear.

The international community must no longer subsidize the leaders of this immoral regime by trading in the commodities they peddle on international markets. This rainbow coalition of contraband products for sale by the military junta has included red rubies, white opium, green jade and brown timber.

The legislation put forward today sends a simple, but clear and strong message: It will not be business as usual for the people in Rangoon until they stop their suppression of their own people in the nation of Burma.

Is there any Member here today who has any doubts about making economic sanctions against the current Rangoon regime permanent and hard hitting? This legislation has the full support of leaders of the American gem industry. They have seen the necessity of putting principle ahead of money and profit when it comes to the actions of the Burmese rogue regime.

And this legislation also seeks to put the blame squarely on the backs of those who have earned it, the ruling generals and their families, and not on the backs of the Burmese people who have already suffered too much.

It calls for frozen bank accounts for the generals, an ending to money laundering by the ruling junta, and no visas to the United States for those involved in the continuing acts of repression and no visas for their immediate families.

The urgency with which we are here today in view of this issue of the restoration of the democratic rights to the people of Burma is demonstrated by the fact that already over 240 Members of this House of Representatives have agreed to cosponsor legislation giving official Congressional recognition to Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Burma democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

H.R. 4286, introduced December 5 by Mr. MANZULLO and Mr. CROWLEY, would award a Congressional Gold Medal to Aung San Suu Kyi in recognition of her courageous and unwavering commitment to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and democracy in Burma.

There is no clearer indication than this legislation of the solidarity that exists between the people of the United States and the good people of Burma on the issues of human rights and democracy.

This legislation is also fully in keeping with administration policy. In a statement made on October 19, following the latest series of bloody and tragic events, President Bush announced an executive order imposing additional sanctions on Burmese leaders and entities. The President also instructed the Commerce Department to tighten export control and regulation over Burma. On that occasion, the President noted that ''Burmese leaders continue to defy the world's just demands to stop their vicious persecution. They continue to dismiss calls to begin peaceful dialogue aimed at national reconciliation. Most of all, they continue to reject the clear will of the Burmese people who wish to live in freedom under leaders of their choosing.''

The President concluded with these observations: ''The people of Burma are showing great courage in the face of immense repression. They are appealing for our help. We must not turn a deaf ear to their cries. I believe no nation can forever suppress its own people. And we are confident that the day is coming when freedom's tide will reach the shores of Burma.''

This legislation provides an opportunity to send a strong, bipartisan and loud message that where human freedom is concerned, politics does stop at the water's edge.

I rise today to urge my colleagues to join in voicing their enthusiastic support for a free Burma by supporting the Block Burmese JADE Act of 2007.

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

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman LANTOS of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the author of this bill, for his efforts in introducing this bill. We have no other speakers at this time.

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

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD an exchange of letters between Chairman RANGEL and Chairman LANTOS on H.R. 3890.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2007.

Hon. TOM LANTOS,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing regarding H.R. 3890, the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007, which was reported by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on October 31, 2007.

As you know, the Committee on Ways & Means has jurisdiction over import matters, such as the import ban and restrictions on

imports imposed by the Block Burmese JADE Act of 2007. Accordingly, certain provisions of H.R. 3890 fall under the Committee's jurisdiction.

There have been some productive conversations between the staffs of our committees, during which we have proposed some changes to H.R. 3890 that I believe help clarify the intent and scope of the measure. My understanding is that there is an agreement with regard to these changes.

The following provisions of H.R. 3890 were among those changed, added, or removed because they fell within the Committee's jurisdiction:

Section 3(a) (''Annual Renewal of Resolutions No Longer Required''): This subsection was removed;

Section 3(b) (Import Restrictions on Gemstones): This subsection was removed and a new Section 3A (''Prohibition on Importation of Certain Jadeite and Rubies and Articles of Jewelry Containing Jadeite or Rubies'') was added;

New Section 3A(a) (''Definitions'') contains definitions for the terms ''Appropriate Congressional Committees,'' ''Burmese Covered Article,'' ''Non-Burmese Covered Article,'' ''Jadeite; Rubies; Articles of Jewelry Containing Jadeite or Rubies,'' and ''United States'';

New Section 3A(b) (''Prohibitions on Importation of Burmese Covered Articles''): Provides that the President shall prohibit the importation into the United States of any Burmese covered article and use provided regulatory authority as necessary; and the President shall take actions to seek a draft waiver decision by the Council on Trade in Goods of the World Trade Organization and adoption of a United Nations General Assembly resolution;

New Section 3A(c) (''Requirements for Importation of Non-Burmese Covered Articles''): Provides that the President, beginning 60 days after the date of enactment, shall require certain actions by the exporting country, exporter and importer as a condition of importing non-Burmese covered articles into the United States to ensure that the imported articles do not contain Burmese jadeite or rubies;

New Section 3A(d) (''Inapplicability''): Exempts certain imports from the requirements of the Act;

New Section 3A(e) (''Enforcement''): Provides that Burmese covered articles and non-Burmese covered articles imported into the United States in violation of the Act are subject to all applicable laws of the United States;

New Section 3A(f) (''Sense of Congress''): Provides that the President should take the necessary steps to negotiate an international agreement similar to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for conflict diamonds; and

New Section 7 (''Waiver of Competitive Need Limitation Under Generalized System of Preferences For Certain Articles of India and Thailand''): Provides for the reinstatement of Generalized System of Preferences (duty-free treatment) for specified Thai and Indian jewelry.

To expedite this legislation for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action on this bill and will not oppose its consideration on the suspension calendar. This is done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this, or similar legislation, in the future.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming our understanding with respect to H.R. 3890, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the record.

Sincerely,

CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2007.

Hon. CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3890, the Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2007.

I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation and the mutually agreed upon text that is being presented to the House, including the amendments to H.R. 3890 reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as described in your letter. I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. I agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not in any way prejudice the Committee on Ways and Means or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation in the future.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters be included in the Congressional Record.

Cordially,

TOM LANTOS,
Chairman.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be an original cosponsor of this important resolution strengthening the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, and I want to thank my good friend and colleague, Chairman LANTOS, for his continued leadership on this issue. It's an issue that concerns Members on both sides of the aisle and anyone who cares about freedom and human rights.

The despicable actions of Burma's brutal regime in recent months are only the latest chapter in a long history of repression by that country's dictators. After their shocking murder and incarceration 2 months ago of peaceful demonstrators, including Buddhist monks—the very symbols of the Burmese people's desire for peace—the Government thugs hope that our attention will turn elsewhere. They hope that the international outcry over the violence and humiliation of this fall will die down. But we are all too aware of the history of this regime to let that happen.

If we turn our attention elsewhere, the regime will intensify the abuse and repeat these crimes again and again. Since the 1988 slaughter of several thousand peaceful demonstrators, the story of Burma has been a constant saga of harassment, violence, and torture. The inhumane treatment of Nobel Peace Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is only the most glaring example of the regime's efforts to stifle democracy—unfortunately there are many others that don't get as many headlines.

Members may recall that I have mentioned in the past how the military regime in Burma locked up a 19-year-old student from my district, Michelle Keegan, who had traveled to Burma in 1998 to mark in a peaceful way the 10th anniversary of those 1988 massacres. She and others were sentenced to 5 years in jail for distributing small leaflets calling for democracy in Burma.

I, and others, were outraged, and agitated for the release of these young people. They wouldn't let us into the country, but they couldn't keep us quiet. If not for the attention of the U.S. Congress and the American people—and for the international pressure that resulted—who knows what would have happened to these students in the prisons of Burma? Thankfully, we gained their release.

The Block Burmese JADE Act will tighten the noose on this murderous regime, expanding what this body has already done to isolate these criminals. Burma's junta continues to enrich itself from the country's vast natural resources while most of its people are mired in poverty. The generals and their families milk state-owned enterprises for all they're worth, getting their hands on much of the nearly $3 billion in annual revenues from oil and gas, timber and gems.

By blocking further assets, imposing more severe import restrictions on Burmese gemstones, and expanding the visa ban on the regime's cronies, we will further limit its comfort zone. The regime will be less able to avoid U.S. sanctions—and U.S. companies will no longer be able to take tax deductions for investment in Burma.

These measures alone won't bring about wholesale change in Burma. We need more help from our allies and from Burma's neighbors if we dare to hope for true freedom in that country. We need China to take a serious stand on the right side of this issue instead of remaining—as usual—lined up against human rights and human dignity.

But this strengthening of our law—this strengthening of our resolve—will take another concrete step in the right direction. It will also make an important statement to Burma's brutal dictators—and to the beleaguered pro-democracy activists in that country struggling under the yoke of military repression.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3890, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 to impose import sanctions on Burmese gemstones, expand the number of individuals against whom the visa ban is applicable, expand the blocking of assets and other prohibited activities, and for other purposes.''

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THOMAS ''TOMMY'' MAKEM

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 768) honoring the life of Thomas ''Tommy'' Makem.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 768

Whereas Thomas ''Tommy'' Makem was born on November 4, 1932 in Keady, County Armagh, in Northern Ireland;

Whereas Thomas Makem emigrated from Ireland to Dover, New Hampshire in 1955, after having won the All-Ireland Championship in acting, to pursue a career in acting

and carrying with him only a makeshift suitcase, a pair of bagpipes, and proof of his health;

Whereas in 1956 Thomas Makem joined the Clancy Brothers, all of whom had immigrated to the United States from Ireland, and began performing musically together as ''The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem'' and were signed by Columbia Records;

Whereas in 1961 Thomas Makem performed at the Newport Folk Festival and, along with Joan Baez, was named as the most promising newcomer;

Whereas in 1963 the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem performed at the White House at the request of President John F. Kennedy;

Whereas the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem continued to perform and record music together, performing in venues such as Carnegie Hall and on programs including The Ed Sullivan Show and The Tonight Show until 1969 when Thomas Makem left the band amicably to pursue a solo career;

Whereas in 1975 Thomas Makem again joined with Liam Clancy and the duo performed together until 1988, including a Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem reunion at the Lincoln Center in New York City, New York;

Whereas in 1997 Thomas Makem wrote a book, Tommy Makem's Secret Ireland, and in 1999 premiered his own one-man theatre show, Invasions and Legacies, in New York, and established the Tommy Makem International Festival of Song in South Armagh, Ireland in 2000;

Whereas throughout his performing career Thomas Makem was highly regarded as an exceptional musician by both his colleagues and the public and received many awards and honors including the World Folk Music Association's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999 and honorary doctorates from the University of New Hampshire in 1998, the University of Limerick in 2001, and the University of Ulster in 2007; and

Whereas Thomas Makem died on Wednesday, August 1, 2007 in Dover, New Hampshire and will now be remembered as a dedicated husband, father, and grandfather and as one of the greatest Irish-Americans of the 20th Century: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honors the life of Thomas ''Tommy'' Makem, and his accomplishments as a musician, composer and performer.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Tommy Makem was one of the greatest Irish-American performers to ever grace the stage. Not only have his works inspired generations of artists, but his determination and success broke down barriers that had long been raised to Irish Americans. Tommy and the Clancy Brothers, with whom he played for many years, were instrumental in breaking down these cultural divides.

Tommy lived a truly remarkable life. He arrived in America in 1955 to pursue a career in acting, having just won the All-Ireland Championship in acting. Like so many immigrants before and after, Tommy arrived with very little, carrying with him only a makeshift suitcase, a pair of bagpipes and proof of his health. However, it did not take Tommy long to find a life in America.

In 1956, he joined with the Clancy Brothers—Patrick, Tom, Bobby and Liam—and they began performing together. In 1961, Tommy performed at the Newport Folk Festival and, along with Joan Baez, he was heralded as ''the most promising newcomer.'' In 1963, Tommy and the Clancy Brothers performed at the White House at the request of President Kennedy. They continued to perform together for years and played venues from Carnegie Hall to the Ed Sullivan Show, until Tommy embarked on a solo career in 1969. For decades, he continued to compose and perform. He would later reunite with the Clancy Brothers in 1988 for a reunion concert. In 1999, Tommy was awarded the World Folk Music Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Tommy was not just a musician, he was so much more. Tommy was an author, a philanthropist, a businessman, an inspiration and, most importantly, he was a loving father, grandfather and husband.

Tommy passed away earlier this year on August 1 in Dover, New Hampshire, where he lived for many years. He left behind a daughter, Katie Makem-Boucher, and two grandchildren, Molly Dickerman and Robert Boucher, and three sons, Shane, Conor and Rory, whom with his nephew, Tom Sweeney, continue the family folk music tradition. They will remember Tommy for the living man he was and for the impact he had on their lives.

□ 1330

Upon his passing, condolences streamed in from all over the country, as well as the world. The Makem family has said that while many talked about his music, most noted what a generous and kind man he was.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and honor the life of a truly remarkable man, an immigrant who touched the lives of so many.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 768, honoring the life of Thomas ''Tommy'' Makem. Makem was an internationally celebrated Irish folk musician, artist, poet and storyteller, best known as a member of the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. He played the long-necked five string banjo, guitar, tin whistle, border pipes, and sang in a very distinctive baritone. He was sometimes known as the Godfather of Irish music.

The son of a successful Irish folk singer, Sarah Makem, Tommy Makem mesmerized audiences for more than four decades. He expanded and reshaped the boundaries of Irish culture and infused a pride and a quest for knowledge of Irish culture in countless others.

In 1955, Makem's ambition to become an actor took him to New York where, after a brief but rewarding career in live television and off-Broadway plays, he teamed up with the Clancy Brothers. They appeared on the ''Ed Sullivan Show,'' the ''Tonight Show'' and every major television network show in the United States. The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem played to audiences from New York's Carnegie Hall and London's Royal Albert Hall to every major concert venue in the English-speaking world.

In 1969, Tommy left the Clancy Brothers to pursue a solo career and immediately sold out Madison Square Garden in New York. His popularity soared, and he went on to three sold out concert tours in Australia, including Sydney's opera house.

By 1975, Makem had rejoined Liam Clancy of the Clancy Brothers. The duo worked together until 1988. Their collaboration garnered the pair an Emmy nomination, as well as several platinum and gold records.

Tommy Makem's music will live on forever. ''The Rambles of Spring,'' Farewell to Carlingford,'' ''Gentle Annie,'' ''The Winds Are Singing Freedom'' and, of course, ''Four Green Fields'' are all standards in the repertoire of folk singers around the world in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

I am very happy to join my good friend and colleague, Representative SHEA-PORTER, in honoring the life of Thomas ''Tommy'' Makem, and I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Does the gentleman from Louisiana have any further speakers?

Mr. BOUSTANY. I have no other Members requesting time, and I'll be happy to yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 768.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII FOR ITS 100 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 264) honoring the University of Hawaii for its 100 years of commitment to public higher education.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 264

Whereas while the natural beauty of Hawaii is recognized throughout the world, the real beauty of the island state lies in its people, who, through their personal relationships with their families, friends, and neighbors, and through their dedicated efforts to serve the needs of the people of Hawaii, have created prosperity and high standards of living;

Whereas the institution which would eventually become the University of Hawaii at Manoa finds its humble beginnings in 1907 in a small house on Young Street as the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts;

Whereas with the establishment of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences in 1920, the university became a full-fledged university, known today as the University of Hawaii at Manoa;

Whereas in 1941, the Hawaii Vocational School was founded near downtown Hilo, becoming a University branch campus in 1951 and the University of Hawaii at Hilo in 1970;

Whereas in 1964, the University of Hawaii community colleges system was established with the creation of four community college campuses: Honolulu; Kapiolani; Kauai; and Maui, with Leeward joining the community college system in 1969, Windward in 1972, and Hawaii in 1990, as the seventh community college;

Whereas West Oahu College was founded in 1976, gaining university status in 1989 as the University of Hawaii—West Oahu, the youngest of the university's baccalaureate degree-granting campuses;

Whereas the 10 campuses of the University of Hawaii combined offer more than 620 certificate and degree-granting programs in a variety of nationally and internationally-recognized areas of excellence, including culinary arts, health sciences, construction, automotive mechanics, digital media, justice administration, forensic anthropology, indigenous languages, tropical agriculture, natural sciences, ocean sciences, earth sciences, astronomy, international business, languages and culture, legal studies, and medicine, to over 50,000 students across the State every year;

Whereas the University of Hawaii has embraced and employed technological advances to reach and serve students via distance learning technologies on the Internet, two-way video, and cable television;

Whereas the nearly 15,000 Hawaii residents who are employed full-time by the University of Hawaii as faculty, staff, researchers, and in other capacities, serve the University and the State of Hawaii by educating its citizens, contributing to the economy, supporting workforce development, and engaging the community to address societal issues and underserved populations;

Whereas the impacts of the University of Hawaii are not confined to those students in its classrooms, but residents and visitors alike who benefit from its outreach, cultural, and entertainment programs: more than 75,000 people register in its non-credit courses; more than 33,000 people participate in university-sponsored conferences, workshops, and training sessions; nearly 130,000 people attend theater, music, and dance events at the University's performing arts centers at the Manoa, Hilo, Kauai, Leeward, and Windward campuses; and nearly 700,000 people cheer on the Manoa and Hilo athletic teams;

Whereas the vitality of today's University of Hawaii touches someone in virtually every family in these islands;

Whereas more than 250,000 alumni now residing in all 50 States and in more than 80 countries around the world are proud to call the University of Hawaii their alma mater, as the educational programs at the University have shaped these individuals into global citizens who contribute to the well-being of a world-wide society with a commitment to integrity, diversity, and service wherever they may be;

Whereas the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii proudly boasts 38 alumni of the University of Hawaii system, and the Senate 15, for a total of 53 proud alumni in the Hawaii State Legislature;

Whereas 2007 marks the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of the University of Hawaii, a momentous occasion by nearly every measure;

Whereas the centennial observance offers the people of Hawaii the opportunity to reflect on 100 years of higher education in Hawaii, celebrate the rich heritage of the University of Hawaii, honor the people who took part in building this outstanding educational enterprise, and envision an even more remarkable future of excellence, sustainability, and innovation that the University of Hawaii has introduced to our islands;

Whereas over the past 100 years, the University of Hawaii has developed into a prominent, world-renowned educational institution famed for its gracious spirit of aloha; academic excellence, intellectual vigor, and opportunity; institutional integrity and service; diversity, cultural identity, social responsibility, and fairness; collaboration and respect; and accountability and fiscal integrity;

Whereas ''Maluna a'e o nâ lâhui a pau ke ola ke kanaka: Above All Nations is Humanity,'' the philosophy of the University of Hawaii is befitting for an institution that has transformed the lives of many around the world through their experiences at the University; and

Whereas all four members of Hawaii's congressional delegation are proud graduates of the University of Hawaii: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress congratulates the University of Hawaii on the momentous occasion of its 100th Anniversary, and expresses its warmest aloha and best wishes for continued success.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert material relevant to House Concurrent Resolution 264 into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Hawaii?

There was no objection.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 264, honoring the University of Hawai'i for its 100 years of dedication to public higher education.

The 10 campuses of the University of Hawai'i offer more than 620 nationally and internationally recognized academic programs, everything from culinary arts to tropical agriculture. It is the only place in the Nation where students can earn a master's degree in indigenous language studies and has the top 25 programs for environmental law, eastern philosophy, international business, and second-language studies.

The 50,000 students who attend the university include many of Hawaii's best and brightest. The sizable Native Hawaiian, Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Pacific Islander populations on our campuses reflect the great diversity of our State. Their years at the University of Hawai'i will prepare them to be the business, community, and political leaders of tomorrow.

I am proud to be among the 250,000 University of Hawai'i alumni who now reside in every State in the Union and in at least 80 countries around the world. This extended community brings the aloha spirit to the world at large.

Just last week I was here on the floor of the House with my two green and white footballs in honor of the university Warriors' perfect 2007 football season. The Warriors are the only college team in the country to go undefeated, but they are just one of the UH sports teams we cheer on across the islands. From volleyball to basketball, our athletes draw nearly 700,000 fans to games every year.

This is a special year for higher education in Hawaii. Not only is it University of Hawai'i's centennial, but it is also the 35th anniversary of the passage of title IX, now known as the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act. Patsy was a friend and continues to be an inspiration to me. This year the University of Hawai'i joined me and Congress in honoring Patsy and her trailblazing work to open the doors of higher education to women across the country.

I want to take a moment to thank the people who make the University of Hawai'i what it is today. David McClain, the current president of the university, and the 17 presidents who have come before him have all been leaders, dedicated to excellence in public higher education. The phenomenal team of faculty and staff has truly made a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of students, past and present. Those students, in

turn, are making enormous contributions to our towns, our State, and our country.

My years at the University of Hawai'i in the late '60s were a time of awakening and questioning for me. Attending the university made a profound difference in my life. In fact, all four members of Hawaii's current congressional delegation have degrees from the University of Hawai'i.

I am proud to work closely with the University of Hawai'i as a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor. As we come to the end of the 100th year in the university's history, congratulations to all involved. Here's to the next 100 successful years.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 264, honoring the University of Hawai'i for its 100 years of commitment to public higher education.

In 1907, the Hawaii Territorial Legislature established the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in Honolulu under terms of the U.S. land grant legislation. Ten students began classes with 13 faculty members in September of the following year, and the first graduates received degrees in 1912. The university has been growing ever since.

In 1912, the founding campus was renamed the College of Hawai'i, and it moved to its present location in the Manoa Valley. Pig farms and kiwi groves were cleared for construction of the first permanent building, Hawaii Hall. Six years later, William Kwai Fong Yap petitioned the legislature for university status and the campus became the University of Hawai'i in 1920.

After the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, classes were suspended for 2 months, and University of Hawai'i students of Japanese ancestry formed the Varsity Victory Volunteers to assist with civil defense, many of whom later became a part of the famous 100th Infantry Battalion.

In 1964, the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges System was established with four additional campuses. Two years later, the founding campus, now called UH Manoa, established a School of Travel Industry Management and the forerunner programs of the School of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific studies. The John A. Burns School of Medicine opened in 1967, and construction began on the first telescope atop Mauna Kea volcano in 1968.

In 2000, Hawaii voters overwhelmingly supported constitutional autonomy for the University of Hawai'i, ensuring the institution more control in the management of its resources.

Honolulu Community College was selected to be one of only six Cisco Training Academies in the country to offer certified network professional training, and Maui Community College continued a tradition of statewide outreach by opening the Moloka'i Education Center.

Additional highlights include winning the contract to manage the Maui Supercomputing Center for the Air Force Research Laboratory, and in 2003, walls were raised for a new medical school and biomedical research facility.

Today, the University of Hawai'i system includes 10 campuses and dozens of educational, training, and research centers across the Hawaiian Islands. As the public system of higher education in Hawaii, UH offers opportunities as unique and diverse as the islands themselves.

UH is the State's leading engine for economic growth and diversification, stimulating the local economy with jobs, research, and skilled workers.

I am happy to join my good friend and colleague, Representative HIRONO, in honoring this exceptional university for all of its accomplishments and wish the faculty, staff, and students continued success.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louisiana for his very complete and kind remarks in support of this measure, and I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from American Samoa, Hawaii's friend, and my friend, ENI FALEOMAVAEGA.

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from the great State of Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, again I thank the gentlelady from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and also the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) for their sponsorship of this legislation which honors the 100th anniversary of one of our Nation's great public institutions of learning, the University of Hawai'i, along with her 10 campuses established all over the State and some 620 certificate, degree, and postgraduate programs for some 50,000 students also currently attending the university.

Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiments expressed earlier by my colleague from Hawaii. This also exemplifies the caliber of the leadership coming from this great State of Hawaii.

I think also of Mrs. Patsy Takomoto Mink for the 35th year now in celebrating the piece of legislation that she championed while a Member of this great institution, and that of course is title IX, which has given authorization to promote and enhance our women's athletic programs, which currently now are taking place all over the country.

I also want to pay special commendation to the head coach of the University of Hawai'i Warriors, June Jones, for doing something that is very special to our island community: they are going to the Sugar Bowl. And having a perfect record, I am disappointed that Colt Brennan did not become the Heisman Trophy winner this year. But be that as it may, I do want to thank Coach June Jones for personally coming to my little territory, American Samoa, to recruit some of our football players who now make up in large part members of the University of Hawai'i Warrior team.

I'm also reminded that some of the great leaders of our country are alumnae of the University of Hawai'i. As a former member of 100th Battalion 442nd Infantry Reserve Battalion, I can only think of Senator INOUYE and the late Senator Spark Matsunaga, both graduates of the University of Hawai'i. I need not share with my colleagues the prominence and the tremendous leadership that these gentlemen have also exemplified while serving the great State of Hawaii.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, the University of Hawai'i has been the center of higher education for many of our Pacific Island leaders from Oceania, namely from Micronesia, Polynesia, and even Melanesia.

The University of Hawai'i also played a critical role in coordinating and facilitating the academic programs instituted through the congressionally mandated institute currently known as the East-West Center. The East-West Center, since its inception in 1963, is a unique institution which, over the years, has brought scholars and leaders from all over the world to meet and discuss issues that are especially important to our Nation's economic, political, social and especially strategic and military interests with countries of the Asian Pacific region; and the University of Hawai'i, to this day, still is part of the East-West Center's current activities and programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially proud that just a few days ago, an alumnus of the University of Hawai'i, who happens to be a relative also, Mr. Ken Niumatalolo, whose parents, Simi and La Niumatalolo, from the little village of La'ie, Hawaii, is now the newly appointed head coach of the football team of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis.

As far as I'm aware, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Niumatalolo is the first of Samoan and Polynesian ancestry to coach an NCAA Division I university team, again a credit also to the University of Hawai'i for giving Mr. Niumatalolo a chance not only to play as a quarterback for the UH Warriors, but to enroll as a student and to obtain a good education.

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Mr. Speaker, again, my congratulations not only to my distinguished friend and dear colleague Ms. HIRONO for introducing this legislation, but to honor this great institution, the University of Hawai'i.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, coming from the great State of Louisiana, I wish to issue a warm welcome to the University of Hawai'i as they come to New Orleans for the Sugar Bowl, and I also want to congratulate them on a perfect regular season for their football team.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further Members on this side wishing to speak and I yield back.

Ms. HIRONO. I thank my colleague from Louisiana for your warm, what we call, ''Aloha'' welcome to your State. Expect thousands and thousands of rabid Rainbow Warrior fans to descend upon your State to spend money but mainly to cheer on our undefeated team, the Warriors.

I would like to add also, Mr. Speaker, that my colleague NEIL ABERCROMBIE, who is even as we speak on a plane coming back to Washington, DC, is, of course, very much in support of this resolution. As I mentioned, all four Members of our congressional delegation have one degree or another from the University of Hawai'i. In NEIL's case, it is a Ph.D., and he also had taught at the University of Hawai'i.

I'm looking forward to also working with Mr. MILLER on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which has helped the University of Hawai'i so much over the years, and it's an honor for me to be on the Higher Education Committee, because the University of Hawai'i, unlike many other States, is the institution of higher learning in Hawaii. It is the public institution of higher learning in Hawaii, which is why literally hundreds of thousands of us have matriculated at the university, and we have a lot to be thankful for for the kind of quality education that the University of Hawai'i has offered to us and continues to do so for the 50,000 or so students who are on campuses all across the State.

And as we are moving forward to celebrate our 100th anniversary, we even now prepare to move forward to create further campuses on Oahu and the neighbor islands to afford more educational opportunities, particularly in the rural areas of our State for students in those areas.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, and my colleague from Louisiana, once again, ''Mahalo nui loa,'' to each one of you in support of this resolution.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE: Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 264, honoring the University of Hawaii for 100 years of educating and serving the people of the state of Hawaii. I'd like to thank Congresswoman HIRONO and Chairman MILLER for their support of this legislation. I'd like to recognize President David McClain and the administration and faculty of UH for all their hard work and dedication. UH holds a distinguished record of achievement in academics, community service and athletics. As a proud alumni and former faculty member of the University of Hawaii, I know personally the impact of the school on those who work and learn there. Yet, that is not the full extent of the University's reach; it touches in some capacity nearly every person in the state.

In 1907, the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in Honolulu was established by the Hawaii Territorial Legislature with 10 students and 13 faculty members. Today, the University of Hawaii system is spread across the state with 10 campuses, 3 degree-granting universities: Manoa, the flagship campus, Hilo, and West Oahu; and 7 community colleges: Hawaii, Honolulu, Kapiolani, Kauai, Leeward, Maui, and Windward. The system includes the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the William S. Richardson School of Law, the Shidler College of Business, the College of Pharmacy, and the Congressionally-established East-West Center. There are currently over 50,000 students and 624 academic programs. Across the system, UH's students and faculty have won countless awards, and been recognized for agriculture, anthropology, computer programming, diversity, education and curriculum research, international business, medical research, oceanographic science, public service, and myriad other fields of study.

The University values aloha, the Hawaiian concept that embraces respect for the history, traditions and culture of Hawaii's indigenous people. It reflects compassion for all people and commitment to the well-being of these islands. To practice this value UH employs nearly 15,000 Hawaii residents who serve the University and the State of Hawaii by educating its citizens, contributing to the economy, supporting workforce development and engaging the community in addressing societal issues and the challenges faced by underserved populations.

The University has also produced more than 250,000 alumni, now residing in all 50 states and more than 80 countries around the world, who are proud to call the University of Hawaii their alma mater. The educational programs at the University have shaped these individuals into global citizens who contribute to the well-being of a world-wide society, with a commitment to integrity, diversity, and service wherever they may be. Alumni who live abroad and on the U.S. mainland take the aloha spirit with them across the nation and world to enrich the lives of others. Among these alumni are all four current and two former members of the Hawaii congressional delegation; former Surgeon General of the United States Kenneth Moritsugu; Time Warner Chairman and CEO Richard Parsons; Miss America 2001 Angela Perez Baraquio Grey; 53 members of the Hawaii State Legislature; numerous professional athletes; and many other academic, art, athletic, business and political leaders.

As a reflection of the state of Hawaii, UH is a rainbow of ethnicities, cultures, nationalities, languages and ideas. The University maintains that society is best served by representing populations equitably throughout UH, and that diverse perspectives help root out prejudice and injustice. This dedication is captured succinctly in the motto of the University, "Ma luna ae o na lahui a pau ke ola o ke kanaka," or "Above all nations is humanity." The value of diversity is also shown through the student body: UH is one of the most diverse universities in the nation, with no dominant ethnic group and over 2,500 international students.

A further source of pride for the University of Hawaii is the Warriors and Wahine. The athletes, coaches, and support staff are some of the most accomplished and dedicated members of the UH ohana, or family. There are no professional sports teams in Hawaii and the student-athletes of the University carry much expectation and affection from the state. The UH women's volleyball team is among the most esteemed programs in the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), winning three NCAA national championships and one Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW, the predecessor to the NCAA for women's sports) national championship, and are consistently in the hunt for a national championship year after year. The Wahine have produced 23 All-Americans, and three National Players of the Year. The Warrior football team is also an immense source of pride to the state. This year the Warriors were the only NCAA Division I school to go undefeated during the regular season and will be playing on New Year's Day in the Sugar Bowl. The current and former starting quarterbacks; Heisman Trophy finalist Colt Brennan and Timmy Chang, hold numerous NCAA records. The entire state will be cheering on the Warriors and, win or lose, will show aloha to this team. The women's volleyball and football team are two of the 21 programs at the University, all of which bring pride and joy to the people of Hawaii.

On this 100th anniversary of the University of Hawaii, I am honored to be able to extend my aloha and mahalo to UH for all it has afforded me personally, and to the state of Hawaii, which is truly enriched because of the efforts of the University.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 264.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROBSTOWN, TEXAS

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 785) recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Robstown, Texas.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 785

Whereas in 2007, the city of Robstown, Texas, celebrates its centennial as the ''Biggest Little Town in Texas'';

Whereas before Robstown became a city in Nueces County, Robstown was a major thoroughfare north of the National Mexican Railway, making it vital for trade and commerce between Mexico and the United States;

Whereas rancher and businessman Robert Driscoll conveyed territories encircling the boundaries of Robstown, inspiring Robstown's name;

Whereas Robstown enters the 21st century as the crossroads of international trade, being the location where the Texas Mexican Railway connects the Port of Laredo with the Port of Corpus Christi and Interstate 69 will intersect Texas State Highway 44;

Whereas Robstown is the home of a new fairgrounds and entertainment venue; the future home of an inland port, which will be the first such port in the United States; and the future home of an Army storage facility;

Whereas Robstown is one of the leading cotton producing areas in the United States, at one time operating the most cotton gins in the United States and later naming the mascot of the Robstown high school the ''Cotton Picker'';

Whereas, a steadfast community in Nueces County, the residents of Robstown have included legendary National Football League Hall of Famer Gene Upshaw; Federal Judge Hilda Tagle; and numerous county, State, and Federally elected officials;

Whereas Robstown has scheduled ''Century of Celebration'' festivities throughout 2007, beginning on January 1 and including a formal celebration on June 1 and the Cottonfest festival in October; and

Whereas Robstown's contributions to the history of the United States include being the site of the first game of Texas Hold 'em poker: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes the 100th anniversary of Robstown, Texas, and commends all of the residents of Robstown and all other individuals who call Robstown home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Res. 785, which recognizes the 100th anniversary of Robstown, Texas.

H. Res. 785, which was introduced by Representative SOLOMON P. ORTIZ on October 30, 2007, was reported from the oversight committee on November 8, 2007, by a voice vote. This measure has been cosponsored by 53 Members.

Known as the ''Biggest Little Town in Texas,'' Robstown is known for its international trade, oil and involvement in the agriculture and cotton industries.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for the recognition of the 100th anniversary of this historic town, and I urge the swift passage of this bill.

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

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Missouri, and I join with him in urging the passage of this important commemorative piece of legislation recognizing, as the gentleman said, the ''Biggest Little Town in Texas,'' on its 100th anniversary.

Certainly Robstown, Texas, located in north central Nueces County, which was established in 1906 by a real estate developer from Iowa, says a great deal about the development of Texas and of the Texas-Mexican railroad connection from the Port of Laredo to the Port of Corpus Christi and along State Highway 44. The sustainability of the small town both before, during and after the Industrial Revolution, throughout a period of development in Texas, took it from a State that was rural in every sense to a State today that is both filled with high-tech and with world headquarters.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in urging quick support and ratification of this bill.

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time to my friend from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) as he would like to consume.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, let me thank Chairman CLAY and my good friend Mr. ISSA for bringing this bill to the floor, and I want today to congratulate and honor the ''Biggest Little Town in Texas.''

Robstown has been ''Celebrating a Century'' this year as the city turns 100 years old. This centennial celebration and resolution are especially important to me because Robstown, a city of about 14,000 people, is my hometown.

I was born and reared and raised there, attended the public schools there, and had my first job as a printer's devil with the local newspaper, the Robstown RECORD.

Cotton and vegetable farming played an important role in the history and economy of Robstown, named after prominent local leader Robert Driscoll.

Robstown is a town where citizens are deeply committed to public service. We've sent sons and daughters to shape the history of local, State and Federal offices. They have all served in our military. They've distinguished themselves in military services.

We've had county commissioners, sheriffs, district attorneys, district judges, Federal judges, State representatives, and this proud Member of the Congress, who came out from this little town of 14,000 people.

Robstown also has a great athletic tradition. Gene Upshaw, of the National Football League and a great football star, came from this little town of Robstown.

Humberto ''Lefty'' Barrera, bantamweight boxer on the historic 1960 Olympic team who later earned an engineering degree at night school, also called Robstown ''my hometown.''

Kathryn Grandstaff, from Robstown, she married Bing Crosby, who we all know.

Our students also excel in the classroom, including the Robstown High School Cotton Pickers band, and they have achieved much in the fields of athletics and academics.

All year long we have recognized the ''Century of Celebration,'' which included a formal celebration on June 1.

One of the greatest traditions is the annual Cottonfest held in October. This year was the biggest ever event that we've had. We have live music, arts and crafts, a sports competition, cookoffs, contests, carnivals and historical exhibits that provide something for everyone in the community.

We also have so much to look forward to as our town continues to grow. Robstown enters the 21st century at the crossroads of international trade due to its proximity to railroads, interstate highways, seaports and airports. It is the hub in that area.

Robstown will serve as a hub by connecting major railway companies, the Texan-Mexican railway, Kansas City Southern and Union Pacific, with direct links to Corpus Christi, Brownsville, Houston, San Antonio and Laredo.

Robstown is also home to the new county fairgrounds and an entertainment venue.

My hometown is the future home of an inland port, which will be the first such port in the United States, and the future home of an Army storage facility.

And no trip to Robstown would be complete without a good filling yourself up with south Texas' best barbecue at Joe Cotten's. Cotten's is an iconic restaurant where many of you have joined me for lunch in south Texas style. It is where Presidential candidates, athletes, business people, cowboys, riders, astronauts, generals, admirals and other celebrities and thousands of others, they even fly on their helicopters to eat at Joe Cotten's.

Robstown is the best of our communities in south Texas, friendly, family-oriented and proud of their history.

It was in Robstown where my mother taught me my most important lesson: to always serve the community that gave you so many opportunities growing up. To whom much is given, much is expected.

Please join me in honoring Robstown on the city's 100th anniversary, and I join my friends Chairman CLAY and Mr. ISSA today for bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join with the pride of Robstown, Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) and pass H. Res. 785.

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 Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 785.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TURRILL POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4009) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 567 West Nepessing Street in Lapeer, Michigan, as the ''Turrill Post Office Building''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4009

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

SECTION 1. TURRILL POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 567 West Nepessing Street in Lapeer, Michigan, shall be known and designated as the ''Turrill Post Office Building''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Turrill Post Office Building''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleague from California in the consideration of H.R. 4009, which names a postal facility in Lapeer, Michigan, after the Turrill family.

H.R. 4009, which was introduced by Representative CANDICE MILLER on October 30, 2007, was reported from the oversight committee on November 11, 2007, by voice vote. This measure, which has been cosponsored by 14 Members, has the support of the entire Michigan congressional delegation.

The Turrill family dates back to the earliest settlers in the Lapeer area. They are a strong representation of what Lapeer is founded upon and are remembered as honest, hardworking farmers and leaders within the community. Dr. Miner Turrill arrived in Lapeer in 1832 and was the first postmaster of the county. When Lapeer was incorporated as a city in 1869, James Turrill was the first mayor. The City of Lapeer is historically touched by the efforts made by the Turrill family and their dedication as public servants.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift passage of this bill.

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

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I, too, have reviewed the post office naming and find it to be one of the most thoughtful and merit-oriented namings that we have had in a long time.

And with that, I yield 10 minutes to the gentlelady from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER), the author of this bill.

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Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I appreciate the gentleman's yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as a representative in this House for the great community of Lapeer, Michigan, I rise in very, very strong support of this resolution to honor one of the founding families of this great community. Lapeer, Michigan, is truly an all-American city. Its population is just under 10,000 people, and it serves as the county seat for the County of Lapeer. The community is located at the base of Michigan's Thumb, and its heritage is deeply based in the agricultural tradition of Michigan. In fact, it is home to mainly family farms. Families have tilled the fertile soil of this area since the community's founding, and today these farms continue to serve as an important part of our breadbasket in Michigan. The community has always been home to the pioneering spirit and the can-do attitude that exemplifies America. And no family represents the spirit of this great community more than the Turrill family.

In 1832, 5 years before Michigan joined the Union as a State, Dr. Miner Turrill settled in Lapeer with his elderly parents, and the Turrills became the third known family, actually, to settle in that area. Dr. Turrill and his family quickly became respected leaders in the community, and upon the opening of the Lapeer United States Post Office in 1833, Dr. Turrill became the area's first postmaster. For that alone it is fitting that the Lapeer Post Office be named in their honor. But the Turrills gave back so much more to this fine community.

During the Civil War, many members of the Turrill family served the cause of freedom on behalf of the Union. This included Captain J.H. Turrill, who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the Union when he was killed in action at Antietam in 1862. In fact, the Lapeer Post of the Grand Army of the Republic was named in his honor and served as a gathering point for all of the veterans of that conflict from the area.

In 1869, Lapeer was incorporated as a city in Michigan, and the voters elected James Turrill to serve as the first mayor of this community. The Turrills continued throughout the years to provide leadership to this great community, and they have been honored in many ways. Today you can drive on Turrill Avenue in Lapeer. Or you might live in Turrill Estates. And your children might attend the Turrill Elementary School in the Lapeer community schools. The people of this community have always honored the dedication to community and the contributions made by the Turrill family.

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, I contacted the Lapeer County Historical Society, and I spoke to them about my desire to name the post office in Lapeer after a distinguished citizen from the community worthy of the honor. And I asked for their guidance and assistance on who was deserving of such an honor, and this was their response:

''The Lapeer County Historical Society recommends that the Lapeer Post Office be named the Turrill Post Office. The Turrill family dates back to the earliest settlement in the Lapeer area. They have always been remembered as honest, hardworking farmers and leaders of the Lapeer community . . . A committee was appointed and met on July 6 to review a 2-page list of names. Turrill was the unanimous choice.''

Mr. Speaker, it is entirely appropriate that this House take this action today to honor one of the pioneering families in a great Michigan community, a family that worked hard to give back to the community, a family that took a leadership role in shaping the community, earned its respect, and has a highly valued place in the history of Lapeer, Michigan.

I want to thank the members of the Lapeer Historical Society for their assistance and their guidance in this effort. And I thank the leadership today for bringing this legislation to the floor, and I will thank the Members of this House for their expected support in honoring this great family. And I certainly thank the members of the Turrill family who did so much to make Lapeer the wonderful community that it has become.

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge my colleagues to adopt H.R. 4009, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4009.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION AND AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 215) supporting the designation of a week as ''National Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Week,'' as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 215

Whereas heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States;

Whereas heart disease affects men, women, and children of every age and race in the United States, regardless of where they live;

Whereas annually approximately 325,000 coronary heart disease deaths occur out of hospital or in an emergency room;

Whereas approximately 95 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims die before arriving at the hospital;

Whereas sudden cardiac arrest results from an abnormal heart rhythm in most adults;

Whereas in 27.4 percent of cases of sudden cardiac arrest, the victim is located in a place other than a hospital and receives

cardiopulmonary resuscitation by a bystander;

Whereas prompt delivery of cardiopulmonary resuscitation more than doubles the chance of survival from sudden cardiac arrest by helping to maintain vital blood flow to the heart and brain, increasing the amount of time that an electric shock from a defibrillator can be effective;

Whereas an automated external defibrillator, even when used by a bystander, is safe, easy to operate, and highly effective in restoring a normal heart rhythm, significantly increasing the chance of survival for many victims if used immediately after the onset of sudden cardiac arrest;

Whereas death or severe brain injury is likely to occur unless resuscitation measures are started no later than 10 minutes after the onset of sudden cardiac arrest;

Whereas the interval between the 911 call and the arrival of EMS personnel is typically longer than 5 minutes, and achieving high survival rates therefore depends on a public trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator use; and

Whereas the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, and the National Safety Council are preparing related public awareness and training campaigns on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillation to be held during the first week of June each year: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of a National Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Week to establish well-organized programs to increase public training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator use and to increase public access to automated external defibrillators; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States and interested organizations to observe such a week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

First of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) for standing in for me.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H. Con. Res. 215, as amended, which supports the designation of ''National Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Week.''

H. Con. Res. 215, which was introduced by Representative JOHN R. ''RANDY'' KUHL, Jr. on September 19, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on November 8, 2007, by voice vote. This measure has been cosponsored by 84 Members.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad statistic that 95 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims die before reaching the hospital. Prompt CPR and use of an automated defibrillator, or AED, can more than double a victim's chance of surviving cardiac arrest. Seventy-five to 80 percent of all cardiac arrests occur within the home. Unfortunately, 60 percent of the public have never seen an automated external defibrillator, much less put it into use.

It is time we do all that we can to raise awareness of these much-needed emergency tools and urge training to combat heart disease at the community level.

I commend the sponsor for introducing this measure, thank all the organizations throughout the country for their support, and urge swift passage of this resolution.

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

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

The automated external defibrillator is a critical part of saving lives here in America. In the first 10 minutes of an onset of symptoms, you have an incredibly short period of time, that 10 minutes, to make the difference between life and death. A typical response time, an optimum response time, for a 911 call is 5 minutes. The availability of these devices, once thought to be only in the crash kit on an emergency vehicle or in a hospital, is now spreading. At our airports, including our Nation's Capital airports, these devices are not just available but they are hung throughout the facility, making it possible, and, in fact, it has occurred, for people who have a heart symptom and pass out to be brought back to life in those 10 minutes, those precious 10 minutes. But in order to expand the use of this lifesaving apparatus, we need to have additional training.

I join with the gentleman from Illinois in saying that the importance of this Automatic External Defibrillator Week is not that we can learn to say it without tying our tongue but, in fact, that we can deploy these devices and get people trained. In my own small condominium unit here in Washington, our neighbors have been trained; and it will undoubtedly in time save lives in our community.

I join with the majority in urging that this bill not only become law this year but that we make this an annual event so as to spread the lifesaving capability of this device.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 215, legislation that will designate a National Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Week. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill, and would like to thank my colleague, Mr. RANDY KUHL of New York, for advancing this legislation to help educate the American people about the critical difference cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator training can make in our country.

This legislation has been dear to Mr. KUHL's heart after a young man in his area, Louis Acompora, died from a blunt impact to the chest while playing lacrosse. Had an automated external defibrillator been available at the time, his life might have been saved. I commend Mr. KUHL's success as a New York State Senator in working with Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg from Long Island to advance the New York State law requiring public schools to have at least one such device on school grounds. His hard work has helped save over 35 lives in New York State in the five years since the law's enactment.

Mr. Speaker, heart disease kills more people in our Nation every year than any other medical condition. Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the most time sensitive cardiac conditions for which immediate attention is vital. If cardiopulmonary resuscitation and defibrillation are not applied within 5 minutes after sudden cardiac arrest, there is virtually no chance of survival. Approximately 325,000 Americans suffer sudden cardiac arrest each year and more than 95 percent die before ever reaching the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics are staggering. Sadly, if more Americans were trained in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation and in using automated external defibrillators, many of these lives could have been saved. Communities with comprehensive automated external defibrillator programs have improved survival rates from only 5 percent to over 40 percent.

Mr. Speaker, this is why it is so critical that we pass H. Con. Res. 215. Having a week dedicated to Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator awareness will increase the profile of this devastating disease, and most importantly, will help save lives. I encourage all my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. KUHL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 215, which would support the designation of a week as National Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness Week.

I would first like to thank my colleague, Mr. BOREN from Oklahoma, for joining me in introducing I this resolution and for his efforts in promoting CPR. I am truly grateful for his leadership and support on this issue.

I introduced this legislation because I believe that we must do all we can to bolster our efforts to combat heart disease and sudden cardiac arrest, as heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States. Approximately 325,000 coronary heart disease deaths occur outside of the hospital or in an emergency room every year, and roughly 95 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims die before even reaching a hospital. These statistics serve as a clear reminder that we must take action to save lives at the local and community levels, and this resolution helps to do just that.

CPR more than doubles a victim's chances of surviving sudden cardiac arrest by maintaining the vital flow of blood to the heart and the brain. Over 75 percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur within the home, so CPR can mean the difference between life and death.

Additionally, automated external defibrillators are easy for even bystanders to operate and are highly effective in restoring a normal heart rhythm if used within minutes after the onset of sudden cardiac arrest. Communities with comprehensive AED programs have achieved survival rates of over 40 percent.

I am proud to have sponsored the New York State law that required public schools to have at least one such device on school grounds. As a State Senator, I worked with State Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg to advance this initiative after a young man from his area, on Long Island, by the name of Louis Acompora died from a blunt impact to the chest while playing lacrosse. Had an AED been available at the time, his life might have been saved. Thankfully, our efforts have helped to save over 35 lives in New York State in the five years since the law's enactment.

The American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, and the National Safety Council are preparing related public awareness and training campaigns to be held during the first week of June, and I am pleased to support this bill as a framework for their efforts.

This resolution will help us to save lives across the country and combat heart disease at the community level. I urge my colleagues to join myself and Mr. BOREN in supporting H. Con. Res. 215.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. 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 Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 215, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL FIRE FIGHTER APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 695) expressing the support for designation of a ''National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day'' to honor and celebrate the firefighters of the United States, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 695

Whereas there are more than 1,100,000 fire fighters in the United States;

Whereas approximately 75 percent of all fire fighters in the United States are volunteers who receive little or no compensation for their heroic work;

Whereas there are more than 30,000 fire departments in the United States;

Whereas thousands of fire fighters have died in the line of duty since the date that Benjamin Franklin founded the first volunteer fire department in 1735;

Whereas 346 fire fighters and emergency personnel died while responding to the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001;

Whereas fire fighters respond to more than 20,000,000 calls during a typical year;

Whereas fire fighters also provide emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, special rescue response, terrorism response, and life safety education;

Whereas, in 1922, President Harding first declared a Fire Prevention Week, and it is appropriate to continue this tradition by supporting the designation of a National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives supports the designation of a ''National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day'' to honor and celebrate the fire fighters of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

As a member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, I am pleased to join my colleagues in support of this resolution to support the goals of National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day. H. Res. 695, as amended, was introduced on October 1, 2007, by Representative JOHN CAMPBELL. On November 8, 2007, the committee reported the bill amended by voice vote.

H. Res. 695 ensures that a day of recognition is granted to the courageous firefighters of the United States, who put their lives at risk in order to guarantee the safety of our citizens. Over the last few months as emergencies across this country have been declared and millions have been evacuated from their homes, our Nation's firefighters have rushed to serve and protect those whose lives and livelihoods were in jeopardy. It is important to commemorate their great efforts and service with a day of honor.

So I commend my colleague for sponsoring this measure and urge its swift passage.

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

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

I join with my colleagues in supporting National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day. This year, particularly as a Californian, it is appropriate that this was authored by a Californian and that I have the opportunity to personally thank the men and women who saved lives and property in California just a month and a half ago. But, of course, firefighters do that every day throughout the country, not just in wildfires that consume hundreds of thousands of acres.

Interestingly enough, firefighters also carry automatic external defibrillators and save lives every day. Firefighters are not just people who put out fires. They are people who train in the prevention of fire. They are people who train in emergency procedures that save lives. They are people who answer to so many calls in our community.

The fact is on 9/11 we understood that firefighters go in the direction where anyone, anyone, should be running from and they do so with no regard for their own safety. They do so because that is what a firefighter's job is. Firefighters do not shy away from riots. They do not shy away from the worst inferno, and they do not shy away from earthquakes in my home State and other disasters. In fact, the term ''American hero'' is best attributed to the men and women who every day train to go into fires to find and retrieve people and, in fact, not to leave the site until all life has been preserved and all property, to the best of their ability, has also been maintained.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in recognizing the heroism not just in California 2 months ago but, in fact, throughout the country of our firefighters and urge support and passage of National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day.

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

□ 1415

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I yield 10 minutes to the gentlelady from Michigan, Mrs. CANDICE MILLER.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly rise in very strong support of this resolution to honor and to celebrate America's firefighters.

Wherever and whatever the danger, every American knows that America's firefighters are just moments away from coming to their rescue, putting their lives on the line to save and protect others in their communities. And no one will ever forget the very vivid example of the bravery of our firefighters that was exhibited on September 11, 2001.

On that horrific day, as thousands were fleeing for their lives and running from buildings, we witnessed firefighters actually running towards the danger. As others were running away from the danger, which is a natural human instinct, the firefighters and first responders were running towards the danger and running into these buildings. And they did this knowing that many would most likely not come out. But these brave men and women are professionals who understood that it was their duty to protect their fellow citizens, and they did so. Their

brave actions on that day no doubt saved countless lives, and through those actions they earned the gratitude of those who were saved and the respect of the entire world.

Throughout this country, firefighters perform similar acts of heroism every day. And although we can never properly repay them for their dedicated service to our communities, we should take action to honor them for their hard work, their bravery and their dedication. Firefighters should never doubt that they have the eternal gratitude and respect of the American people that they serve so faithfully.

The establishment of a National Firefighter Appreciation Day will help remind everyone of the tremendous work that our firefighters do each and every day, and we should take the time to recognize those efforts.

Mr. Speaker, they prevent tragedies from happening, they respond instantly when tragedies occur, and they help pick up the pieces in tragedy's aftermath. They are there to help in some of the worst times in people's lives, guiding them through with their brave helping hands.

I certainly appreciate the work of the sponsors of this bill in bringing it to the floor. And I urge all of my colleagues to support the adoption of this important resolution so that we, the assembled Representatives of the American citizens, can show America's firefighters the support of a grateful Nation.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this legislation and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 695, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: ''Resolution expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the designation of a National Fire Fighter Appreciation Day to honor and celebrate the fire fighters of the United States.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL POSTAGE STAMP FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH EXTENSION

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 597) to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 4 years, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 597

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.

Section 414(h) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2007'' and inserting ''2011''.

SEC. 2. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

The National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense shall each submit to Congress and the Government Accountability Office an annual report concerning the use of any amounts that it received under section 414(c) of title 39, United States Code, including a description of any significant advances or accomplishments, during the year covered by the report, that were funded, in whole or in part, with such amounts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, now it is my pleasure to yield such time as he might consume to the author of this legislation, Representative CLAY from Missouri.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for yielding the time and for his leadership on the subcommittee with this piece of legislation.

S. 597, as amended, ensures greater accountability by requiring that the NIH and DOD issue annual reports to Congress detailing how proceeds from the breast cancer research stamp are allocated. In addition, the bill extends reauthorization of the breast cancer research stamp until 2011.

I am grateful to Senator FEINSTEIN for agreeing to this change. Now the Senate version of the breast cancer semipostal will be identical to the measure I sponsored, H.R. 1236, which was unanimously passed by the House on October 30, 2007.

Unlike many programs that are not reauthorized timely but continue to operate, the breast cancer research stamp must be reauthorized or the U.S. Postal Service will discontinue selling the stamp. In fact, the Postal Service was forced to take this stamp off sale for 26 days in 2004 because the Senate did not act in time.

Amid constituent concerns of stamp sales being halted, I contacted the Postmaster General of the U.S. Postal Service to ensure that sales would continue. I was assured that the stamp would not be removed from shelves; however, the Senate must pass this bill by December 31.

Mr. Speaker, let me again thank all of the breast cancer organizations, the Postal Service, and my colleagues in the House and Senate for their support.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting swift passage of S. 597, as amended.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I join happily with the gentleman from Missouri and my own home State Senator, Senator FEINSTEIN, in urging immediate passage of this renewal.

This extension is not only critical, but it comes at a time when those of us on this House floor are still remembering the recent loss of Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis. Yes, in fact, today could be considered to be Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis' Breast Cancer Awareness Day because it's not just the statistic of 180,000 people, mostly women, getting breast cancer or 40,000 dying, it's a friend and a colleague who fought valiantly through not only this Congress but the previous Congress, and almost, but did not, win against this dreaded disease.

Breast Cancer Awareness stamps are not about the $54 million raised, although that goes a long way towards adding to the research pool. It's about the countless millions of people who receive a stamp that sends a message that reminds them to get that available mammogram, to, in fact, do a self-test, to be aware of lumps, to be aware of the possibility of this terrible and invasive disease taking the life of their wife, their daughter, their mother. So, I join again in urging passage of this.

And I might take a personal liberty that you don't often see on the House floor. My opponent in my last race and, God willing, my opponent in this race, Jeeni Criscenzo, is presently fighting cancer. I saw her yesterday in California dealing with the effects of chemo. Her detection was relatively early; she has a good chance. But it's things like this that the House does that sometimes gets criticized as not substantial legislation that hopefully will save women like my opponent and friend, Jeeni Criscenzo, from the kind of terrible tragedy that befell Jo Ann Davis and so many other women last year.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I certainly join with my colleague from California in extolling the legacy of Representative Jo Ann Davis, who served with us on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Mr. Speaker, S. 597, as amended, now mirrors the House version of the Breast Cancer Semipostal measure which was unanimously passed by this body on October 30, 2007.

The House version, H.R. 1236, which was sponsored by representative WILLIAM LACY CLAY, reauthorizes the sale of the breast cancer stamp for an additional 4 years from 2007 to 2011. The bill

also follows up on the Government Accountability Office's recommendations that the relevant agencies report the use of monies received from the sale of the stamp, including a description of any significant advances on accomplishments that were funded by the sale.

As a member of the Oversight Committee Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, Representative CLAY is to be commended for his diligence and patience for working with all parties and securing an acceptable compromise on the sale of the breast cancer stamp.

I note proudly that the United States Postal Service has sold over 785.6 million breast cancer research stamps from which $54.626 million has been transferred to the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense for breast cancer research and awareness.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the public for buying the breast cancer semipostal stamp and the numerous organizations for lending their strong support for its continuation. With your help, I am confident that we will find a cure.

I urge swift passage of this bill, and again commend the representative from Missouri, our colleague, Representative CLAY, for his introduction.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 597, to reauthorize the Postage Stamp for Breast Cancer. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among women and the leading cause of cancer death among women under the age of 40. Research is key to improving breast cancer prevention, detection and treatment. In the 9 years the stamp has been sold, it's raised more than $40 million to fund breast cancer research around the country. In those nine years, great strides have been made, but we can do more and that's why we should support the extension of the breast cancer stamp.

In addition to this important legislation, we need to do more to prevent breast cancer deaths in women under the age of 40. Approximately 11,000 women under the age of 40 will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, of which nearly 1 ,300 will die. However, most research, education, and prevention efforts are focused upon women over the age of 45. That's why I introduced the Annie Fox Act, H.R. 715, named after a young woman in my district who was diagnosed with breast cancer and died at the age of35. This bill will authorize research into the causes of breast cancer in younger women and educate them about the risks of breast cancer.

It is important that we not only continue to fund research and education over the ages of 45, but that we also do so for our younger women so that they may live long, healthy lives. I applaud the passage of this important legislation and look forward to working with my colleagues to pass H.R. 715, the Annie Fox Act.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 597, which would reauthorize the highly successful special postage stamp that supports breast cancer research.

Breast cancer affects virtually every American family. Most of us have lost a family member—grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, and daughters—to breast cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates 178,000 women in the United States will be diagnosed this year with breast cancer. They estimate 40,000 women will die from the disease. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, accounting for more than one in four cancers diagnosed in women.

We must do everything we can to understand the causes of breast cancer so we can effectively prevent and treat it. Since its inception, the breast cancer research stamp has raised $53 million for life-saving research. Proceeds from the sale of the stamps fund research at the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense. By reauthorizing the breast cancer research stamp, we would ensure that this funding source for breast cancer research continues.

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

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

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. 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 Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 597, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A Bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RELATING TO SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4108) to amend section 3328 of title 5, United States Code, relating to Selective Service registration, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4108

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

SECTION 1. SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION.

Subsection (b) of section 3328 of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(b) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Director of the Selective Service System, shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section. Such regulations—

''(1) shall include procedures—

''(A) for the adjudication of determinations of whether a failure to register was knowing and willful; and

''(B) under which such a determination may not be made if the individual concerned shows by a preponderance of the evidence that the failure to register was neither knowing nor willful;

''(2) may provide that determinations of eligibility under the requirements of this section shall be adjudicated by the Executive agency making the appointment for which the eligibility is determined; and

''(3) shall provide for exceptions to determinations of ineligibility under this section to allow for—

''(A) the appointment of an individual who was discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions; and

''(B) the appointment or continued employment of an individual who has reached 31 years of age.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he might consume to the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, Chairman MILLER from California.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him and the Chair of the committee and Mr. ISSA for all of their work on this legislation.

This legislation was drafted with the help and the cooperation of the Veterans Administration and the Office of Personnel Management and the Selective Service.

Current laws governing Federal employment do not draw a very clear distinction between those who do not register for selective service through an oversight and those who knowingly and willfully avoid registering. Under current law, we are lumping sort of the innocent along with the guilty, and this legislation is an effort by these agencies to correct what's wrong with this legislation and to make sure that we can protect those who do this in an unknowing fashion.

The bill sets out to correct this by exempting individuals from employment ineligibility who failed to register for selective service but were honorably discharged from active duty in the armed services. And second, it would allow current Federal employees who are at least age 31 to remain eligible for Federal employment despite their failure to register. And this would effectively change the lifetime ban from employment to a 5-year ban, which would coincide with the statute of limitations. So there would be the full ability to prosecute those individuals that we felt wrongfully failed to register for the draft.

This would have a big impact on the caseload, and it would also make sure

that we do not deny many of our agencies the talents and the abilities of individuals who have been caught in this conundrum that has taken place.

And this has been, after many months of negotiation, and Mr. ISSA has been a vital part of these negotiations with Selective Service, with the Veterans Administration, and with the Office of Personnel Management, and I would encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation. I think it restores to law the intent for which it was passed and keeps us from punishing those individuals who are not guilty of knowingly refusing to register for the draft.

□ 1430

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, often the most absurd example is what forces us to look, and look more carefully, at flaws in our legislation. This one is a good example. Chris Frecking is a citizen of the United States who has been employed at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Francisco for the last 16 years. Mr. Frecking was born in the Philippines to an American father in 1968 and was sworn in as a U.S. citizen in 1990. But there lies the rub.

He was sworn in as an American citizen. He came here from the Philippines after he turned 18 unaware that he should register with the Selective Service after there was in fact no draft or likelihood of anyone being called if they did. He failed to do so. He did try, though, when he discovered that this was a lifetime requirement in 1994. But, in fact, this was not allowed.

This is a gentleman who has been a good citizen, who in fact fell through the cracks. This legislation today after careful scrutiny in harmony with many organizations but most importantly at the leadership of the director of the Selective Service, in fact, makes it possible for us to continue to urge men to register for the Selective Service and treats them fairly if, through no fault of their own, they fail to do so.

I urge the swift passage of this bill. It is good legislation. It corrects a minor flaw. I join with my colleague from California in saying that sometimes the best legislation is small and bipartisan but makes a big difference in people's lives.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 additional minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I want to thank my colleague from California for mentioning Mr. Frecking, because this was a case that really was just so absurd in how it was being played out because of the circumstances that he found himself caught in, but more importantly it also had the potential to deny the veterans service of the VA Hospital in San Francisco the very skilled talents of this individual. They went to bat. They recognized that they too had made a mistake, inadvertently they made a mistake. But they did not want to lose his skill and talents to our veterans coming through that hospital. And it was really at their insistence, their concern, that brought this case to the forefront and allowed us to be able to work it out with the Office of Personnel Service and Selective Service.

I know as we explained it, we talked about it back and forth, and Mr. ISSA, at first I don't think he thought this could possibly be going on, but we convinced him that it was, and this is exactly the kind of case that this legislation is designed to address so we don't harm these individuals in the manner which was possible for Mr. Frecking.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. ISSA. I yield back the balance of my time.

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

As a Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of H.R. 4108, as amended, a bill to amend title 5, relating to Selective Service registration.

H.R. 4108 was introduced on November 7, 2007, by Representatives GEORGE MILLER and DARRELL ISSA. The legislation would provide for exemptions from determinations of ineligibility for Federal employment for individuals who have not registered with the Selective Service. Those who have received an honorable discharge from the armed services who have performed at least 10 years of Federal service would no longer be deemed ineligible.

Under current law, all males born after December 31, 1959, must register with the Selective Service by their 26th birthday in order to be eligible for employment in the Federal Government. An individual who has not registered with the Selective Service is not eligible for Federal employment unless he can prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the failure to register was neither knowing nor willful.

This means that the individual must prove to a high legal standard that he did not know he was required to register or thought he had registered. H.R. 4108 would exempt from this requirement individuals who were honorably discharged from the armed services or who have 10 years of service in the Federal Government.

H.R. 4108 was introduced on November 7, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The committee marked up the measure on November 8, 2007, and ordered that the bill be reported by voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4108, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAILING OF THE NAVY'S ''GREAT WHITE FLEET''

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 261) commemorating the centennial anniversary of the sailing of the Navy's ''Great White Fleet,'' launched by President Theodore Roosevelt on December 16, 1907, from Hampton Roads, Virginia, and returning there on February 22, 1909.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 261

Whereas the launching of the Great White Fleet marked the emergence of the United States as a true global seapower, able to dispatch 16 new battleships on a worldwide deployment for 14 months;

Whereas these battleships were painted entirely white, with gilded scrollwork on their bows, and subsequently came to be known as the ''Great White Fleet'';

Whereas the 4 squadrons of 4 battleships each, manned by 14,000 sailors, sailed 43,000 miles and made 20 port calls on 6 continents;

Whereas the Fleet, in conducting visits to important nations such as Australia, served to reinforce a friendship and partnership that continues to this day;

Whereas the Fleet, in providing a tangible demonstration of the forward naval presence of the United States in the Pacific, also reinforced the message of how important maritime stability and security are to the United States;

Whereas the Fleet, in response to one of the worst natural disasters in European history, was able to immediately divert to Messina, Sicily, to offer humanitarian aid to the Italian people; and

Whereas the Fleet, in executing a range of missions and returning to the United States after 14 months at sea, displayed to the world a number of core American values, including compassion, showed its flexibility by responding to unforeseen events, and demonstrated the ability of the United States to project maritime power as a stabilizing force: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) commemorates the wisdom of President Theodore Roosevelt in developing and launching the Great White Fleet;

(2) supports a one-time designation of a day to celebrate the 100th centennial of the Great White Fleet and the special role the Fleet played in building enduring friendships with important allies and partner nations;

(3) commends efforts by the Department of the Navy to maintain and strengthen our cooperative partnerships with foreign nations and to safeguard our Nation's interests in the maritime domain;

(4) commends efforts by the Department of the Navy in leading the development of a Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower; and

(5) honors the sacrifices made and services rendered by the servicemembers of the Navy,

Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard and the civilians who constitute our maritime services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support House Concurrent Resolution 261, commemorating the centennial anniversary of the sailing of the Navy's Great White Fleet launched by President Theodore Roosevelt on December 16, 1907 from Hampton Roads, Virginia, and returning there on February 22, 1909.

I would like to thank my colleague from Virginia, Mrs. THELMA DRAKE, my friend and colleague on the House Armed Services Committee, for bringing this measure before the House. It was the Atlantic Fleet, later to be known as the Great White Fleet for its pristine decor that launched the United States into the realm of the maritime overnight. Over 14,000 sailors made an extraordinary voyage around the world, from Virginia in the Atlantic Ocean, around South America's Cape Horn to San Francisco. From there, the crews sailed the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, through the Mediterranean Sea, and back to the United States, stopping in such great nations as Australia and Italy to forge and secure the diplomatic friendships that continue to this day.

In 14 months, the Great White Fleet demonstrated to the entire world that the United States is committed to both military maritime presence as well as international humanitarian aid. This coming Sunday, December 16, marks the 100th year since the beginning of that voyage. In the past 100 years, we have maintained these commitments and continued deployments of the naval ships, including the hospital ships *Mercy* and *Comfort*, to provide aid and assistance to those in time of need. This centennial is an appropriate time to celebrate and renew our continued commitment to responsible international stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 261.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 261, a resolution I introduced to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the launching of the Great White Fleet. On December 16, 1907, 16 battleships, including, of course, the USS *Virginia*, launched from Norfolk for a 14-month-long cruise around the world. Envisioned by President Theodore Roosevelt, himself a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, as an opportunity to showcase the military and humanitarian might of the United States, the fleet sailed over 42,000 miles around the globe, traveling around the tip of South America, across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, through the Suez and Mediterranean and back across the Atlantic to Norfolk.

Upon arriving in Egypt, the fleet's commanding officer, Rear Admiral Charles Sperry, dispatched two of his battleships to assist in providing humanitarian assistance to the victims of an earthquake that had ravaged Sicily. The cruise, which has earned its place in American naval history as one the single greatest achievements of the 20th century, foreshadowed events in 2004 when the U.S. Navy provided assistance and comfort to the victims of the tsunami in Indonesia and neighboring countries and again in 2005 when assistance was provided to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The event also foreshadowed the debate in Washington regarding the size of the U.S. fleet and the needed industrial capacity. Painted white and visible for miles, the fleet caused President Roosevelt to ask rhetorically, ''Oughtn't we all feel proud?'' I can surely sympathize. As the Representative of Virginia's Second Congressional District, I fully understand the proud sensation of driving across the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel and seeing the raw naval power that is home ported in Norfolk.

That moment of pride transcends into a moment of pause when witnessed by our enemies and a moment of comfort when witnessed by our friends. President Roosevelt understood the concept of force projection before the term was fashionable.

Our great tradition of naval power was not founded by President Roosevelt, but he understood it and harnessed it foreshadowing the great challenges of the 21st century and today.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, that the idea of sending our fleet halfway around the world was not an idea widely accepted by Congress, and yet President Roosevelt through his leadership and determination and in his role as Commander in Chief set out to do what he thought was right, sending a message long before it can be done over a computer that the United States was now an ''A List'' celebrity on the world stage. And it worked. Upon its return, the headline of The Washington Post dated February 21, 1909, read: ''Eyes of World Opened By Fleet.''

Mr. Speaker, ask most students of history about the achievements of President Theodore Roosevelt, and I imagine that they will start with the Panama Canal. I introduced this resolution in part because I feel that President Roosevelt's historic vision of a strong blue-water Navy as the cornerstone of American foreign policy should never be forgotten.

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

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. I would just like to close by saying that as the proud daughter of a naval veteran from World War II, I again thank my colleague from Virginia for bringing forth this resolution and I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 261.

I am prepared to close if my colleague is.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 261, introduced by my friend and colleague from Virginia's Second Congressional District, Congresswoman THELMA DRAKE, to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the sailing of the Navy's ''Great White Fleet'' from Hampton Roads, Virginia.

On December 16, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt dispatched sixteen new battleships at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition on a global deployment to show the world that the United States had emerged as a global naval power. These sixteen ships were painted white, with gilded scrollwork on their bows, and became known as the ''Great White Fleet.''

Made up of four squadrons of four battleships each and manned by 14,000 sailors, the ships sailed 43,000 miles and made 20 port calls on six continents in 14 months. The fleet helped shore up American diplomatic efforts and friendships around the world, proving the success of pragmatic diplomatic policy. The fleet was greeted enthusiastically in nearly every port, where people in the thousands turned out to see America's new fleet. The fleet also responded to one of the worst earthquakes in European history by diverting to Sicily to offer humanitarian aid to the people of Italy.

On February 22, 1909, President Roosevelt returned to Hampton Roads, Virginia to witness the triumphant return of the ''Great White Fleet.'' President Roosevelt saw the fleet's successful global voyage as one of his administration's major accomplishments by enhancing the role of the United States in international affairs. Few can deny the historical importance of President Roosevelt's decision to deploy the ''Great White Fleet'' around the world.

Seven of the 16 great battleships that constituted the ''Great White Fleet'' were built in my hometown of Newport News, Virginia at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, today known as Northrop Grumman Newport News. Although the ''Great White Fleet'' demonstrated that America was an emerging seapower, the success of the ''Great White Fleet'' made Newport News and the Hampton Roads area a powerhouse for shipbuilding. One hundred years later, Northrop Grumman Newport News is still leading the way in the shipbuilding industry by building some of the most powerful and advanced ships for the United States Navy. Northrop Grumman Newport News has already begun work on the U.S.S. *Gerald Ford,* the newest

and most advanced generation of air craft carrier, to lead the U.S. Navy into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the voyage of the "Great White Fleet" has proven to be a pivotal event in the history of this great Nation. While impacting the entire United States, the impression of the "Great White Fleet" can be most felt in Hampton Roads, Virginia. In addition to being home to one of the Nation's most important shipbuilding facilities at Newport News, the world's largest naval base is located just across the Hampton Roads in Norfolk, Virginia. The citizens of Hampton Roads should feel very proud about the role of our region in one of the most important nautical voyages in American history. I urge my colleagues to support this important concurrent resolution.

Mrs. DRAKE. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 261.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives, The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 7, 2007, at 3:39 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4252.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

□ 1445

FAIR TREATMENT FOR EXPERIENCED PILOTS ACT

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4343) to amend title 49, United States Code, to modify age standards for pilots engaged in commercial aviation operations.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4343

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act".

SEC. 2. AGE STANDARDS FOR PILOTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 447 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 44729. Age standards for pilots

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitation in subsection (c), a pilot may serve in multicrew covered operations until attaining 65 years of age.

"(b) COVERED OPERATIONS DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered operations' means operations under part 121 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

"(c) LIMITATION FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS.—

"(1) APPLICABILITY OF ICAO STANDARD.—A pilot who has attained 60 years of age may serve as pilot-in-command in covered operations between the United States and another country only if there is another pilot in the flight deck crew who has not yet attained 60 years of age.

"(2) SUNSET OF LIMITATION.—Paragraph (1) shall cease to be effective on such date as the Convention on International Civil Aviation provides that a pilot who has attained 60 years of age may serve as pilot-in-command in international commercial operations without regard to whether there is another pilot in the flight deck crew who has not attained age 60.

"(d) SUNSET OF AGE 60 RETIREMENT RULE.—On and after the date of enactment of this section, section 121.383(c) of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, shall cease to be effective.

"(e) APPLICABILITY.—

"(1) NONRETROACTIVITY.—No person who has attained 60 years of age before the date of enactment of this section may serve as a pilot for an air carrier engaged in covered operations unless—

"(A) such person is in the employment of that air carrier in such operations on such date of enactment as a required flight deck crew member; or

"(B) such person is newly hired by an air carrier as a pilot on or after such date of enactment without credit for prior seniority or prior longevity for benefits or other terms related to length of service prior to the date of rehire under any labor agreement or employment policies of the air carrier.

"(2) PROTECTION FOR COMPLIANCE.—An action taken in conformance with this section, taken in conformance with a regulation issued to carry out this section, or taken prior to the date of enactment of this section in conformance with section 121.383(c) of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect before such date of enactment), may not serve as a basis for liability or relief in a proceeding, brought under any employment law or regulation, before any court or agency of the United States or of any State or locality.

"(f) AMENDMENTS TO LABOR AGREEMENTS AND BENEFIT PLANS.—Any amendment to a labor agreement or benefit plan of an air carrier that is required to conform with the requirements of this section or a regulation issued to carry out this section, and is applicable to pilots represented for collective bargaining, shall be made by agreement of the air carrier and the designated bargaining representative of the pilots of the air carrier.

"(g) MEDICAL STANDARDS AND RECORDS.—

"(1) MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDS.—Except as provided by paragraph (2), a person serving as a pilot for an air carrier engaged in covered operations shall not be subject to different medical standards, or different, greater, or more frequent medical examinations, on account of age unless the Secretary determines (based on data received or studies published after the date of enactment of this section) that different medical standards, or different, greater, or more frequent medical examinations, are needed to ensure an adequate level of safety in flight.

"(2) DURATION OF FIRST-CLASS MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.—No person who has attained 60 years of age may serve as a pilot of an air carrier engaged in covered operations unless the person has a first-class medical certificate. Such a certificate shall expire on the last day of the 6-month period following the date of examination shown on the certificate.

"(h) SAFETY.—

"(1) TRAINING.—Each air carrier engaged in covered operations shall continue to use pilot training and qualification programs approved by the Federal Aviation Administration, with specific emphasis on initial and recurrent training and qualification of pilots who have attained 60 years of age, to ensure continued acceptable levels of pilot skill and judgment.

"(2) LINE EVALUATIONS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this section, and every 6 months thereafter, an air carrier engaged in covered operations shall evaluate the performance of each pilot of the air carrier who has attained 60 years of age through a line check of such pilot. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, an air carrier shall not be required to conduct for a 6-month period a line check under this paragraph of a pilot serving as second-in-command if the pilot has undergone a regularly scheduled simulator evaluation during that period.

"(3) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 24 months after the date of enactment of this section, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report concerning the effect, if any, on aviation safety of the modification to pilot age standards made by subsection (a).".

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 447 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"44729. Age standards for pilots.".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the pending bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will raise the retirement age for commercial airline pilots from age 60 to age 65. For more than three generations, pilots have been required to retire from commercial aviation when they reach age 60. There have been a number of changes in both the medical condition, the medical examination of pilots, recurring, more intensive medical reviews, that argue for a longer period of time for the age of retirement of commercial pilots. There have been

changes in the economics of aviation that have rearranged the retirement plans for pilots in midstream, in some cases wiping out retirement plans altogether, in other cases totally restructuring them, which two factors argue for a change in the retirement age.

We responded to those changed circumstances in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007, which moved from our committee through the House on September 20th. It was our hope that the other body would move ahead with an FAA reauthorization bill. That hasn't happened.

As time went on and the other body continued to be locked in whatever difficulties they encounter, there were increasing appeals from pilots, from airlines, from the traveling public, frankly, to separate out this provision from our reauthorization bill. I was very reluctant to do that, in hopes that we would use this provision, among others, as leverage and as part of our integral package on FAA reauthorization. Clearly, the other body is not going to even move a bill through committee in the waning days of this session. It then became clear to me there was no reason further to delay action on this matter of justice for commercial airline pilots.

Furthermore, the FAA forecasts an increase in airline travel to more than 1 billion passengers in the next 7 to 8 years, and retirements among airline pilots are up 173 percent. We are seeing almost every day five or more of the most senior experienced pilots retiring. We ought to provide this relief. We ought to separate this provision out from our House-passed bill and provide a measure of justice and economic relief for pilots.

In the reauthorization bill, the provisions that we included for this age relief are drawn out and included in H.R. 4343. One, pilots who have reached age 60, to serve beyond that time frame, must have a first-class medical certificate renewed every 6 months. Second, they must continue to participate in FAA pilot training and qualification programs to ensure acceptable levels of skill and judgment. Three, they must submit to a line check every 6 months. That assures that pilots who are continuing to serve beyond age 60 will meet all the threshold requirements of skill, capability, alertness and responsiveness to their ever-increasingly difficult challenges.

In addition, our bill requires international flights leaving the U.S. to have at least one pilot under the age of 60. That applies international standards in the flight deck. This requirement would terminate if the international standard were changed.

The increased pilot age limit is not retroactive, however, and does not allow pilots who reached age 60 prior to enactment to serve as commercial pilots unless they are employed by an air carrier as a required flight deck crew member, or are newly hired on after the date of enactment without credit for prior service.

I believe that moving this legislation now, if we can also get it through the other body in quick order, will have a profound and personal effect on the lives of thousands of pilots who otherwise would be forced to retire. We have had consensus within the committee on this issue. The question is whether we should take it out at this time or leave it in the House-passed bill for consideration later in conference with the other body.

Clearly, as I said earlier, we are not going to get to that point, and Mr. COSTELLO has advocated strongly that we consider at an appropriate time moving the legislation separately, and he is the Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee. Mr. MICA has been a strong advocate for early action on this legislation, apart from our authorization bill. Mr. PETRI, the same, and other pilot members of our committee have similarly advocated.

So I think we move ahead with a broad consensus measure that should pass the House readily and hopefully the other body as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to welcome the chairman of our committee back. It is good to see you standing strong and firm after elective surgery and a couple of weeks hospitalization, and bringing a Christmas present with you to the pilots of our country, especially those who otherwise might be forced to retire if this is unnecessarily delayed.

As you pointed out, we hoped to move it in a timely fashion. A year ago, the international community lowered the standard to 60. Now we are in a transition period, and we hope this passes today and the Senate acts in a speedy fashion, because each day we delay, a few more people's careers are disrupted unnecessarily. So I thank you for scheduling this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the ranking Republican on the Public Works and Transportation Committee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

First of all, I too want to welcome back Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. OBERSTAR, he and I have had the great experience of working since 15 years ago when I came to Congress. He was chairman of Aviation. I became the ranking member on the Republican side when he became Chair of the committee.

We had a great year. We probably passed more legislation than any other committee. We passed an historic water resources bill. We actually did, I think, the 107th override of a Presidential veto. We agreed in a bipartisan fashion to invest in our Nation's infrastructure. I am sorry Mr. OBERSTAR wasn't here to see that glorious day.

It is very lonely not having either him fighting with you or not having him here to fight with. But we are pleased he is back, and hopefully had an experienced Republican physician doing all those titanium additions to his spine. But he looks great and we are pleased to have him here.

I am also pleased that through his leadership, and a joint bipartisan effort, and I wrote him on December 5, and I will include this letter as part of the RECORD, saying while I oppose taking other measures out of the pending FAA reauthorization, I want to keep the pressure on, we need to pass that bill, that there is a particular provision whose interest is paramount to that legislation, and that is doing away with an obsolete and unfair FAA mandatory retirement rule that every day is penalizing our pilots. In fact, more than 50 of our Nation's most experienced pilots of commercial airliners are forced to retire.

Now, this bill is entitled the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act. I would like to also give a personal example of why I think this is important. The title is important. I might even want to amend the title in honor of one of the guys I went to college with, a buddy of mine. His name is Bob Fobes.

Most people in Congress don't know Bob Fobes, but Bob and I were fraternity brothers, went to the University of Florida. Let me tell you, there is nobody more devoted as far as a pilot. I think the only thing that Bob is devoted to, other than his wife Laurie and his family, is flying, and Bob has not failed on any occasion to mention to me that he is going to be affected by this particular outdated rule that was passed nearly a half a century ago when males and females didn't live as long as they do in our society.

So we are addressing something that personally affects folks like Bob Fobes and thousands of other pilots who are dedicated to one of the great professions that has given the world and America in particular a magic carpet to get around to places that people would not have even imagined they could be 50 years ago.

As of November 2006, we also know that foreign airline pilots are allowed to fly up to age 65, so our counterparts across the Atlantic are doing this. The U.S. sets up a double standard, unfortunately, and I think it is a disadvantage to the flying public to, again, not have our most experienced individuals in the cockpit and being able to fly.

As Chairman OBERSTAR pointed out, there are additional protections here for the flying public that these individuals will be subject to, even more medical exams, making certain that they are fit and capable even in these additional years that we grant.

The Freedom to Fly Act, H.R. 1125, was introduced earlier into the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee by one of our outstanding leaders in aviation, also a pilot, ROBIN HAYES, the gentleman from North Carolina, and he has 313 bipartisan sponsors on his legislation. ROBIN

HAYES cannot be here, so I also wanted to give credit to not only Chairman OBERSTAR, Mr. COSTELLO and Mr. PETRI, but also ROBIN HAYES, who has worked tirelessly to make certain that this legislation and this particular measure comes before the House.

This is the right thing to do at the right time. I would like to thank again all those who have been involved, and some of the staff members on both sides of the aisle who helped bring this measure forward. I encourage Members to vote ''yes'' on this very sensible and desperately needed legislation.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, December 5, 2007.

Hon. JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN OBERSTAR: It is very clear that legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration will not be signed into law before the end of this year. Therefore, I strongly believe it is our obligation and this Committee's responsibility to see to it that our most experienced pilots are permitted to continue flying commercial aircraft.

You and I have both received bipartisan request letters from our colleagues urging passage of legislation to increase the current retirement age for thousands of commercial airline pilots across the country. Moreover, H.R. 1125, The Freedom to Fly Act, has 313 bipartisan cosponsors, including many Members who serve on our Committee.

I look forward to working with you to move a compromise bill before Congress adjourns this session.

Sincerely,

JOHN L. MICA,
Ranking Republican Member.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to express my appreciation to Mr. PETRI and Mr. MICA for their good wishes and the welcome back. It is a good feeling to have recovered from rather extensive surgery. I am fond of saying now I have more metal in my neck than in some of my bicycles, because they are carbon fiber and these are titanium rods and screws, and I am learning to live in a different way with this new architecture in my cervical spine. But it is a good feeling to recover use of hands and arms and be able to function fully and normally. I am grateful to both gentlemen for their good wishes and for all those colleagues who sent good wishes and cards and good eats.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join our colleagues on the other side the aisle in welcoming our chairman back. Let me say that on this legislation, I think Chairman OBERSTAR, as he always does, has summarized the legislation very well. We have a similar provision in H.R. 2881 that we passed out of the House on September 20, and, unfortunately, as Chairman OBERSTAR indicated, it is pending in the other body.

It makes sense to pass this legislation at this time. We are hopeful that by doing so today that the other body will act quickly and we, in fact, can get this over to the President and signed into law.

□ 1500

Many changes have taken place since the FAA arbitrarily imposed the age 60 rule in 1960. The age expectancy of a person living in the United States then versus today goes from 60-something-years-old, in the early 1960s, to 77 years today. We have other provisions in the legislation, as Chairman OBERSTAR indicated, on international flights that make certain that there is at least one person in the flight crew 60 years old or under 65. Secondly, we have provisions to make certain that physicals and other health care issues are addressed by pilots that will qualify.

Let me say that I strongly support this legislation. As Chairman OBERSTAR indicated, both Mr. PETRI and Mr. MICA, myself, Mr. HAYES, and other members of the committee have broached this subject and attempted to bring it to the floor before today. I am very pleased that we are moving on this legislation. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this needed legislation.

Since 1959, the Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, has required commercial airline pilots to retire at age 60.

This mandatory retirement rule was initially put in place for safety reasons, although some have argued that the FAA had little scientifically backed data in 1959 to support the safety mandate.

In any event, the ''Age 60 Rule,'' as it is known, soon became accepted practice.

For many years the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, also required commercial airline pilots to retire at age 60. However, in November 2006, a new ICAO standard went into effect, allowing a pilot to fly up to age 65, as long as the co-pilot is under age 60.

This change in ICAO standard resulted in an immediate double standard.

Regardless of FAA's policy, as of November 23, 2006, foreign pilots flying into the U.S. are allowed to fly up to age 65, provided the co-pilot is age 60 or younger. Yet, U.S. pilots must retire as soon as they reach 60 years of age.

Clearly, we now have a fairness issue that must be addressed.

This new double standard has caused a groundswell of U.S. pilots close to retirement to push for a similar change to FAA standards.

In response to the change in the ICAO standard, the FAA announced that it would initiate an ''Age 60'' review and rulemaking process. The FAA no longer assumes that once a pilot reaches age 60 they are automatically unsafe.

All the groups involved have done excellent work to save not only their careers and the careers of their colleagues, but to keep the skies as safe as possible.

The FAA has forecasted that by 2015 the U.S. will have 1 billion passengers flying annually. We also are facing a pilot shortage in the near future.

Clearly, we must do everything we can to ensure that our most experienced pilots are able to continue to fly as long as safety is not compromised.

This legislation provides for additional medical and training requirements for pilots ages 60 through 65 to address any possible safety concerns. It is a well-thought-out bill, which evens the playing field while ensuring aviation safety.

I would like to thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. MICA, and the chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, Mr. COSTELLO, for all their hard work on this long sought after legislation.

This is a good, bipartisan bill, and I encourage members to vote "yes" on H.R. 4343.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I do want to join Mr. MICA in sending compliments to Mr. HAYES, a member of our committee, who has been a strong advocate, even before we began our reauthorization legislation, for changing the age. But he along with other pilots on the committee, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. SALAZAR, formed a united front and a bipartisan front well before we began our work on the FAA reauthorization bill. So we give them joint credit and appreciation for their support from this initiative.

It is our hope in passing this bill today that the other body will act quickly on it without much ado. That would be a great initiative, a great sign of progress at these penultimate hours of the first session of the 110th Congress.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act of 2007.

This legislation will help address America's pilot shortage and improve airline safety, by enabling experienced pilots to continue flying instead of being forced into retirement.

Every week, 50 of our most experienced pilots are forced to retire as they reach the current mandatory retirement age of 60.

The Fair Treatment of Experienced Pilots Act would raise the retirement age to 65, in recognition that pilots who are 60 are still fully capable of flying. In fact, their experience often makes them better and safer pilots. This commonsense legislation includes requirements for pilots' health, training and evaluation.

Tourism is Hawai'i's major industry, and millions of visitors come to Hawai'i by air every year. We recognize the importance of the airline industry to our visitors as well as our residents who travel often for business, to visit family and friends and go on vacations.

Clearly, having experienced pilots on our nation's airlines is important to Hawai'i and America.

Many of our older pilots are also veterans who served our country in the military. So we are not only talking about the fair treatment of pilots, but also the fair treatment of veterans. Fairness requires us to allow experienced, highly capable pilots to continue flying—and not to be forced into retirement once they turn 60.

This legislation has bipartisan support because it is good policy. This legislation helps

airlines and the flying public by improving safety and mitigating the pilot shortage.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Subcommittee on Aviation, I want to acknowledge the leadership of Chairman OBERSTAR, the sponsor this bill.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act of 2007.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4343.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. 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.

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3986) to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3986

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

Section 2(a)(2)(J)(ii) of the John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76h(a)(2)(J)(ii)) is amended by striking ''Public Works and Transportation'' and inserting ''Transportation and Infrastructure''.

SEC. 3. PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM.

The John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76h et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 6 the following:

''SEC. 7. PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Board is authorized to study, plan, design, engineer, and construct a photovoltaic system for the main roof of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

''(b) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days before beginning construction of the photovoltaic system pursuant to subsection (a), the Board shall submit a report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate on the feasibility and design of the project.''.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 13 of the John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76r) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (a) and (b) and inserting the following:

''(a) MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND SECURITY.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board to carry out section 4(a)(1)(H)—

''(1) $20,200,000 for fiscal year 2008;

''(2) $21,800,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

''(3) $22,500,000 for fiscal year 2010.

''(b) CAPITAL PROJECTS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board to carry out subparagraphs (F) and (G) of section 4(a)(1)—

''(1) $23,150,000 for fiscal year 2008;

''(2) $16,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

''(3) $17,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.''; and

(2) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e), and by adding after subsection (c) the following:

''(d) PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board such sums as may be necessary to carry out section 7, with such sums to remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 5. EXISTING AUTHORITIES.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or affect the authority or responsibility of the National Capital Planning Commission or the Commission of Fine Arts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material therein.

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

There was no objection.

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

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is a national memorial to a fallen President, one of the most loved, respected, and admired Presidents of our history. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was initially proposed as a national cultural center during the tenure of President Dwight Eisenhower. It moved its way through the legislative process and took firm root and forward progress during the brief tenure of President John F. Kennedy and then sprang forward under President Lyndon Johnson. It has become an extraordinary cultural center for the Nation.

Our committee has had the good fortune to hold jurisdiction over the physical facility of the Kennedy Center and of its operations, and we have managed that responsibility very thoroughly and very effectively through the tenure of many previous Chairs of this committee. In particular, in the current context I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who is the Chair of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, for her leadership on this bill as well as our ranking member of the full committee, Mr. MICA, and the subcommittee ranking member, Mr. GRAVES, and Mr. PETRI who is here today managing the bill on the Republican side, for crafting what has historically been in our committee bipartisan legislation dealing with the operations of the Kennedy Center.

Since opening its doors September 8, 1971, the Kennedy Center has continued each year to gain national and international renown for its performance arts, programming, and for the education programs at the Kennedy Center that reach out across the Nation so that high schools, colleges, and universities can participate by satellite and live performances or recorded performances at the Kennedy Center.

The center has crossed the threshold in the last couple of years by performing over 3,000 performances, hosting millions of theater-goers, visitors, tourists. But of all of those accomplishments, none matches the international outreach of the Kennedy Center under President Michael Kaiser. In the aftermath of the Iraq war, Michael Kaiser personally traveled to Iraq to meet with the musicians of the Iraqi symphony who were, in many cases, without instruments or had somehow sheltered them from the post-invasion trauma, and secured instruments for them and secured funding to travel the Iraqi symphony to the Kennedy Center to perform jointly with the National Symphony Orchestra, an extraordinary gesture of international brotherhood and sisterhood of the arts.

President Kaiser has traveled to Africa, to the Far East, Japan, China to mobilize interest in the arts, joint initiatives with the Kennedy Center, and has actually established programs of arts management in countries well beyond our shores to help particularly Third World countries where arts have fallen well below the threshold of national concerns where people are more concerned about starvation and disease than they are about the arts. President Michael Kaiser has raised the threshold, raised the vision of arts managers in other countries, and created a great future for the arts wherever he has traveled.

Over the past decade, a great deal of work at the Kennedy Center has focused on life safety and accessibility projects. Many of those are completed. The Kennedy Center's capital building plan, which was updated earlier this year, emphasizes facility infrastructure. Over the next several years, the Kennedy Center will focus on replacing mechanical and electrical systems that consist of original equipment that is well beyond its useful life or should be replaced by more efficient equipment, and we provide authority for that work to continue to prevent failure or breakdown of essential equipment.

The bill before us today authorizes appropriations for maintenance and capital projects of the Kennedy Center for fiscal years 2008 to 2010. For maintenance, repair, and security, the bill authorizes $64.5 million over 3 years. For capital projects, the bill authorizes $56.2 million through 2010. Those are numbers derived from the Kennedy

Center's 2006–2007 Comprehensive Building Plan, which has worked its way through the administrative review process within the administration and the Office of Management and Budget.

The bill also authorizes the center to study, plan, design and build a photovoltaic system on the four-acre main roof of the Kennedy Center. That is 140,000 square feet of roof space. A preliminary estimate shows that a photovoltaic system would cost $6 million to build, but would save $10 million over the next 25 years. It is part of the plan of this committee to redirect the energy consumption of our portfolio of Federal civilian office space, for which this committee has responsibility of some 367 million square feet of Federal civilian office space that we can cut down on the electricity bill of $5.8 billion a year at those facilities. We could save the taxpayers a lot of money, and we could save the environment an awful lot of damage by converting to photovoltaic use. A good place to start is with the arts and with the Kennedy Center and with the Department of Energy building in the recently House-passed version of the energy conservation bill.

So this initiative that we require would in itself be a tribute to President Kennedy's longstanding well-known views of environmental protection.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of this measure, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

H.R. 3986, the John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2007, is a bipartisan bill authorizing appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for 3 years. Additionally, the bill authorizes a photovoltaic system for the main roof of the Kennedy Center.

The Kennedy Center serves an important role in our Nation. Not only is it one of the busiest theaters in the world, hosting millions of patrons each year to its seven stages, but it is first and foremost a presidential memorial for President John F. Kennedy.

Since its founding, the Kennedy Center has become one of the world's premier entertainment venue, featuring award-winning performances.

The funds we are authorizing today will go towards the upkeep and maintenance of the facility. These repairs are in line with the comprehensive building plan maintained by the Kennedy Center and created at the direction of Congress in 1994.

By supporting the regular maintenance and upkeep of the Kennedy Center, we can ensure that the center will continue to be a world-class venue well into the future.

I would also like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman NORTON, for working with us on this legislation. It was important for the Kennedy Center to report back to Congress before construction begins on the photovoltaic project to ensure adequate congressional oversight of the project.

I believe it is important the photovoltaic project be cost effective and appropriate for a presidential memorial. Thank you again for working with us.

I support this measure and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, it is my earnest hope that the other body will act promptly on this legislation. We would certainly like to get the bill enacted before the close of this session of Congress. We intend to pass this bill and send it over to the other body in the hopes that they will simply accept or make such technical or minimal changes as we can accept without the need for a conference with the other body, and send this bill on to the President to get the authorization in place in time for the upcoming budget cycle.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3986, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1515

OVER-THE-ROAD BUS TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3985) to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to register a person providing transportation by an over-the-road bus as a motor carrier of passengers only if the person is willing and able to comply with certain accessibility requirements in addition to other existing requirements, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3985

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. REGISTRATION OF MOTOR CARRIERS OF PASSENGERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 13902(a)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (B)(iii);

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) the accessibility requirements established by the Secretary under subpart H of part 37 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, or such successor regulations to those accessibility requirements as the Secretary may issue, for transportation provided by an over-the-road bus; and''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Sections 13902(a)(5) and 13905(d)(1)(A) of such title are each amended by inserting after ''Board'' the following: ''(including the accessibility requirements established by the Secretary under subpart H of part 37 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, or such successor regulations to those accessibility requirements as the Secretary may issue, for transportation provided by an over-the-road bus)''.

SEC. 3. OVER-THE-ROAD BUS DEFINED.

Section 13102 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(27) OVER-THE-ROAD BUS.—The term 'over-the-road bus' means a bus characterized by an elevated passenger deck located over a baggage compartment.''.

SEC. 4. DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS.

Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall take necessary actions to implement the changes required by the amendment made by section 2(a) relating to registration of motor carriers providing transportation by an over-the-road bus.

SEC. 5. COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation and the Attorney General shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to delineate the specific roles and responsibilities of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Justice, respectively, in enforcing the compliance of motor carriers of passengers providing transportation by an over-the-road bus (as defined in section 13102 of title 49, United States Code) with the accessibility requirements established by the Secretary under subpart H of part 37 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, or such successor regulations to those accessibility requirements as the Secretary may issue. Such memorandum shall recognize the Department of Transportation's statutory responsibilities as clarified by this Act (including the amendments made by this Act).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3985.

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

There was no objection.

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

This legislation will ensure that the motor coach accessibility regulations promulgated by Department of Transportation under the Americans with Disabilities Act are vigorously monitored and actively enforced. A leader in this initiative was our committee colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO). His leadership on this initiative is of long standing, his commitment to the handicapped community is well known, and he has been a forceful and vigorous advocate, as has Mr. PETRI, who is the ranking member of the Aviation Subcommittee, and served previously as Chair of the Surface Subcommittee. He is well familiar with the issues presented to our fellow citizens saddled with disabilities.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the DOT was required to adopt a final rule, which they did in 1998, requiring vehicle modifications for intercity buses, charter buses, tour buses, to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

But regulations have to be enforced to be effective, and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has interpreted the motor carrier statute in a way that limits the agency's ability to assess compliance with over-the-road bus accessibility regulations.

That's not acceptable. We have had quite some discussion about that issue. And, in fact, a new version of the American with Disabilities Act was introduced earlier this year by our majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and cosponsored and co-initiated by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) who has long been a strong advocate for legislation supporting the needs of the handicapped community.

Relying simply on Department of Justice enforcement authority, the FMCSA felt it couldn't take action on violations of its own regulations by over-the-road bus companies. In the U.S. Court of Appeals case, Peter Pan Bus Lines and Bonanza Acquisition, the court rejected the claim that the agency does not have discretion to interpret the law to allow consideration of compliance with ADA. The case was sent back to FMCSA for further review in February of this year.

But again the agency dragged its feet. After 8 months of failure to act, the FMCSA responded to the court in October, but only after Chairman DEFAZIO and I expressed our intent to legislate a solution if the agency did not provide its own plans to comply with ADA requirements.

In the decision, FMCSA defends its position that the agency does not have the authority to enforce the American with Disabilities Act and said, ''If Congress intended to expand the fitness criteria to include compliance with additional DOT regulations such as 49 CFR part 37, it presumably would have said so.''

Well, we are saying so today. If that's what they think they need, then we are going to make sure they have the authority to do it. There is no excuse for any further delay.

Specifically, the pending bill amends section 13902 of title 49 of U.S. Code to prohibit the Federal Motor Carrier Administration from granting registration authority to motor carrier providing over-the-road bus transportation where that carrier is not willing or able to comply with the accessibility requirements under subpart H of part 37 of title 49, CFR.

This bill will allow DOT to put compliance with ADA on a par with compliance with safety requirements, further clarifying in this legislation that the Secretary may suspend, amend or revoke a motor carrier's registration in the event of willful failure to comply with ADA. And bill further requires DOT and the Justice Department to enter into a memorandum of understanding to clearly define each department's roles and responsibilities in enforcing the provisions of ADA. This was not a new initiative. Some years ago when I chaired the Economic Development Subcommittee and the Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee, my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Klinger, and I required similar memorandum of understanding among three departments who were failing to carry out their responsibility on transportation overlaps.

So what we are doing here in this legislation has precedence of over 20 years ago in a similar issue of transportation.

ADA was enacted 17 years ago. We need to keep our vigilance over its enforcement, make sure that the agency is doing its responsibility to oversight and that the carriers are complying with their responsibility to all members of the traveling public.

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

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

H.R. 3985 will level the playing field for all bus and motor carrier companies operating in interstate commerce in this area. The bill deserves support. I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this important bipartisan bill offered by my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The Over-the-Road Bus Transportation Accessibility Act of 2007 is an important bill for all people who rely on transportation by bus and motorcoaches.

H.R. 3985 requires that all buses and motorcoaches comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the ''ADA.'' If not, the U.S. DOT will revoke the company's authority to operate on our interstates and highways.

H.R. 3985 will also require U.S. DOT and the Department of Justice to work together when an ADA violation is discovered. This will ensure that bus and motorcoach companies that violate the ADA will be held accountable for their actions.

It is important to note that this bill is not creating any additional ADA requirements. H.R. 3985 does not change what is currently mandated in the ADA. Bus and motorcoach companies will not have to change their business plans, unless they are not obeying the law.

This bill simply ensures that all carriers comply with the ADA, which is what they are supposed to do anyway. If a bus is not in compliance, it will not be on our roads.

H.R. 3985 will level the playing field for all bus and motorcoach companies operating in interstate commerce. Companies who have ignored the ADA will not have a competitive advantage over the good actors who have spent substantial amounts on lifts and other equipment to make their buses accessible.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3985.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. 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.

HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BARRINGTON ANTONIO IRVING

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 661) honoring the accomplishments of Barrington Antonio Irving, the youngest pilot and first person of African descent ever to fly solo around the world, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 661

Whereas Barrington Irving was born in 1983 in Kingston, Jamaica, and raised in inner-city Miami, Florida;

Whereas Irving discovered his passion for aviation at the age of 15 when Captain Gary Robinson, a Jamaican airline pilot who has since served as his mentor, took him to tour the cockpit of a Boeing 777;

Whereas Irving overcame financial hardship to pursue his dream to become a pilot by working miscellaneous jobs and working for private aircraft owners in exchange for flying lessons;

Whereas Irving was the recipient of a joint Air Force/Florida Memorial University Flight Awareness Scholarship to cover college tuition and flying lessons for his tireless volunteer efforts and commitment to community service;

Whereas in 2003, Irving contacted companies including aircraft manufacturer Columbia, which agreed to provide him with a plane to fly around the world if he could secure donations and components;

Whereas over several years, Irving visited aviation trade shows throughout the country and secured more than $300,000 of cash and donated components including the engine, tires, cockpit systems, and seats for a Columbia 400, one of the world's fastest single-engine piston airplanes;

Whereas in the process of pursuing his dream of an around the world flight, Irving founded a nonprofit organization in 2005 to address the significant shortage of youth pursuing careers in aviation and aerospace;

Whereas Irving's efforts have garnered widespread community support and sponsorship as an effective model to expose young people and underrepresented groups to opportunities in aviation;

Whereas on March 23, 2007, Irving embarked from Miami, Florida, on a 24,600-mile flight around the world in an airplane named ''Inspiration'' at 23-years of age while still a senior majoring in aerospace at Florida Memorial University;

Whereas on June 27, 2007, Irving concluded his flight in Miami, Florida, after stopping in 27 cities throughout the world; and

Whereas Irving continues to inspire youth and adults alike with his achievements and

work to increase the accessibility of opportunities in aviation and aerospace: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the accomplishments of Barrington Irving, the youngest pilot and first person of African descent ever to fly solo around the world and founder of a nonprofit organization that inspires youth to pursue careers in aviation and aerospace;

(2) encourages young people and minorities to pursue educational opportunities in preparation for careers in aviation and related industries; and

(3) encourages museums throughout the Nation related to aviation to commemorate the historic achievements of Captain Barrington Irving.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 661.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Barrington Antonio Irving was the youngest person and the first person of African descent to undertake a 24,600-mile solo flight around the world. His extraordinary accomplishment was brought to the attention of the committee by the passionate appeal for recognition in the form of this resolution by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), to whom I now yield such time as he may consume.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to commemorate the achievements of Captain Antonio Barrington Irving, the youngest pilot and first person of African descent to fly solo around the world.

I thank Chairmen OBERSTAR and COSTELLOs and Ranking Member PETRI and the distinguished staff for their support and willingness to expedite the consideration of this resolution.

Since we introduced H. Res. 661, my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) and I have been joined by a bipartisan coalition of 43 cosponsors who also share our desire to encourage youth to pursue careers in aviation. It is our hope that recognizing Barrington Irving's achievement will encourage many more youth to reach for the same skies in which he made history.

Barrington Irving was born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1983, and soon after moved to Miami, Florida. When he was 15 years old, he met Captain Gary Robinson, a Jamaican airline pilot who became a lifelong mentor, inspiring him to fly one day himself.

Enduring the challenges of growing up in inner-city Miami, Irving never let his dreams of becoming a pilot be stifled. He worked miscellaneous jobs to save for lessons, and eventually earned a joint Air Force-Florida Memorial University flight awareness scholarship to study aviation and take professional flying lessons.

Barrington took tremendous steps to pursue his dream in aviation while still a student at Florida Memorial University.

Mr. OBERSTAR, I am sure that a colleague of yours and a mentor of mine when I first came to Congress would be very proud of this young man, William Lehman, who at one time was in the same position as yourself as Chair of Transportation, developed the program at Florida Memorial University which allowed for a significant number of youngsters to achieve status as captains in aviation, many of whom have gone on to become commercial airline pilots and military pilots, and I am sure that Alabama Bill, as some of us know him, would be proud today.

The reason I mention it is this program, when Carrie Meek came to Congress, KENDRICK's mother, she continued the efforts on this program, as did KENDRICK and others. I guess it comes under the heading ''earmark,'' perhaps. And if that is the case, then I continuously urge my colleagues to review the status of things when responsible acts are taking place and they are being made to sound irresponsible because they are identified as earmarks. We need to be very cautious in this institution in that regard because we ignore a lot of time opportunities like in this particular case.

This young man contacted many companies and convinced the aircraft manufacturer Columbia to provide him with a plane to fly around the world if he could secure donations and the components.

□ 1530

After successfully securing donations, Barrington embarked on a 24,600-mile flight around the world from Opa Locka, Florida on March 23, 2007. Only 23 years of age, he was still a senior, majoring in aerospace, that program that I talked about that Bill Lehman helped to develop at Florida Memorial University, and he was a senior at the time he began this flight.

He traveled the world as an ambassador of aviation, teaching young people in 27 cities around the world about opportunities in aviation and the importance of academics. He returned from his journey on June 27, 2007, concluding his flight at the same small airport from where he began in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Mr. Speaker and Mr. Chairman, this young man embodied the perseverance and dedication necessary to truly pursue one's dreams.

Barrington Irving deserves praise not only for his achievement, but for the continued community contributions of Experience Aviation, Inc., a nonprofit organization he founded to address the shortage of youth pursuing careers in aviation.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. PETRI and the staff as we work on many initiatives to come that will reprioritize opportunities in aviation for our youth and promote achievement in all fields of human endeavor.

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

This resolution honors the heroic achievements of Captain Barrington Antonio Irving, the youngest pilot and first person of African American descent to fly solo around the world.

Captain Barrington Irving was born in Jamaica, as was pointed out, in 1983 and raised in Miami, Florida. His lifelong dream was to become a pilot, and this exceptional young man overcame great obstacles to make his dream a reality.

On March 23, 2007, after nearly 4 years of acquiring sufficient funds for his journey, Irving embarked from Miami, Florida, on a 24,600-mile flight around the world in an airplane rightly named Inspiration. At the age of 23, Irving became the youngest person, as well as the first African American pilot, to fly around the world when he returned to Miami on June 27, 2007.

During his 3-month journey, Irving visited with young people in 27 cities around the world encouraging them to enter aviation and stressing the importance of academics.

Captain Barrington Irving is an inspiration and an example that, through perseverance and dedication, anyone can overcome even the greatest obstacles and can achieve their goals.

I am proud to support this legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional young man and commemorating his historic achievement.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield myself such time as I may consume to express my great appreciation to the gentleman from Wisconsin and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA). Mr. PETRI has been wonderful to work with on this issue and to acknowledge an extraordinary achievement that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) has spelled out in such graphic detail, and well said.

Barrington Irving did something truly extraordinary in flying around the world. But more important than the flight was the inspiration he has served and has become for young people, young people younger than him, or his age, who are fascinated with aviation and with aerospace itself.

Mr. Irving established a nonprofit educational organization, created a travel blog for the purpose of empowering young people and encouraging minorities, in particular, to pursue careers in aviation. His around-the-world trip earned widespread community support and sponsorship, but more importantly as an inspiration for young people to aspire to something greater than themselves for the future.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) cited the initial investment in the college program that stimulated young Barrington's interest and facilitated his skill in aviation, and appropriately mentioned our former colleague, Bill Lehman, who served as Chair of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, and that brought a very touching memory back to me as I worked with then-Chairman Lehman in my capacity as Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee to resolve a number of complex issues in aviation. He was always gracious and caring and helpful and astute. I appreciate the gentleman's reference.

And let us move quickly to enact this legislation to acknowledge Barrington Antonio Irving's contribution to aviation, an inspiration to young people.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 661 is a resolution honoring the accomplishments of Barrington Antonio Irving, the youngest pilot and first person of African descent ever to fly solo around the world.

I want to thank our colleague, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, for introducing this important legislation.

On June 27, 2007, Barrington Irving flew solo around the world to inspire youth, in particular inner-city youth and minority youth, throughout the Nation to consider pursuing careers in aviation and aerospace. In doing so, he became the first African American and youngest pilot to make such an extraordinary trip.

In order to make his dream a reality, he received donations from airplane manufacturers and others, which he used to assemble the plane that carried him around the world. He named his plane "Inspiration" in hopes that his flight would inspire others to reach for their dreams.

In addition to such an amazing accomplishment, Barrington continues to work tirelessly to provide additional resources for young people pursuing careers in the field of aviation.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Irving is a remarkable man, which should serve as a motivation to us all that dreams can come true if you put your mind and heart into a project. That is why I support H. Res. 661 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 661, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO ASSIST IN THE CLEANUP OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2007, OIL SPILL IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 853) honoring those who have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of the November 7, 2007, oil spill in San Francisco Bay.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 853

Whereas the oil spill that occurred on November 7, 2007, in the San Francisco Bay resulted in the discharge of between 53,570 and 58,000 gallons of toxic bunker fuel, causing one of the Bay Area's worse environmental disasters;

Whereas 28 beaches were closed and over 1,300 birds so far have been severely impacted by the spill;

Whereas thousands of individuals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area immediately volunteered to assist with the cleanup;

Whereas Bay Area community non-profit organizations, such as San Francisco Connect, have also rallied to support the response and recovery work by supporting these volunteer efforts;

Whereas Bay Area environmental organizations, such as Baykeeper, Save the Bay, and the Bay Institute, have provided invaluable leadership in reporting, assessing, and helping to remediate the damage to the Bay's ecosystem;

Whereas the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, members of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, commercial crabbers, and other Bay Area fishermen have all joined the cleanup efforts as well; and

Whereas the city of San Francisco, particularly through its Department of Emergency Management, has significantly contributed to the overall response, bringing considerable resources to bear: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honors those individuals and organizations who have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of the November 7, 2007, oil spill in one of our Nation's most beloved national treasures, the San Francisco Bay.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 853, introduced by my good friend and distinguished Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI.

This resolution honors thousands of volunteers who helped clean up the Bay Area's beaches and wildlife after the harmful oil spill of November 7 of this year. The public's response to 58,000 gallons of fuel polluting the bay typified how the San Francisco Bay community comes together during a crisis. Our Bay Area constituents were eager to volunteer their time and help minimize the negative effects to the Bay Area's fragile ecosystem. For days and days after the spill, they cleaned birds and combed the shoreline for oil residue, and in some cases put their own health at risk in order to protect our bay.

In order to coordinate the volunteer efforts, numerous organizations mobilized their members in support of the cleanup, including Save the Bay, the Fishermen's Association and the Crab Boat Owners. I am so proud of our Bay Area constituents, how much energy they showed, how much passion they showed, and such dedication that they showed to the bay during this environmental disaster. These volunteers deserve recognition from the House of Representatives.

I strongly support House Resolution 853.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 853 honors the efforts of all of those that volunteered to assist the response to the recent oil spill in San Francisco Bay. Last month a cargo vessel collided with a span of the San Francisco Bay Bridge, resulting in a gash to the vessel's hull and the release of approximately 58,000 gallons of fuel oil into the bay.

Following reports of the oil spill, the Coast Guard, with its Federal, State and local government partners, initiated a response to the spill which has resulted in the deployment of 440 personnel and the recovery of more than 4,000 cubic yards of oily solids.

In addition to the critical work performed by the Coast Guard and other government officials, literally thousands of volunteers have assisted in cleanup operations at beaches throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Volunteers have assisted professional cleanup crews in removing oil from beaches and have reported sightings of oil-affected areas and impaired wildlife to oil spill response personnel.

Additionally, volunteers were required to undergo at least 4 hours of hazardous waste and emergency response training before participating in the cleanup efforts.

I want to commend the Speaker of the House, Ms. PELOSI, and join with her today in thanking these volunteers and honoring their efforts to respond to this unfortunate event.

I also want to take time to thank all of the Federal, State, and local officials for their efforts to contain and minimize the environmental and economic impacts of the spill.

I urge all members to support this resolution.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 853.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak personally from my position as someone who lives in the Bay Area. I live on the east bay in Alamo, California, far from where the spill was. But I have to tell you that of the 8 or 9 million people that live in the Bay Area, not one single one was completely unaffected by what happened on this terrible day of November 7. Many of us are deeply concerned that this was an accident that shouldn't have happened, that this was something that may have been prevented. And I have to commend the Speaker and the delegation from the Bay Area for moving very quickly on a bipartisan basis to begin hearings to be sure that we actually know what exactly happened so that it can be prevented in the future. But today we're really here to celebrate the thousands of Bay Area members that came forward so quickly to volunteer to assist in the cleanup of the bay at a time when it was in great jeopardy, at a time when they put their own health at risk when, for many of them, it was as simple as just going down the road to the beach near their house and attempting to do whatever kind of cleanup they could have.

The environmental impact of the spill is still being felt, and certainly for the wildlife of the Bay Area, it is still a question of how many will survive in the long term. When you have this kind of bunker oil, which is pretty toxic stuff, come into the bay and flow on to these wild fowl and other animals, it puts them in great jeopardy.

We believe that in San Francisco the bay is a national treasure. We believe it is not only a source of environmental pride, but it is also a place where many thousands of San Franciscans and Bay Area people work. We have obviously a very big crab industry, a big fishing industry; and tourism, of course, is a big part of what we do in the Bay Area. So we are deeply concerned about what happened on November 7.

But I think that this is a good time to celebrate the activism and the volunteerism of people of the Bay Area and the San Francisco area.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my friend and colleague from California that I have no further speakers at this time and would reserve until she finds herself in a similar position.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. The Speaker became as concerned as we all were immediately upon hearing about this, and brought the California Bay Area delegation together to understand what we can do in our Federal capacity to move this issue. And it was the Speaker's intention today to speak about the volunteerism of the Bay Area people. Her speech will be in the RECORD.

At this time I ask all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 853.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, again I yield myself such time as I might consume just simply to thank the honorable Speaker of the House for introducing this resolution and, again, to commend the selfless acts, thousands of selfless acts of the volunteers in the San Francisco Bay Area, also my good friend on the Transportation Committee, Mrs. TAUSCHER, for her stewardship of this bill. I urge passage.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in San Francisco and my colleagues in the Bay Area delegation, I want to thank Chairmen OBERSTAR and CUMMINGS, and Ranking Members MICA and LATOURETTE, for their cooperation in bringing this resolution to the floor.

The San Francisco Bay is one of Northern California's most precious resources. Its biodiversity and fundamental role in commerce and recreation make it essential to the vitality of the entire Bay Area.

The Bay is special to San Franciscans. We bring our kids and grandkids here to play and learn about the environment. We surf and sail. And we appreciate the precious ecosystem that exists on the beaches, in the estuaries, under the water, and in the nearby National Marine Sanctuary—the Gulf of the Farallones. So protection of this Bay—its safety and its health—has always been a high priority. Any harm to the Bay is a serious matter, and when disaster struck on November 7th our community was quick to respond.

Thousands of Bay Area residents immediately volunteered to clean beaches, rescue wildlife and undo the damage caused by this devastating spill. City officials worked with federal authorities on a volunteer management agreement to train and deploy local volunteers who were qualified to assist with difficult shoreline and wildlife recovery efforts. As a result, over 1,000 members of the Bay Area community were quickly trained and credentialed.

In addition, community non-profit organizations such as San Francisco Connect and the San Francisco Volunteer Center rallied support; environmental organizations like Baykeeper, Save the Bay and the Bay Institute offered their expertise; and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, members of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, commercial crabbers and other Bay Area fishermen offered their equipment and experience.

Today's resolution honors all of the individuals, organizations and officials who volunteered their time, their skills and their energy in response to this disaster. Their commitment to both the environment and their community saved wildlife from oil residue, protected the Bay's ecosystem and made our beaches safe again for Bay Area families.

As it says in the Bible, 'to minister to God's creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us.'

To all of those who ministered to the Bay, I thank you as a San Franciscan, as one who is honored to represent our great city in this House, and as Speaker of the House.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 853 honoring those who have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of the November 7, 2007 oil spill in San Francisco Bay.

My district lies roughly 50 miles south of the area affected by the oil spill. Even though they were not directly affected by the spill, the institutions and people in my district offered their help and support to their northern neighbors. The Marine Wildlife Center at the Long Marine Lab in Santa Cruz treated birds injured by this spill, the NOAA Weather Service in Monterey played a pivotal role in providing wind and sea forecasts necessary to predict the spill's trajectory and assist in containment, and local organizations such as the Santa Cruz Surfrider Chapter organized volunteers to assist cleanup efforts in the San Francisco Bay.

I am proud of all of the people who unselfishly volunteered to assist the cleanup. Their unselfish response to this environmental disaster highlights just how important marine resources are to our communities. But, despite our best intentions "business as usual" is killing our oceans. We can no longer rely on the generosity of the citizens of this country to clean up the mess created by big business and poor governance.

When my constituents invest their valuable time to take care of the environment, I take notice. Actions speak louder than words, and with their actions in November, the people of the Central Coast are asking us to do more to ensure that we protect the environment while we conduct our business. If there is one thing that this oil spill shows, it is that if we don't make protecting the environment a higher priority, it will come back to haunt us . . . look at climate change.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, we were reminded about just how fragile our waterways are when a ship ran into the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and spilled 58,000 gallons of oil into the San Francisco Bay. The spill spread and soiled the pristine beaches of Marin County, in my district. It also threatened the Point Reyes seashore and restoration projects in Richardson Bay and San Pablo Bay.

Thousands of volunteers, including many of my constituents, spent countless hours cleaning up. Fishermen volunteered their boats and their time to help with clean up efforts. Without their help, the cleanup efforts would have taken much longer, more birds could have died, and more of the oil would have been unrecoverable.

Unfortunately, not enough training sessions were offered and many potential volunteers were turned away from helping with the clean up efforts because they lacked the necessary training. We need to learn from this and provide more training opportunities and better utilize potential volunteers.

As we move forward, we must also look into new technologies to prevent spills and protect water and beaches. In Marin County, booms across Bolinas Lagoon and Drakes Estero failed and left these areas vulnerable to oil spill contamination. We need to ensure that we have enough equipment to respond quickly and effectively, especially for areas somewhat distant from spill mobilization centers. We also need to ensure that we have enough people trained to handle this equipment and manage the response efforts at these sites.

Thank you, Speaker PELOSI and Representative TAUSCHER for your leadership on this resolution. Thank you to my constituents and to all the volunteers who assisted with clean up efforts.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 853 and to honor those selfless individuals who volunteered to help cleanup the recent San Francisco Bay oil spill.

On November 7, a cargo vessel inexplicably collided with the San Francisco Bay Bridge, spilling more than 58,000 gallons of toxic bunker fuel and causing one of the worst environmental disasters the region has ever seen. The impact on wildlife and surrounding beaches has been extremely detrimental, with over 28 beaches closing and severely impacting wildlife all around the bay.

However, in a strong testament to the American spirit, through this disaster we saw resolve and self-sacrifice. I am extremely proud of the thousands of individuals from around the area who immediately volunteered to assist with the cleanup. Bay Area non-profit community organizations like San Francisco Connect have supported the response and recovery of volunteers, while Bay Area environmental organizations like Baykeeper, Save the Bay, and the Bay Institute have provided invaluable leadership in assessing the damage and remediating this beautiful ecosystem.

Specifically, I want to recognize two of my constituents, Lynn Adams and Deborah Nagle-Burks who, with the Pacifica Beach Coalition, solicited volunteers while working through red tape to make sure anyone who wanted to participate in the clean-up was able to. They remain involved, and have advocated for a proactive approach to training volunteers before a spill occurs so that the response of local citizens can be faster and the damage limited.

In addition, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, members of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, commercial crabbers, and other Bay Area fishermen have all joined the cleanup efforts, making an indelible contribution.

The collaborative effort of state and local agencies deserves our thanks as well. The City of San Francisco, particularly through its Department of Emergency Management, has significantly contributed to the overall response.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the volunteers who have given their time, the fishermen who have given their boats, and the first responders who have given their expertise to this clean up. Without the extraordinary efforts of these men and women it is certain the scope of damage to the fragile Bay ecosystem would be even greater than what we face today.

I will never cease to be proud and amazed by the dedication of my constituents and of the American people. This why I rise in very strong support of H. Res. 853. It is my hope that this resolution will be swiftly passed and the selfless individuals who volunteered to clean up the oil spill will be duly recognized.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 853.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1545

PROVIDING FOR CONCURRENCE BY HOUSE WITH AMENDMENTS IN SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 797, DR. JAMES ALLEN VETERAN VISION EQUITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 855) providing for the concurrence by the House in the Senate amendment to H.R. 797, with amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 855

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution the bill (H.R. 797) entitled ''An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve compensation benefits for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes, to provide for the use of the National Directory of New Hires for income verification purposes, to extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an educational assistance allowance for qualifying work study activities, and to authorize the provision of bronze representations of the letter 'V' for the graves of eligible individuals buried in private cemeteries in lieu of Government-provided headstones or markers.'', with the Senate amendment thereto, shall be considered to have been taken from the Speaker's table to the end that the Senate amendment thereto be, and the same is hereby, agreed to with the following amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Dr. James Allen Veteran Vision Equity Act of 2007''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—LOW-VISION BENEFITS MATTERS

Sec. 101. Modification of rate of visual impairment for payment of disability compensation.

Sec. 102. Improvement in compensation for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes.

TITLE II—MATTERS RELATING TO BURIAL AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

Sec. 201. Provision of medallion or other device for privately-purchased grave markers.

Sec. 202. Improvement in provision of assistance to States relating to the interment of veterans in cemeteries other than national cemeteries.

Sec. 203. Modification of authorities on provision of Government headstones and markers for burials of veterans at private cemeteries.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 301. Use of national directory of new hires for income verification purposes for certain veterans benefits.

Sec. 302. Extension of authority of Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an educational assistance allowance to persons performing qualifying work-study activities.

TITLE I—LOW-VISION BENEFITS MATTERS

SEC. 101. MODIFICATION OF RATE OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT FOR PAYMENT OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

Section 1114(o) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''5/200'' and inserting ''20/200''.

SEC. 102. IMPROVEMENT IN COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS IN CERTAIN CASES OF IMPAIRMENT OF VISION INVOLVING BOTH EYES.

Section 1160(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''blindness'' both places it appears and inserting ''impairment of vision'';

(2) by striking ''misconduct;'' and inserting ''misconduct and—''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) the impairment of vision in each eye is rated at a visual acuity of 20/200 or less; or

''(B) the peripheral field of vision for each eye is 20 degrees or less;''.

TITLE II—MATTERS RELATING TO BURIAL AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

SEC. 201. PROVISION OF MEDALLION OR OTHER DEVICE FOR PRIVATELY-PURCHASED GRAVE MARKERS.

Section 2306(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) In lieu of furnishing a headstone or marker under this subsection, the Secretary may furnish, upon request, a medallion or other device of a design determined by the Secretary to signify the deceased's status as a veteran, to be attached to a headstone or marker furnished at private expense.''.

SEC. 202. IMPROVEMENT IN PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO STATES RELATING TO THE INTERMENT OF VETERANS IN CEMETERIES OTHER THAN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.

(a) REPEAL OF TIME LIMITATION FOR STATE FILING FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR INTERMENT COSTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The second sentence of section 3.1604(d)(2) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, shall have no further force or effect as it pertains to unclaimed remains of a deceased veteran.

(2) RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.—Paragraph (1) shall take effect as of October 1, 2006 and apply with respect to interments and inurnments occurring on or after that date.

(b) GRANTS FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE VETERANS' CEMETERIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(a)(1) Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary may make a grant to any State for the following purposes:

''(A) Establishing, expanding, or improving a veterans' cemetery owned by the State.

''(B) Operating and maintaining such a cemetery.

''(2) A grant under paragraph (1) may be made only upon submission of an application to the Secretary in such form and manner, and containing such information, as the Secretary may require.''.

(2) LIMITATION ON AMOUNTS AWARDED.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''Amounts''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) In any fiscal year, the aggregate amount of grants awarded under this section for the purposes specified in subsection (a)(1)(B) may not exceed $5,000,000.''.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Such section is further amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) by striking ''Grants under this section'' and inserting ''A grant under this section for

a purpose described in subsection (a)(1)(A)''; and

(ii) by striking ''a grant under this section'' each place it appears and inserting ''such a grant'';

(B) in subsection (d), by striking ''to assist such State in establishing, expanding, or improving a veterans' cemetery''; and

(C) in subsection (f)(1), by inserting '', or in operating and maintaining such cemeteries,'' after ''veterans' cemeteries''.

(4) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prescribe regulations to carry out the amendments made by this subsection.

SEC. 203. MODIFICATION OF AUTHORITIES ON PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES AND MARKERS FOR BURIALS OF VETERANS AT PRIVATE CEMETERIES.

(a) REPEAL OF EXPIRATION OF AUTHORITY.—Subsection (d) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 201, is further amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (3); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5), as added by that section, as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively.

(b) RETROACTIVE EFFECTIVE DATE.—Notwithstanding subsection (d) of section 502 of the Veterans Education and Benefits Expansion Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-103; 115 Stat. 995; 38 U.S.C. 2306 note) or any other provision of law, the amendments made by that section and by subsections (a), (b), (c), (d), and (f) of section 402 of the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-461; 120 Stat. 3429) shall take effect as of November 1, 1990, and shall apply with respect to headstones and markers for the graves of individuals dying on or after that date.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 301. USE OF NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES FOR INCOME VERIFICATION PURPOSES FOR CERTAIN VETERANS BENEFITS.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR INFORMATION COMPARISONS AND DISCLOSURES OF INFORMATION TO ASSIST IN ADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN VETERANS BENEFITS.—Section 453(j) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653(j)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11) INFORMATION COMPARISONS AND DISCLOSURES TO ASSIST IN ADMINISTRATION OF CERTAIN VETERANS BENEFITS.—

''(A) FURNISHING OF INFORMATION BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Subject to the provisions of this paragraph, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall furnish to the Secretary, on such periodic basis as determined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in consultation with the Secretary, information in the custody of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for comparison with information in the National Directory of New Hires, in order to obtain information in such Directory with respect to individuals who are applying for or receiving—

''(i) needs-based pension benefits provided under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code, or under any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs;

''(ii) parents' dependency and indemnity compensation provided under section 1315 of title 38, United States Code;

''(iii) health care services furnished under subsections (a)(2)(G), (a)(3), or (b) of section 1710 of title 38, United States Code; or

''(iv) compensation paid under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, at the 100 percent rate based solely on unemployability and without regard to the fact that the disability or disabilities are not rated as 100 percent disabling under the rating schedule.

''(B) REQUIREMENT TO SEEK MINIMUM INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall seek information pursuant to this paragraph only to the extent necessary to verify the employment and income of individuals described in subparagraph (A).

''(C) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—

''(i) INFORMATION DISCLOSURE.—The Secretary, in cooperation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall compare information in the National Directory of New Hires with information provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to individuals described in subparagraph (A), and shall disclose information in such Directory regarding such individuals to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in accordance with this paragraph, for the purposes specified in this paragraph.

''(ii) CONDITION ON DISCLOSURE.—The Secretary shall make disclosures in accordance with clause (i) only to the extent that the Secretary determines that such disclosures do not interfere with the effective operation of the program under this part.

''(D) USE OF INFORMATION BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use information resulting from a data match pursuant to this paragraph only—

''(i) for the purposes specified in subparagraph (B); and

''(ii) after removal of personal identifiers, to conduct analyses of the employment and income reporting of individuals described in subparagraph (A).

''(E) REIMBURSEMENT OF HHS COSTS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reimburse the Secretary, in accordance with subsection (k)(3), for the costs incurred by the Secretary in furnishing the information requested under this paragraph.

''(F) CONSENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall not seek, use, or disclose information under this paragraph relating to an individual without the prior written consent of such individual (or of a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of such individual).

''(G) EXPIRATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority under this paragraph shall expire on September 30, 2011.''.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 53 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5317 the following new section:

''§ 5317A. Use of income information from other agencies: independent verification required before termination or reduction of certain benefits and services

''(a) INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary may terminate, deny, suspend, or reduce any benefit or service specified in section 5317(c), with respect to an individual under age 65 who is an applicant for or recipient of such a benefit or service, by reason of information obtained from the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 453(j)(11) of the Social Security Act, only if the Secretary takes appropriate steps to verify independently information relating to the individual's employment and income from employment.

''(b) OPPORTUNITY TO CONTEST FINDINGS.—The Secretary shall inform each individual for whom the Secretary terminates, denies, suspends, or reduces any benefit or service under subsection (a) of the findings made by the Secretary under such subsection on the basis of verified information and shall provide to the individual an opportunity to contest such findings in the same manner as applies to other information and findings relating to eligibility for the benefit or service involved.

''(c) SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR REIMBURSEMENT TO SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.—The Secretary shall pay the expense of reimbursing the Secretary of Health and Human Services in accordance with section 453(j)(11)(E) of the Social Security Act, for the cost incurred by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in furnishing information requested by the Secretary under section 453(j)(11) of such Act, from amounts available to the Department for the payment of compensation and pensions.

''(d) EXPIRATION OF AUTHORITY.—The authority under this section shall expire on September 30, 2011.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5317 the following new item:

''5317A. Use of income information from other agencies: independent verification required before termination or reduction of certain benefits and services.''.

SEC. 302. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE AN EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE TO PERSONS PERFORMING QUALIFYING WORK-STUDY ACTIVITIES.

Section 3485(a)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''June 30, 2007'' each place it appears and inserting ''June 30, 2010''.

Amend the title so as to read: ''An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve low-vision benefits matters, matters relating to burial and memorial affairs, and other matters under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Dr. James Allen Veteran Vision Equity Act of 2007.

I was glad to be able to work with my colleagues on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, on both sides of the aisle and in both Houses, to get here. I want to thank Mr. RANGEL and his staff for their guidance on the provision that fell under the jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee.

I especially want to thank our colleague from Madison, Wisconsin, Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, who led the effort for this, who got it to the floor today and who will explain it in whatever detail she thinks is important.

I note that this bill was previously introduced in the last Congress; however, it never became law. I am glad this Congress has the opportunity to do more for our blind and vision impaired veterans.

The Dr. James Allen Veteran Vision Equity Act of 2007, named after a noted physician and ocular pioneer who worked for over 35 years in the VA, would allow veterans who receive veterans' disability compensation for impairment of vision in one eye to be eligible to receive additional disability compensation for impairment of vision in the eye that is not service-connected, where the impairment in each eye is to a visual acuity of 20/200 or less or of a peripheral field of 20 degrees or less (the definition of "legal blindness" adopted by all 50 states and the Social Security Administration.)

H.R. 797 also directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to match and compare VA needs-based pension benefits data, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation data, health-care services data, and unemployability compensation data with the National Directory of New Hires maintained by DHHS, for the purpose of determining eligibility for such benefits and services.

It would also authorize $5 million for establishing, improving and expanding for the operation and maintenance of state-owned veterans' cemeteries. Additionally, the bill will repeal the time limitation for States to file for reimbursement costs for interring unclaimed veterans' remains, making it retroactive to October 1, 2006.

Finally, this measure extends the authorization of the veterans work study program until 2010.

This bill affects an estimated 5 percent of the 13,109 veterans who have service-connected blindness or loss of vision in one eye. As of September 17, 2007, 1,129 service members have sustained serious eye wounds in combat according to the Defense Armed Forces Institute of Surgical Pathology (any of which may later lead to blindness).

Also, it is reported that many of the over 4,400 traumatic brain-injured OIF/OEF servicemembers will likely suffer from serious vision-related complications and at least 57 percent of all eye injuries of this war are caused by IED explosions.

Walter Reed Army Medical Center alone has treated close to 540 Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom service members for visual injuries and over 230 of our soldiers unfortunately have sustained legal blindness in one eye.

It is worth noting, that in 2002, Congress passed and the President signed Public Law 107–330, which included a provision to correct a similar deficiency in the Paired Organ law for hearing loss. In 2006, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a legislative hearing and received favorable testimony on H.R. 2963, a bill similar to H.R. 797. In that hearing, the VA supported H.R. 2963.

This is important and meaningful legislation for our men and women in uniform—who have fought and are fighting for our country.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of this resolution and urge swift consideration of the Dr. James Allen Veteran Vision Equity Act of 2007 by the Senate before the end of this session of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield whatever time she may consume to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN).

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman FILNER.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 855, the Dr. James Allen Veteran Vision Equity Act that I introduced earlier this year. This bill fixes an inequity in the current paired organ statute that has resulted in a denial of appropriate disability compensation to blinded veterans.

Congress has rightly recognized that some human organs or limbs are designed to work in pairs: legs, hands, kidneys, lungs, ears and, of course, eyes. In the instance of eyes, blindness in one eye profoundly affects depth perception even if sight is fully retained in the other eye. The paired organ statute was written to assist those veterans who experience a service-connected loss of a paired organ or limb. The statute recognizes the interdependency of paired organs and endeavors to treat the combined disability created by a nonservice-connected loss, injury or degeneration of the remaining paired organ or limb as though it was the result of a service-connected disability. In general, the paired organ statute accomplishes this task, with the exception of its treatment of eyes and loss of sight.

I want to share with you the story of Dr. James Allen, after whom this legislation is named. Dr. Allen is a professor of ophthalmology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine in my district. He has worked at the Veterans Affairs Hospital for 33 years and treated numerous eye patients, including veterans who are blind.

One example is Mr. Donald May. Don is a World War II veteran who lost his right eye in a hand grenade explosion. A few years ago, Mr. May became legally blind in the nonservice-connected left eye. He applied to the Department of Veterans Affairs for help and was denied further benefits. He was told that the current law in regard to paired organs did not apply to him, even though he was legally blind in his service-connected right eye.

After Dr. Allen brought the plight of his patients to my attention, I began to research why these veterans were being denied the benefits I felt they deserved, benefits that I believe Congress intended to grant them. Through my work with the Blinded Veterans Association, we discovered that while the current paired organ statute covers blindness, in practice few, if any, veterans have ever been able to qualify for such compensation.

In theory, the statute provides that a veteran who is service-connected for blindness in one eye could qualify for additional disability compensation if they become blind in the remaining eye for nonservice-connected reasons. However, the statute does not define the term ''blindness,'' nor is any provision made for impairment of vision in the nonservice-connected eye short of blindness.

Rather than using visual acuity of 20/200 or loss of field of vision to 20 degrees as the definition of legal blindness that has been adopted by all 50 States and the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs uses a much more restrictive definition, 5/200, as a rating for legal blindness, which in rough layman's term is the equivalent of having an eye with light perception only. As a result, few, if any, blinded veterans are able to qualify for additional compensation under the paired organ statute.

H. Res. 855, the Dr. James Allen Veterans Vision Equity Act, fixes this problem. It defines blindness as impairment of vision where the impairment is to a visual acuity of 20/200 or less or of a peripheral field loss of vision of 20 degrees or less. This change in the law would only affect a small percentage, estimated to be roughly 5 percent of the 13,000-plus veterans who are service-connected for loss of vision in one eye. Yet such a change would send a powerful message that our Nation's blinded veterans and the hardships that they have faced are not forgotten.

Indeed, our Nation's blinded veterans face significant challenges in the labor market. The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research found that for individuals with visual impairments, to the extent that they are unable to read letters, the employment rate is only 30.8 percent, compared to 82.1 percent for those without disability.

I want to mention that this resolution complies with the PAYGO rules. The costs associated with H. Res. 855 are fully offset. This bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to match and compare VA needs-based pension benefits data, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation data, health care services data and unemployability compensation data with the National Directory of New Hires maintained by DHHS, for the purpose of determining eligibility for such benefits and services. According to the GAO, such data matching will help reduce fraud and abuse within the VA system as it determines eligibility and benefits to those veterans thought to be unemployable but are indeed working.

I would like to just thank Chairman FILNER, Subcommittee Chairman JOHN HALL, as well as Congressmen JOHN BOOZMAN and VIC SNYDER for their unwavering support of this bill. I also want to thank the staff of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for their help in advancing this legislation.

H. Res. 855 is a modest but important step in restoring fair treatment to those veterans blinded due to their service to our country and to further our commitment to them. Their sacrifices and their service to this Nation should be matched by our desire to improve the quality of life for them and their families.

Earlier this year, the Blinded Veterans Association had found over 200 soldiers returning from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom who are blinded in one eye due to their service-related injuries. They could be benefited in the future by this legislation.

I strongly encourage all my colleagues to support H. Res. 855.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 855, which would amend H.R. 797, the Dr. James Allen Veterans Vision Equity Act, as amended by the other body. I would like to thank my colleagues, Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER, Mr. BOOZMAN of Arkansas and Ms. BALDWIN of Wisconsin, for their efforts on this bill. On March 21 of this year, this body

passed H.R. 797 with a unanimous vote of 424–0, and I am pleased to support it.

The first title of this resolution would allow veterans who receive veterans disability compensation for impairment of vision in one eye to be eligible to receive additional disability compensation for impairment of vision in the eye that is not service connected. This eligibility includes situations where the impairment in each eye is to a visual acuity of 20/200 or less, or of a peripheral field loss of 20 degrees or less. This is the same definition of legal blindness adopted by all 50 States and the Social Security Administration.

Title II of H.R. 797 incorporates several sections of H.R. 2696, the Veterans Dignified Burial Assistance Act of 2007, which I introduced in June to improve VA burial benefits and State veterans cemeteries.

From time to time, Mr. Speaker, a State locates the remains of veterans who were not interred at the time of their death for various reasons. When States inter these veterans, they cannot be reimbursed by VA because of the time limit on reimbursement costs. This legislation would repeal this limitation and helps ensure that all veterans will receive a proper interment with the honor and respect that they have earned.

Title II would also authorize the Secretary of the VA to make additional grants to States for improving and expanding State veteran cemeteries. States would be required to submit an application to the Secretary for this funding, of which the aggregate amount authorized for all State grants is $5 million.

The final provision of title II would provide families with the option of placing a medallion on a deceased veteran's grave denoting veteran status, in lieu of a VA headstone for graves already marked by a private marker.

Mr. Speaker, many private cemeteries do not allow a second marker on a grave site because it complicates routine maintenance. Therefore, a medallion would identify a veteran's grave in a manner that would be universally acceptable and would meet the family's desire to honor the deceased veteran and will be one more reminder to everybody of the sacrifices made by veterans. This provision is very similar to an amendment that I offered at the full committee markup of H.R. 797, and I'm very pleased to support it again now.

While not the specific intent of the provision, veterans' families may benefit financially from this measure. Currently, VA offers second markers for veterans' graves that already have a privately procured marker. While there is no cost for the markers, mounting of these second markers is at the family's expense, usually several times the cost of the stone itself. Since the new medallion could be applied directly to the current marker with an industrial-grade adhesive, families will be able to apply the medallion on their own, allowing them to avoid significant mounting costs.

Mr. Speaker, title III of the resolution extends the use of the New Hires Act and would save the government money by allowing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services regarding unemployment compensation data in order to determine eligibility for VA needs-based pension benefits.

The Congressional Budget Office informally estimates that this section of the resolution would save the taxpayers $30 million over 10 years. I would note that this savings funds the vision, burial and work study provisions in this bill.

Also included in title III is a provision that extends work study jobs at VA through June 2009. Current law allows work study recipients to perform a variety of duties throughout the VA, as well as veteran-related paperwork at their schools.

Congress extended the provision for 6 months in PL 109–461 to prevent canceling benefits in the middle of the school year. I'm pleased that we're able to extend this provision even further in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 855, which would amend H.R. 797, as amended.

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

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 797 is a very, very good bill, and I appreciate Ms. BALDWIN working so hard. I think we could actually use the adjective tirelessly on this one, in order to bring it forward.

It really has two provisions that I'm especially pleased to support. First, I'm pleased that this bill will help veterans with visual disabilities. To put this in perspective, VA compensates about 13,000 veterans for blindness in one eye.

□ 1600

DOD statistics show that about 1,169 servicemembers have experienced eye injuries in Iraq, and VA states about 111 of those are now receiving compensation. And let us not forget that with the number of traumatic brain injury casualties, and those that have gone undiagnosed, many of them will experience visual impairment as a result of those injuries. Thanks to Ms. BALDWIN's work in bringing this forward, the change in this law will make sure that all of these individuals will be treated fairly.

I am also greatly pleased that we have been able to fund reinstatement of the GI Bill work-study provisions that expired last June. These additional work-study jobs will benefit both the veteran student and veterans at large by increasing the resources available to assist VA employees in accomplishing their mission.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very good bill and I urge my colleagues to support it. I also want to thank Mr. FILNER and his staff for, again, bringing this forward, along with Mr. BUYER, the ranking member; and the staff over here. Again, this is a very good bill, and I urge support of its passage with my colleagues.

Mr. LAMBORN. I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I will include in the RECORD an article published in the Ophthalmic News on protective eye gear, and I urge my colleagues to unanimously support this resolution.

[From Ophthalmology Times, May 1, 2007]

PROTECTIVE EYE GEAR ESSENTIAL FOR MODERN SOLDIER: OCULAR INJURIES HAVE CLIMBED TO NUMBER 4 SLOT BEHIND AMPUTATION, TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY, PTSD

(By Lynda Charters)

BALTIMORE.—Ocular injuries during war have steadily increased from as far back as the Civil War because of the vulnerability of the face and eyes on the battlefield and the increasing use of fragmentary weapons. Thomas P. Ward, MD, described how ocular injuries have changed and how to prevent them here at the Current Concepts in Ophthalmology meeting in Baltimore.

The meeting was sponsored by Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, and Ophthalmology Times.

''What we learned about eye injuries was not just learned from the current war in Iraq but from several previous wars,'' said Dr. Ward, a private practitioner in West Hartford, CT, and former ophthalmology consultant to the U.S. Army's surgeon general. The percentage of ocular wounds received on the battlefield has increased steadily over the past century, from less than 1% during the Civil War to about 13% in the early phase of the war in Iraq, he added.

''That 13% is much higher than would be expected if we were considering only the random chance of a projectile hitting the eye,'' Dr. Ward said. ''The eye has a very small profile, i.e., only 4% of the face and 0.27% of the body surface area.''

He recounted that, through June 2006 at the Echelon III-level combat support hospital in Iraq and Afghanistan, 1,086 ocular injuries occurred. Of these, 207 were primary eye injuries. In the remaining 879 eye injuries, another organ was the primary injury (usually the brain or a limb). The eye injuries represented 13% of all patients who sustained injuries. Many more ocular injuries occurred in the local populace, he said.

The eyes are so vulnerable, he explained, because they are preferentially exposed during combat, whereas the rest of the body, except for the limbs, is protected with armor.

In addition, the types of munitions used have changed over the past century. During the Civil War, if a soldier was hit by a cannonball or minnie ball, he likely would die, and ocular injuries were not an issue. Modern weapons, however, generate numerous fragments when they explode. ''Modern hand grenades, for example, fragment into about 2,000 individual projectiles, and the eye is exceptionally vulnerable to small fragments,'' Dr. Ward said.

Other lessons:

penetrating injuries are the most important type, accounting for up to 50% of all ocular injuries, and

there is no delayed primary closure in ophthalmology; the primary repair almost always is the definitive repair.

Finally, because of the nature of modern weaponry, ocular injuries often are bilateral. More than half of all eye injuries (57%) are caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The remaining injuries were caused by rocket-propelled grenades, gunshot wounds, mortar and shrapnel, land mines, and other causes.

Surprisingly, according to Dr. Ward, the incidence of endophthalmitis was 0%, despite the fact that approximately 25% of ocular injuries are caused by intraocular foreign bodies. Another factor that did not seem to affect the incidence was that the foreign bodies were not removed for weeks in many cases. Dr. Ward wondered whether the lack of endophthalmitis may have been the result of the use of topical and systemic third- or fourth-generation fluoroquinolones.

The IEDs being used are increasingly more powerful, and Dr. Ward showed that the injuries sustained with more recent ones cause more damage.

Many more eye injuries do not result in evacuation to the combat support hospital, he said. ''As of late 2005, approximately 3,000 ocular injuries were reported as having been treated and the soldiers returned to duty. There were a total of 14,559 eye-related patient encounters by optometrists in the theater of war. This [number] from the Army is considered low as the result of inconsistent reporting,'' Dr. Ward emphasized.

Armor to protect the eyes has been used over the centuries, and it has been shown to be effective in eliminating war-related problems. Sympathetic ophthalmia, Dr. Ward pointed out, developed in about 0.3 percent of ocular injuries during World War II. Only one documented case has been reported by U.S. forces since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A statistic that emphasizes the importance of prevention is that ocular injuries hold the number four slot for disability behind amputation, traumatic brain injury, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 855.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 855.

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

There was no objection.

DO-NOT-CALL REGISTRY FEE EXTENSION ACT OF 2007

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2601) to extend the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to collect fees to administer and enforce the provisions relating to the ''Do-not-call'' registry of the Telemarketing Sales Rule, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2601

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Do-Not-Call Registry Fee Extension Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FEES FOR ACCESS TO REGISTRY.

Section 2, of the Do-Not-Call Implementation Act (15 U.S.C. 6101 note) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 2. TELEMARKETING SALES RULE; DO-NOT-CALL REGISTRY FEES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Trade Commission shall assess and collect an annual fee pursuant to this section in order to implement and enforce the 'do-not-call' registry as provided for in section 310.4(b)(1)(iii) of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, or any other regulation issued by the Commission under section 3 of the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act (15 U.S.C. 6102).

''(b) ANNUAL FEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall charge each person who accesses the 'do-not-call' registry an annual fee that is equal to the lesser of—

''(A) $54 for each area code of data accessed from the registry; or

''(B) $14,850 for access to every area code of data contained in the registry.

''(2) EXCEPTION.—The Commission shall not charge a fee to any person—

''(A) for accessing the first 5 area codes of data; or

''(B) for accessing area codes of data in the registry if the person is permitted to access, but is not required to access, the 'do-not-call' registry under section 310 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, section 64.1200 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any other Federal regulation or law.

''(3) DURATION OF ACCESS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall allow each person who pays the annual fee described in paragraph (1), each person excepted under paragraph (2) from paying the annual fee, and each person excepted from paying an annual fee under section 310.4(b)(1)(iii)(B) of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations, to access the area codes of data in the 'do-not-call' registry for which the person has paid during that person's annual period.

''(B) ANNUAL PERIOD.—In this paragraph, the term 'annual period' means the 12-month period beginning on the first day of the month in which a person pays the fee described in paragraph (1).

''(c) ADDITIONAL FEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall charge a person required to pay an annual fee under subsection (b) an additional fee for each additional area code of data the person wishes to access during that person's annual period.

''(2) RATES.—For each additional area code of data to be accessed during the person's annual period, the Commission shall charge—

''(A) $54 for access to such data if access to the area code of data is first requested during the first 6 months of the person's annual period; or

''(B) $27 for access to such data if access to the area code of data is first requested after the first 6 months of the person's annual period.

''(d) ADJUSTMENT OF FEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—

''(A) FISCAL YEAR 2009.—The dollar amount described in subsection (b) or (c) is the amount to be charged for fiscal year 2009.

''(B) FISCAL YEARS AFTER 2009.—For each fiscal year beginning after fiscal year 2009, each dollar amount in subsection (b)(1) and (c)(2) shall be increased by an amount equal to—

''(i) the dollar amount in paragraph (b)(1) or (c)(2), whichever is applicable, multiplied by

''(ii) the percentage (if any) by which the CPI for the most recently ended 12-month period ending on June 30 exceeds the baseline CPI.

''(2) ROUNDING.—Any increase under subparagraph (B) shall be rounded to the nearest dollar.

''(3) CHANGES LESS THAN 1 PERCENT.—The Commission shall not adjust the fees under this section if the change in the CPI is less than 1 percent.

''(4) PUBLICATION.—Not later than September 1 of each year the Commission shall publish in the Federal Register the adjustments to the applicable fees, if any, made under this subsection.

''(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) CPI.—The term 'CPI' means the average of the monthly consumer price index (for all urban consumers published by the Department of Labor).

''(B) BASELINE CPI.—The term 'baseline CPI' means the CPI for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2008.

''(e) PROHIBITION AGAINST FEE SHARING.—No person may enter into or participate in an arrangement (as such term is used in section 310.8(c) of the Commission's regulations (16 C.F.R. 310.8(c))) to share any fee required by subsection (b) or (c), including any arrangement to divide the costs to access the registry among various clients of a telemarketer or service provider.

''(f) HANDLING OF FEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The commission shall deposit and credit as offsetting collections any fee collected under this section in the account 'Federal Trade Commission—Salaries and Expenses', and such sums shall remain available until expended.

''(2) LIMITATION.—No amount shall be collected as a fee under this section for any fiscal year except to the extent provided in advance by appropriations Acts.''.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

Section 4 of the Do-Not-Call Implementation Act (15 U.S.C. 6101 note) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

''(a) BIENNIAL REPORTS.—Not later than December 31, 2009, and biennially thereafter, the Federal Trade Commission, in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission, shall transmit a report to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce that includes—

''(1) the number of consumers who have placed their telephone numbers on the registry;

''(2) the number of persons paying fees for access to the registry and the amount of such fees;

''(3) the impact on the 'do-not-call' registry of—

''(A) the 5-year reregistration requirement;

''(B) new telecommunications technology; and

''(C) number portability and abandoned telephone numbers; and

''(4) the impact of the established business relationship exception on businesses and consumers.

''(b) ADDITIONAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31, 2009, the Federal Trade Commission, in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission, shall transmit a report to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce that includes—

''(1) the effectiveness of do-not-call outreach and enforcement efforts with regard to senior citizens and immigrant communities;

''(2) the impact of the exceptions to the do-not-call registry on businesses and consumers, including an analysis of the effectiveness of the registry and consumer perceptions of the registry's effectiveness; and

''(3) the impact of abandoned calls made by predictive dialing devices on do-not-call enforcement.''.

SEC. 4. RULEMAKING.

The Federal Trade Commission may issue rules, in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code, as necessary and appropriate to carry out the amendments to the Do-Not-Call Implementation Act (15 U.S.C. 6101 note) made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this legislation, which we refer to as H.R. 2601, was introduced by the distinguished ranking member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, my good friend Mr. STEARNS from the State of Florida. This bill is to extend the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to collect the fees that administer and enforce the provisions relating to the national do-not-call registry.

In 2003, Mr. Speaker, Congress passed the Do-Not-Call Implementation Act, which authorized the FTC to establish fees sufficient to implement the national do-not-call registry as originally authorized by the Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act of 1994. I don't think it's hyperbole, Mr. Speaker, to say that this may quite possibly be one of the most popular laws and government initiatives in our Nation's history. Consumers have registered more than 146 million telephone numbers since the registry became operational in 2003.

The FTC's authority to annually establish the appropriate level of fees to charge telemarketers for access to the registry expires, yes, it expires in 2007, and Mr. STEARNS's bill, as amended, in the Energy and Commerce Committee renders that authority permanent. If Members of Congress wish to avoid the wrath of millions of angry constituents who are being called by telemarketers during dinner time, it is in our best interest to facilitate the continuing operation of the do-not-call registry and vote for this bill.

As is the case with the vast majority of the legislation passed out of the subcommittee of which I am a member, this is a bipartisan bill. I'm proud to say that, Mr. Speaker. We worked on this measure together. This is a bipartisan bill that was crafted in consultation with the appropriate agency of expertise, in this case the Federal Trade Commission. The bill passed my subcommittee by a voice vote on October 23; and a week later, on October 30, it was unanimously approved by the full Energy and Commerce Committee. It is fully deserving of quick passage on the floor of the House today.

As usual, Mr. Speaker, the staff on both sides of the aisle worked together on this bill, and with Ranking Member STEARNS as well as Ranking Member BARTON of the full committee, they should all be commended for their ongoing cooperation with the chairman, the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), and the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH), who chairs the subcommittee.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that said, I am going to urge a ''yes'' vote.

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

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

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his support on this important bill.

I rise in support of H.R. 2601, the Do-Not-Call Registry Fee Extension Act of 2007. As the sponsor of the legislation and as ranking member on the committee with jurisdiction over the Federal Trade Commission and over consumer protection, I can assure the Members of the body that this is a necessary piece of legislation. It will have an immediate and meaningful impact on our constituents. I can remember when we marked this up when I was chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection and we started this whole process rolling.

The national do-not-call registry was enacted by Congress to provide citizens the ability to place their home phone numbers on a list that prohibits unsolicited phone solicitations. My colleagues, unfortunately, the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to collect fees to maintain the registry has expired. This legislation simply restores the commission's authority to collect the necessary fees to maintain and update the registry and provides businesses with certainty on the fees that they pay to access the registry.

The bill also includes input from both the Federal Trade Commission and industry. We asked for their support. Substantively, the amended legislation provides permanency for the program through a consistent fee structure. This will help both business with predictability of fees and help the Federal Trade Commission excel by providing certainty of funding for this popular program, and this obviously makes budgeting far easier from year to year.

The legislation also provides for certain biannual reports by the Federal Trade Commission on the effectiveness of this registry that will provide Congress with the necessary information to provide adequate oversight, and that's important too, Mr. Speaker.

As the gentleman from North Carolina has mentioned, the popularity of this program has been very high and success of the do-not-call registry was confirmed by almost every member of our committee and their district. Many of our constituents still express their gratitude for enacting a simple law like this, the original law in providing a means to stop unwanted commercial solicitation over their home phone.

For those who avail themselves of this option, and remember now, if people out there want to use it, they have to call the toll-free number to get it, but the people who avail themselves of this have expressed satisfaction. They have experienced a noticeable decrease in phone calls interrupting their dinner and their family life.

So I am proud to be a sponsor of the reauthorization legislation. It's important that the act and the list continue in effect. This is one example where our actions received near unanimous bipartisan support here in Congress. Here we are with the omnibus budget bill and all the controversy, but here is a good example of bipartisan support. It brings in both the public, industry, and the Federal Trade Commission. So I am confident that the reauthorization of the Do-not-call Act is supported by millions of Americans who have placed their number on the list. So I urge all Members to support and vote for this bill.

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I want to thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am ready to close this out. But I am sure the American people will be very appreciative that we are willing to extend this to become a permanent program, the do-not-call registry.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2601, the ''Do-Not-Call Registry Fee Extension Act of 2007'', of which I am the lead Democratic sponsor. This bill enjoys wide bipartisan support. Its passage will help to ensure the continued operation of one of the most popular Federal consumer protection programs ever adopted by the Congress, the registry that allows consumers to list their phone numbers and thereby protect themselves from unwanted telemarketing phone calls.

Congress originally assigned the task of implementing and enforcing the Do-Not-Call Registry to the Federal Communications Commission, but they proved less than enthusiastic and nothing ensued. Congress then directed the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to perform these tasks. To date, the Registry established by the FTC includes more than 145 million telephone numbers, and the FTC has initiated 27 cases alleging Do-Not-Call violations, resulting in orders totaling $8.8 million in civil

penalties and $8.6 million in redress or disgorgement. This is a proud record indeed.

To maintain the success of this program, however, legislative action is needed. The authority of the FTC to collect fees to support maintenance of the Registry and the related enforcement program expired at the end on September 2007. H.R. 2601, whose lead sponsor is Rep. STEARNS, will provide the FTC with a permanent fee structure for this purpose, contingent on approval of the fees in annual appropriations acts. This will provide appropriate oversight over the funding mechanism. The bill also requires the FTC to prepare two reports on the use and effectiveness of the Registry, including allegations regarding abuse surrounding a number of exemptions. The Committee takes these consumer complaints seriously and intends to look into them, in connection with review of the FTC reports.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this important consumer protection bill.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. 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 North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2601, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DO-NOT-CALL IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3541) to amend the ''Do-not-call'' Implementation Act to eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal ''do-not-call'' registry, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3541

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION OF EXPIRATION DATE FOR REGISTERED NUMBERS.

The Do-Not-Call Implementation Act (15 U.S.C. 6101 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 5. PROHIBITION OF EXPIRATION DATE.

''(a) NO AUTOMATIC REMOVAL OF NUMBERS.—Telephone numbers registered on the national 'do-not-call' registry of the Telemarketing Sales Rule (16 C.F.R. 310.4(b)(1)(iii)) since the establishment of the registry and telephone numbers registered on such registry after the date of enactment of this Act, shall not be removed from such registry except as provided for in subsection (b) or upon the request of the individual to whom the telephone number is assigned.

''(b) REMOVAL OF INVALID, DISCONNECTED, AND REASSIGNED TELEPHONE NUMBERS.—The Federal Trade Commission shall periodically check telephone numbers registered on the national 'do-not-call' registry against national or other appropriate databases and shall remove from such registry those telephone numbers that have been disconnected and reassigned. Nothing in this section prohibits the Federal Trade Commission from removing invalid telephone numbers from the registry at any time.''.

SEC. 3. REPORT ON ACCURACY.

Not later than 9 months after the enactment of this Act, the Federal Trade Commission shall report to Congress on efforts taken by the Commission, after the date of enactment of this Act, to improve the accuracy of the ''do-not-call'' registry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill that we now consider on the floor is related to the previous bill that we just adopted. H.R. 3541, the Do-not-call Improvement Act of 2007, ensures that Americans who signed up to be on the do-not-call list remain on the do-not-call list. As the law currently stands, consumers are automatically purged from the registry after a 5-year period and they are forced to re-register their phone numbers with the FTC. Consequently, if we do nothing, of the 132 million telephone numbers that are currently listed on the do-not-call registry, almost 52 million of those numbers will expire and once again be fair game for telemarketers.

I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that the vast majority of these consumers are unaware that they must relist their phone numbers. As was the case with the previous bill, I don't think Members of Congress want to incur the wrath of millions of angry constituents and family members who thought they were safe from the nuisance of telemarketers, but are once again getting their pestering phone calls every evening. I might also add that September 28, the date in which 52 million numbers will expire, is right before election day. Need I say more?

The authors of the bill, my good friend Mr. DOYLE, who will speak in just a few moments, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, and my friend Mr. PICKERING from Mississippi, are both valued members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and they are to be commended for their bipartisan cooperation. On October 30 the bill was amended at the full committee markup to require the FTC to periodically scrub the do-not-call registry to remove phone numbers that have been disconnected or reassigned and further requires the commission to report to Congress on the accuracy of the registry. As such, H.R. 3541 ensures that the do-not-call list is fair and accurate and that only those American consumers who do not wish to be called by telemarketers are on the registry.

This is a thoughtful, bipartisan piece of legislation, and I urge its adoption.

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

□ 1615

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, H.R. 3541, the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act, and I thank my colleagues from Pennsylvania and Mississippi for their initiative here of making a good bill even better. This legislation simply removes the requirement from the Federal Trade Commission to automatically remove consumers' phone numbers from the registry.

My colleagues, the original act would have required consumers to re-register their phone number every 5 years and was intended, in part, to keep the list accurate and up to date. This will result in tens of millions of Americans being dropped off the list each year contrary to their intention. Millions of Americans would have to re-up, so to speak, to stay on the list. Most of them, in their day-to-day life, would be unaware that their number is about to expire.

So, this bill does a great service. This bill corrects this and would make numbers on the registry permanent, but at the same time require the Federal Trade Commission to keep the list accurate by simply removing invalid and disconnected phone numbers. As further assurance of this, the Federal Trade Commission must study and report to Congress on the accuracy of these numbers. I think that's important. And we mentioned that earlier in the bill, that we're going to have the Federal Trade Commission come back with a report to us. And this is a good area for the Federal Trade Commission to come back and talk about the accuracy of these millions and millions of numbers. So, I applaud my two colleagues for doing that.

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 4 minutes to my good friend from Pennsylvania, a gentleman who works so hard for his constituents, Mr. DOYLE.

Mr. DOYLE. I thank my friend from North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to approve H.R. 3541, the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007.

The national do-not-call registry was established in 2003 and is managed by the Federal Trade Commission and enforced by the FTC, the Federal Communications Commission, and State law enforcement officials. Most telemarketers are not allowed to call your number once it has been on the registry for 31 days. If they do, you can

file a complaint against them with the FTC and they can be forced to pay a fine.

The Federal do-not-call registry is one of the most successful government programs ever created. Over 132 million telephone numbers have been added to the registry since its creation. Unfortunately, current regulations require that the registry remove individuals' numbers after 5 years. Consequently, starting in June of 2008, millions of people will begin receiving telemarketing calls again. Many of them don't realize that their listing has expired and that they need to add their number to the do-not-call list again if they want to block telemarketers' phone calls.

It makes no sense to force people to sign up every couple of years. Unfortunately, that's just what will happen if action isn't taken. And that's why I introduced this legislation along with my good friend from Mississippi, CHIP PICKERING, to make registration with the Federal do-not-call list permanent.

My legislation, the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007, would make the numbers on the Federal do-not-call registry permanent. Under this legislation, someone would only have to sign up for the do-not-call registry once. Without passage of this act, over 50 million phone numbers will be purged from the registry within the next year. The hassle for consumers will be tremendous, with no real payoff.

Now, when a consumer signs up for the do-not-call list, they expect a roach motel where their numbers go in and the telemarketers can't check them out. But for those few individuals who are worried that they might change their mind at some future date, I want to make clear that this bill will still allow individuals to take their names off if they choose to, and it gives the FTC explicit authority to scrub numbers that are invalid or don't belong on the list.

There is no need to risk Americans being removed from the do-not-call list unless they want to be removed, and the best way to deal with this nightmare is to end it before it starts. As I said when I introduced this legislation, I suspect there are very few people saying, ''Gee, I really miss those telemarketing calls at dinnertime. I wish the Government would just take me off that do-not-call list.'' Well, if this bill is enacted, individuals won't have to worry about signing up for the do-not-call list every 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the AARP, the Consumers Union, the Center for Democracy and Technology, Consumerist.com, and the American Teleservices Association for endorsing this bill. It's a great day when consumer groups, senior groups, privacy groups, and yes, even telemarketers, can agree on making the do-not-call list better.

I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this legislation. By signing up with the national do-not-call registry, over 130 million Americans have told telemarketers, ''Don't call us; we'll call you.'' Let's save them the hassle of having to have sign up time and time again.

In closing, I want to thank my friend CHIP PICKERING. I want to thank Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman DINGELL, Ranking Member BARTON, Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee Chairman BOBBY RUSH and my good friend CLIFF STEARNS. And I also want to thank several staffers who have worked so hard on this bill: Gregg Rothschild, Consuela Washington, Shannon Weinberg, Brian McCullough, Will Carty. And finally, I want to thank Hugh Carroll of Mr. PICKERING's staff and Kenneth DeGraff of my staff for all of their hard work.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in passing this bill and making one of the most popular Federal services even better.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished Member from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING).

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

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3541. I, too, want to join in commending my colleagues, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. STEARNS, and my good friend Congressman DOYLE from Pennsylvania. I thank the leadership of the committee, Chairman DINGELL and Congressman JOE BARTON. JOE has been a good friend, and he has provided the support on our side, and CLIFF STEARNS, the leadership on our side.

MIKE DOYLE has been a tireless champion on this, a bulldog, and a great advocate for keeping peace and goodwill through the Christmas season for the citizens of our country as we do something that is common sense and pretty straightforward and simple, and that is to extend the do-not-call.

We do not want the cold calls to fill the stockings. We simply want the good cheer that will come from the time around the dinner table and the Christmas tree and the holiday season that all of us who want to be protected in that sanctuary of home will be, and this bill will do that.

The other great benefit, if we're watching our budget around Christmastime as a country and in the Congress, this has no cost. And so for our friends on the Senate side who are known to be frugal, we can tell you this has no cost. It can be passed quickly. It should be passed quickly as a Christmas present for the citizens of the country.

This is good government. It is time. And we can do this together, House and Senate, on a bipartisan basis. It is one of the most widely popular programs that we've had in this country; over 150 million people have signed up. I'm proud to be part of this effort, and I'm proud that I've worked with friends on the other side of the aisle to achieve this.

This is good news, good legislation, and a good effort. And I do wish to commend the committee for their work. I thank Mr. DOYLE again for his good leadership.

As I previously stated, the Do Not Call legislation is extremely popular and has been effective in largely eliminating the unwanted intrusions associated with commercial telemarketing calls to the home. We should all be proud of the success of the legislation and I want to commend both the FCC and FTC for their efforts in this area. I am confident that this language will benefit both the American people and industry. FTC and industry concerns were well vetted and fully considered as the bill moved through normal process. We added the reporting requirement to ensure we are providing an accurate database to the telemarketing industry so they are not hindered by making registration permanent.

Since the Do Not Call registry falls within the jurisdiction and enforcement of both the FCC and FTC, I hope there is continued consistent application, direction, and enforcement by both agencies. We have all worked hard to develop and implement the Do Not Call legislation, and we must be cautious in protecting its integrity and enforceability, particularly as it applies to charities and nonprofits. Inconsistent direction or enforcement ultimately will weaken the enforceability of the restrictions and undermine the statutory intent of this successful Government program. Again, I thank the committee and look forward to passage of this legislation.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, this has been a good debate on this issue, and I want to thank both the gentlemen who have authored this bill for their passion and for their leadership and what they do for the Congress.

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I just want to add to Mr. PICKERING's comment about the frugality of the Senate. I think certainly if Mr. PICKERING was in the Senate, we wouldn't have that frugality.

Mr. PICKERING. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. STEARNS. I would be glad to yield.

Mr. PICKERING. I would be regretful if I did not mention the good work of the staff, as did Mr. DOYLE. And for me, on my staff, Hugh Carroll has been tireless and has worked hard, and I appreciate his good work on this effort.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3541 the ''Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007''. This bill enjoys wide bipartisan support. Along with H.R. 2601, legislation considered by the House immediately before this bill, these measures will strengthen and ensure the continued operation of one of the most popular Federal consumer protection programs ever adopted by the Congress, the registry that allows consumers to list their phone numbers and thereby protect themselves from unwanted telemarketing phone calls.

Current rules provide that telephone numbers be removed from the list after 5 years, thus requiring consumers to re-register their numbers in order to fend off pesky telemarketing calls. Most consumers are unaware

of this requirement. And I would observe that it places a particular burden on the elderly, the group most often victimized by telemarketing frauds.

The FTC testified before our Committee last month that they would not remove any expiring numbers from the Do-Not-Call Registry, that is, phone numbers will stay registered, pending action by Congress to address this issue.

To that end, H.R. 3541 will eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Registry, subject to certain common sense exceptions, such as at the request of the individual to whom the number is assigned. To maintain the accuracy of the Registry, H.R. 3541 directs the FTC to ''periodically'' check telephone numbers on the Registry against national or other appropriate databases, and remove from such Registry telephone numbers that have been disconnected and reassigned. The Committee intends for the FTC or any subcontractor to check these numbers at least once a month and preferably more frequently as technology allows. Nothing in this bill prohibits the FTC from removing invalid telephone numbers from the Registry at any time. The Committee expects the FTC to work with industry and technology experts to ensure the accuracy of the Registry. The legislation directs the FTC to report to Congress, not later than 9 months after date of enactment, on efforts taken by the agency to improve the accuracy of the Registry. I commend Representatives DOYLE and PICKERING for their strong bipartisan leadership on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this strong package of important consumer protections. Let us hope for swift action on H.R. 3541, as well as on the legislation establishing a permanent funding mechanism, leading to quick enactment so that Americans are not once again inundated with unwanted calls from telemarketers.

Mr. STEARNS. 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 North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3541, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A Bill to amend the Do-not-call Implementation Act to eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal 'do-not-call' registry''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EXTENSION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4341) to extend the trade adjustment assistance program under the Trade Act of 1974 for 3 months.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4341

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

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) ASSISTANCE FOR WORKERS.—Section 245(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2317(a)) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2007'' and inserting ''March 31, 2008''.

(b) ASSISTANCE FOR FIRMS.—Section 256(b) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2346(b)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and $4,000,000'' and inserting ''$4,000,000''; and

(2) by inserting after ''October 1, 2007,'' the following: ''and $4,000,000 for the 3-month period beginning on January 1, 2008,''.

(c) ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS.—Section 298(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2401g(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking '', and there are authorized'' and inserting ''. There are authorized''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: ''There are authorized to be appropriated and there are appropriated to the Department of Agriculture to carry out this chapter $9,000,000 for the 3-month period beginning on January 1, 2008.''.

(d) EXTENSION OF TERMINATION DATES.—Section 285 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2007'' each place it appears and inserting ''March 31, 2008''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) through (d) shall be effective as of January 1, 2008.

SEC. 2. OFFSETS.

(a) TIME FOR PAYMENT OF CORPORATE ESTIMATED TAXES.—The percentage under subparagraph (B) of section 401(1) of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act is increased by 0.25 percentage points.

(b) CUSTOMS USER FEES.—Section 13031(j)(3)(B)(i) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)(B)(i)) is amended by striking ''December 13, 2014'' and inserting ''December 20, 2014''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) will each control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. TAA will run out very soon, and it's essential that that not happen. This is a vital program for workers in this country, for the firms for which they work, for farmers, and for their entire communities.

We've been trying to not only extend TAA, but we've been trying to reform it and to improve it. We have passed legislation in this House, legislation that, indeed, reformed and enhanced and expanded TAA, and it passed this House with some considerable bipartisan support. It addressed issues like this:

Expands TAA to service workers;

Improves funding, because a number of States have essentially run out of funds;

Streamlines the process for application for TAA because an unfriendly regimen of rules has too often made it difficult for people to access it;

Modernizes the unemployment system, which badly needs it;

Provides assistance to manufacturing communities hard hit by trade.

Unfortunately, though this bill passed comfortably in this House and was an important landmark supported by our Speaker, by the majority leader, by Chairman RANGEL, by others, many of us on the Ways and Means Committee and, as I said, with some considerable bipartisan support, but unfortunately, the bill has essentially not moved in the other body. And it has been blocked, I think, by a position in the other body that it should be linked to something else.

Also, the administration essentially has opposed this legislation. And it was really rather startling that that occurred. After all, earlier this fall the President said this about TAA: ''I understand that if you're forced to change a job halfway through a career it can be painful for your family. I know that. And that is why I'm a big believer in trade adjustment assistance that helps Americans make the transition from one job to the next.''

Unfortunately, it was only a few weeks after that that we received, on the eve of the markup of the bill in the Ways and Means Committee, a letter from the Secretary of Labor opposing the bill that was before the committee. And in the letter the Secretary said, ''negative impacts with trade that are borne by the few,'' that this does not warrant the changes we make in the legislation. Unfortunate language, indeed, because there has been an impact of trade very substantially across the board, not only in the manufacturing industries, but in the service industries and beyond, and that that impact has been borne by many, many more than a few.

So, what has happened is that we passed this legislation with some bipartisan support, legislation that, as I say, expanded and reformed TAA and also addressed overdue issues of unemployment counts. We're just stuck because of the opposition of the administration, and also because of inaction in the Senate.

So, here's what this legislation does:

It extends TAA for 3 months. Why 3 months? Three months because it's the intention the majority, after we return after the holidays, if we adjourn for the holidays, and I assume we will, to get moving quickly to take up this vital reform of TAA within the first few months, to make it a high priority in this House, and we hope in the entire Congress, and we hope in the White House.

□ 1630

So I come today on behalf of many of us viewing the importance of this legislation and asking that this House vote for a 3-month extension until March 31, 2008.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back myself so much time as I may require.

I rise in support of this extension of the Trade Adjustment Assistance, or TAA program, for 3 months beyond its expiration of December 31. The TAA program provides important training,

health care, and other benefits to American workers adversely affected by trade. While this bill will continue the program for 3 months, I believe 6 months would be better and would allow the Senate sufficient time to pass the TAA reauthorization bill.

Also, the Senate and House must work together to develop what I hope will be truly bipartisan legislation that helps workers affected by trade and globalization get retrained and back to work sooner. Unfortunately, the House-passed Democrat bill was not the product of a bipartisan approach as I had hoped and did not include key Republican reform proposals.

In light of this, an overwhelming majority of the Republicans did not support it, and the bill drew a veto threat from the administration. In contrast, a TAA reauthorization bill that committee Republicans offered in an alternative on the floor was supported by 95 percent of all House Republicans and 11 Democrats. This strong support reflects the meaningful reforms in our 5-year TAA reauthorization, such as an increased health coverage tax credit.

As debate moves forward, I hope that at least some of the key TAA reforms in our bill will be considered and adopted. Several critical reforms in the House Republican TAA bill were not included with the House-passed language. They include providing more flexible training options to get people back to work sooner, such as training before layoffs, part-time training, and providing training scholarship for workers to use over 4 years, provisions to enhance the capacity of training providers, primarily community colleges to provide effective training programs, new accountability measures for TAA program funds, an extension and modernization of the Workforce Investment Act that will better integrate it with TAA to expand services to all workers and additional flexibility for States to operate UI programs that would help workers get back on the job faster.

I also want to reiterate my opposition to how the majority paid for the House-passed bill, and I hope we can revisit this issue as the process moves ahead.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I believe we should discuss TAA expansion in the context of initiatives that would expand trade opportunities for U.S. workers, farmers, and producers. We must pass all of our pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea and reauthorize trade promotion authority that allows the President a stronger hand to negotiate these beneficial agreements in the first place.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, this is not the time to have any lengthy debate about trade nor, I think, about TAA. But before I yield back my time, since this is going to be a 3-month extension, and that means there needs to be quick action and we intend to undertake it as soon as we come back, I do want to emphasize a few points. Number one, the bill that passed here addressed the issue of service workers. Essentially, what Mr. HERGER has referred to in his bill left the status quo and left out virtually all service workers, and that is simply inadequate and inappropriate.

It also did not touch the issue of funding. It did not streamline the processes so many people today in the manufacturing field for example when they lose their job because of trade simply can't work their way through all of the red tape. Also it doesn't address the issues within the unemployment compensation system and also doesn't refer to the needs of communities especially hard hit in manufacturing areas.

So we should pass this bill with notice that we here on the majority side intend to move quickly next year. I hope there can be a lot of bipartisan discussion. We need to do it quickly.

Let me say one last thing about the gentleman from California's statement about trade bills. We need to reform trade policy. We also need to pass trade adjustment assistance, and the attempt to link the two in terms of legislation simply will not work, and I don't think should or will happen.

TAA can stand on its own feet. TAA is necessary for those thrown out of work through no fault of their own because of the impact of trade. And to try to use TAA as an instrumentality to push particular trade bills simply shortchanges people in this country who lose their jobs, communities that lose their base, firms that are left out because of trade. Trade is not the only cause of dislocation in this country, but it is a substantial cause that needs to be addressed by reforming trade policy, number one, and we took major steps to begin to do that this year on the majority side, and also to pass TAA.

So I hope Mr. HERGER and the Republicans will join with us the first 3 months of next year, and let's get busy and pass TAA. I hope also that the administration will drop its resistance and also stop trying to use TAA as a bargaining tool. That is not fair to people who are hurting economically through no fault of their own.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4341.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4341.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADDRESSING VULNERABILITIES IN AVIATION SECURITY

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1413) to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to address vulnerabilities in aviation security by carrying out a pilot program to screen airport workers with access to secure and sterile areas of airports, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1413

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

SECTION 1. ENHANCED PERIMETER SECURITY AND ACCESS CONTROL THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE SCREENING OF AIRPORT WORKERS.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) shall carry out a pilot program at 7 service airports to screen all individuals with unescorted access to secure and sterile areas of the airport in accordance with section 44903(h) of title 49, United States Code.

(b) PARTICIPATING AIRPORTS.—At least 2 of the airports participating in the pilot program shall be large hub airports (as defined in section 40102 of title 49, United States Code). At least 1 of the airports participating in the pilot program shall be a category III airport. Each of the remaining airports participating in the pilot program shall represent a different airport security risk category (as defined by the Assistant Secretary).

(c) SCREENING STANDARDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under paragraphs (2) and (3), screening for individuals with unescorted access under the pilot program shall be conducted under the same standards as apply to passengers at airport security screening checkpoints and, at a minimum of 1 airport, shall be carried out by a private screening company that meets the standards in accordance with section 44920(d) of title 49, United States Code. That airport shall be an airport that uses such a private screening company to carry out passenger screenings as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) DESIGNATED SCREENING LANE.—In addition to the requirements under paragraph (1), each airport participating in the pilot program shall designate at least one screening lane at each airport security screening checkpoint to be used to screen individuals with unescorted access on a priority basis under the pilot program. Such lane may also be used to screen passengers.

(3) ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SCREENING.—At 1 of the 7 airports participating in the pilot program, the Assistant Secretary shall deploy, instead of the screening standards required under paragraphs (1) and (2), alternative means of screening all individuals with unescorted access to secure and sterile areas of the airport. Alternative means of screening may include—

(A) biometric technology for airport access control;

(B) behavior recognition programs;

(C) canines to screen individuals with unescorted access to secure and sterile areas of the airport;

(D) targeted physical inspections of such individuals;

(E) video cameras; and

(F) increased vetting, training, and awareness programs for such individuals.

(d) VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS.—As part of the pilot program under this section, the Assistant Secretary shall conduct a vulnerability assessment of each airport participating in the pilot program. Each such assessment shall include an assessment of vulnerabilities relating to access badge and uniform controls.

(e) TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENTS.—Airport operators at each airport at which the pilot program under this section is implemented shall conduct an assessment of the screening technology being used at that airport and submit the results of the assessment to the Assistant Secretary. The Assistant Secretary shall compile the results of all the assessments and provide them to each airport participating in the pilot program.

(f) OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENTS.—As part of the pilot program under this section, the Assistant Secretary shall conduct an operational assessment at each airport participating in the pilot program. Each such assessment shall include an evaluation of—

(1) the effect on security of any increase in terminal congestion created as a result of screening individuals with unescorted access under the pilot program;

(2) the average wait times at screening checkpoints for passengers and individuals with unescorted access;

(3) any additional personnel required to screen individuals with unescorted access;

(4) the effect of screening individuals with unescorted access on other security-related activities at the airport;

(5) any lost productivity of individuals with unescorted access associated with airport participation in the pilot program; and

(6) the rate at which ''prohibited items'' are detected and confiscated from individuals with unescorted access.

(g) DURATION.—The pilot program shall be carried out for a period of not less than 180 days.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

(i) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the last day of the pilot program, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the results of the pilot program.

(2) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the effect of screening all airport workers with access to secure and sterile airport areas on screening and logistical resources.

(B) An assessment of the security improvements that are achieved from screening such workers.

(C) An assessment of the costs of screening such workers.

(D) The results of the vulnerability assessments conducted under subsection (d).

(E) An estimate of the infrastructure and personnel requirements necessary to implement a screening program for individuals with unescorted access at all commercial service airports in the United States in order to process each such individual and each passenger through each screening checkpoint in fewer than 10 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this bill and include therein any extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1413 creates a pilot program screening airport workers at seven airports. Screening passengers but giving workers open access is like installing a home security system but leaving the back door open. We know criminal activity has resulted from this loophole and we cannot take a chance that terrorists will exploit it. H.R. 1413 is a bipartisan approach to ensure security at our airports, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 1413, legislation sponsored by my good friend and fellow New Yorker, Nita Lowey, and me that seeks to close an important loophole in the airport security program.

Since 9/11, Congress and the airline industry have taken strong affirmative actions to tighten security at our Nation's airports. However, one of the few areas of security that has grown unchanged since the horrific events of 9/11 is airport workers screening. While airline passengers are searched from head to foot before we board a plane or reach the gate, most airports do not screen 100 percent of their employees when entering into secure areas.

Earlier this year at the Orlando International Airport just outside my congressional district, airport employees were able to smuggle loaded weapons onto a plane bound for Puerto Rico. This significant breach in security could have been avoided with 100 percent screening of airport workers. Thankfully, no one was hurt, and the employees' intent was not to incite terror. However, had those guns been used to hijack a plane to commit a larger terrorist act, I am confident that we would have 100 percent screening at all our airports and that would already be in place as we speak.

Let's not wait for such an attack to occur before we take action. H.R. 1413 will create a pilot program for TSA to test the plausibility of screening of all airport workers at seven airports. While some have objected to the 100 percent worker screening in principle, they have no broad federally operated test case upon which to base this opinion. The value of this pilot project is that it allows TSA to evaluate thoroughly the strengths and weaknesses of 100 percent airport worker screening on a small scale. While no one wants more bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake, we do need to protect the traveling public.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida from the airport that, I might add, does have 100 percent screening.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, I had the honor and privilege of chairing the House Aviation Subcommittee for some 6 years. I inherited that responsibility some months after September 11 and concluded my service as the Chair of that important subcommittee January of this year. I now am the ranking member on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Just by way of my background, I have been involved in both the creation of TSA and the evolution of TSA over these years, and, trying to make certain, as I know Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE is doing, Representative NITA LOWEY is trying to do, and I think they are very well intended and actually I hope to work with them, I just found out about this proposal coming up today last night, and I do pledge to work with them to try to make their intent the most effective intent, protecting the American public. And I know that is what Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE does. That is her intent. And I think that is Mrs. LOWEY's intent here.

But what we have got to do is make certain that we aren't doing something that really won't achieve the results. And I think the normal screening of workers, as it has been done as we screen passengers, would not be that effective. So I have no objection to a demonstration project, but I think what we need is one that is sophisticated to try to deal with finding out what the bad intent of supposedly good aviation system workers may be.

□ 1645

Most of what we have at the airport today, I hate to tell you, the technology does not deal with the current threat. The current threat is not someone taking a gun or a weapon, as we traditionally know it, through airport screening checkpoints. In fact, USA Today has shown even how flawed this system is, in revealing some of the results of taking through not only those type items but also other items that may pose a risk today.

The problem we have is people with bad intent who obtain employment in this industry can do great harm. What we need to do is focus the screening on going after that bad intent, because once they get past the worker screening or passenger screening point, a worker has access to chemicals, substances, tools, a treasure trove of items that can be used to take down an aircraft, and that is what we want to prevent.

So I am not going to try to kill this measure. That is not my intent. In fact, I didn't come out here to call for

a roll call vote on this. But what I would like to do is work with them to see that their intent, which is to make certain that workers who may pose danger to the system, we find a way to screen them that would be most effective in protecting our passengers.

The worst thing we can do, and I will tell you this, I helped create the Department of Homeland Security, I helped author the TSA bill. But TSA and the Department of Homeland Security is 177,000 employees. I compare it to sort of like pigeons you may see in a plaza, and when Congress claps its hands, they will all fly off in whatever direction we send them, but it may not always be the best-intended.

I give you one final example. We ban lighters from being carried onboard aircraft. We ban lighters, but we didn't ban cell phones or cameras with a battery. Here's my cell phone. This is much more dangerous as an ignition electronic device than any lighter that you can carry onboard.

So sometimes we do things here with good intentions, like the lighter ban, but they may not have the results we would like to achieve. So I came here to tell both of the sponsors I appreciate what they are trying to do, but I think we can take and craft their demonstration project into a demonstration project that truly screens workers in a way that will be beneficial to catch the potentially bad players and that we can make this system safer.

So I compliment you on your well-intended efforts. I pledge to work with you, and we will take it from there.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his wisdom and for his willingness to work with us. I have no more speakers, and I urge the Members to support this critical legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted Mr. MICA does want to work with us. Certainly, the type of screening he is talking about, where we are able to determine or hopefully determine the intent of the workers coming in, is a very good one. But I think we also need to be very vigilant to make sure that they are not bringing in suitcase bombs in what may look like a worker's toolbox.

This situation was actually brought to my attention by TSA workers who, at one of the airports that I was at, said to me, You know, we have to screen you, but would you believe people are coming in the back door without any kind of screening at all, other than a swipe card? These are people who may work at the airport; they work at the concession stands. And certainly the TSA workers are screened, Members of Congress are screened, candidates for President are screened when they go through the airport, but imagine this, that individuals are coming in the back door with just a swipe card.

We need to make sure that money is well spent, I agree with Mr. MICA, and I think that what we need is a variety of ways to deter any acts of terrorism, and that clearly is what this pilot program is all about. I look forward to working with Mr. MICA and being able to utilize his many years of experience on this.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1413.

H.R. 1413 was introduced by Representatives LOWEY and BROWN-WAITE to establish a pilot program to test the viability of physically screening airport workers at seven (7) airports. I am pleased to report that this bipartisan bill, as amended in Committee, not only requires TSA to test physical screening but also alternative forms of screening, including: biometrics, behavior recognition, and canine teams.

Consideration of H.R. 1413 is timely in light of the October 2007 arrest of 10 airline employees for operating a drug smuggling ring at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. The ring leader allegedly directed JFK airport employees from inside the airport on how to move heroin and cocaine into so-called "safe areas" of the airport.

Mr. Speaker, most people that work in our nation's airports are hardworking, trustworthy people who pose no threat to the traveling public. However, in a post-9/11 world, we have to address the risk of an "inside job"—where an attack is planned and executed by an airport worker who exploits security gaps. H.R. 1413 does just that.

H.R. 1413 does so in a manner that strives to assure that that people that keep the planes flying are able to do their job. Specifically, H.R. 1413 creates a 180-day pilot program where all the people that access the terminal and the airplanes, not just the American Flying Public, are screened.

To those who think this can't be done, I'm here to tell you "it can be done." They do it at London's Heathrow airport. They do it at DeGaulle Airport in Paris. I understand that there are those who don't want us to look at this approach. But in a post-9/11 world, failing to do so is just plain wrong.

Under the leadership of Subcommittee Chairwoman JACKSON-LEE, H.R. 1413 was agreed to "as amended," on April 24th by voice vote. The full committee considered, voted and reported favorably on August 1. I strongly urge passage of this bill that takes a reasonable approach to exploring how to better secure our airports, airplanes and travelers.

Mrs. LOWEY and Ms. BROWN-WAITE are to be commended for their leadership on this critical legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with the bills sponsors and other interested parties to ensure that TSA structures the pilot in a manner that provides Congress with the best guidance on how to address this gap in security. I strongly urge passage on this important homeland security measure.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1413, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to address vulnerabilities in aviation security by carrying out a pilot program to screen airport workers with access to secure and sterile areas of airports, introduced by my distinguished colleague from New York, Representative LOWEY. As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Chair of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure Protect, I believe that this important piece of legislation, of which I am a proud cosponsor, is absolutely imperative for insuring the protection of our nation.

Today, aviation security is high on the list of priorities of air travelers, the Federal Government, and the international air community. Since September 11th we have made many improvements in the security of our nation's transportation infrastructure. However our job is far from over, whether it's more improvements to be made or gaps to close. In matters of security, we must not become complacent—as our enemies adapt, so must we. And we did, we now have a federal screening workforce, we screen 100 percent of the checked baggage, we are in the process of moving to 100 percent screening of air cargo and we are constantly trying to find new technology to help all of these functions. In addition we armed pilots and barricaded the cabin door, still there is much more that needs to be done and this legislation is an important step in the direction of making our nation more secure.

This important legislation includes a number of provisions that will make American airports safer by directing the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a number of new programs. In this day and age when Presidential candidates and Members of Congress must go through airport security and screening, it is unfathomable that airport employees with access to sterile areas of the airport are still excused from such screening. This legislation calls for the implementation of a pilot program at five commercial service airports that will screen all airport workers with access to sterile areas of the airport. This program calls for screening of airport employees to be conducted under the same standards as apply to passengers at security screening checkpoints and to be carried out by private screeners at a designated screening lane for their exclusive use at a minimum of two airports. This will ensure that airport employees are held to the same standards as all other people wishing to enter an airport. In order to further ensure security, this bill requires that each airport participating in said program is subject to a vulnerability assessment by the Department of Homeland Security.

An endemic problem in the national security system is the lack of specificity of legislation that is meant to secure our nation's airports. This bill escapes that by specifying that at least two of the participating airports be large hub airports, with the remaining airports representing different airport security risk categories, therefore ensuring a holistic assessment of our airports current security risks. This legislation further specifies that each participating airport operator conduct an assessment of the screening technology used at the airport and to submit the results to the Assistant Secretary. Following this comprehensive program, the United States will be able to better assess the real security of its nation's airports.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 1413 and I call on my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation because I strongly believe that it will strengthen our nation's efforts to confront the existing vulnerabilities our current airport security system and consequently make our nation more secure.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1413, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to address vulnerabilities in aviation security by carrying out a pilot program to screen airport workers with access to secure and sterile areas of airports, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY CHAIRMAN OF PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF CLASSIFIED SCHEDULE OF AUTHORIZATIONS AND CLASSIFIED ANNEX

(Mr. REYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce to all Members of the House that the conference report to accompany H.R. 2082, the Intelligence Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2008, has been filed in accordance with House rules and that the classified schedule of authorizations and the classified annex of the conference report is available for review by Members at the offices of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in room H–405 of the Capitol. The committee office is open during regular business hours, and this evening during our votes, for the convenience of any Member who wishes to review this material prior to the consideration of the conference report by the House. Members wishing to review this material should contact the committee to arrange a time and a date for that review.

In addition to signing the oath for access to classified information specified in clause 13 of rule XXIII of the House of Representatives Rules, committee rules also require that Members agree in writing to a nondisclosure agreement that indicates that the Member has been granted access to the classified schedule of authorizations and classified annex, and that they are familiar with the rules of the House and the committee with respect to the classified nature of that information and the limitations on disclosure of such information.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

House Resolution 842, by the yeas and nays;

House Resolution 847, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 4343, by the yeas and nays.

The vote on H.R. 3985 will be taken later in the week.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO THE VICTIMS OF CYCLONE SIDR IN SOUTHERN BANGLADESH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 842, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 842, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 388, nays 0, not voting 43, as follows:

[Roll No. 1142]

YEAS—388

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)

Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—43

Alexander
Boswell
Brown, Corrine
Buyer
Carson
Cleaver
Conyers
Cubin
Davis (IL)
Doolittle
Everett
Feeney
Ferguson
Gilchrest
Graves
Hinojosa
Hooley
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Kind
King (IA)
Lantos
Lofgren, Zoe
Lucas
Marchant
Matheson
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moore (WI)
Murtha
Paul
Pryce (OH)
Reyes
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sessions
Smith (NJ)
Tancredo
Wexler
Wynn

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1852

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTMAS AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 847, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 847, as amended.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 372, nays 9, answered ''present'' 10, not voting 40, as follows:

[Roll No. 1143]

YEAS—372

Abercrombie
Aderholt
Akin
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Chandler
Clay
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
Delahunt
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Pearce
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schiff
Schmidt
Scott (GA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Wu
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—9

Ackerman
Clarke
DeGette
Hastings (FL)
Lee
McDermott
Scott (VA)
Stark
Woolsey

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—10

Conyers
Frank (MA)
Holt
Payne
Pence
Schakowsky
Schwartz
Wasserman Schultz
Welch (VT)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—40

Alexander
Boswell
Brown, Corrine
Buyer
Carson
Cleaver
Cubin
Davis (IL)
DeLauro
Dicks
Everett
Ferguson
Graves
Hooley
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Kind
King (IA)
Lantos
Lofgren, Zoe
Lucas
Marchant
Matheson
McHugh
McKeon
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moore (WI)
Murtha
Paul
Pryce (OH)
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sessions
Tancredo
Wexler
Wynn

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1902

Mr. CONYERS changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''present.''

Mr. KUCINICH changed his vote from ''present'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. McHUGH. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 1143, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

FAIR TREATMENT FOR EXPERIENCED PILOTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4343, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4343.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 390, nays 0, not voting 41, as follows:

[Roll No. 1144]

YEAS—390

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Baker
Baldwin
Barrett (SC)
Barrow
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman

Boren
Boucher
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carter
Castle
Castor
Chabot
Clarke
Clay
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Hulshof
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Reyes
Reynolds
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—41

Alexander
Boswell
Brown, Corrine
Buyer
Carson
Chandler
Cleaver
Cubin
Davis (IL)
Everett
Ferguson
Graves
Hooley
Hunter
Jindal
Johnson (IL)
Keller
Kind
King (IA)
Lantos
Lewis (GA)
Lucas
Marchant
Matheson
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Moore (WI)
Murtha
Olver
Paul
Pryce (OH)
Renzi
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sessions
Tancredo
Van Hollen
Wexler
Wynn

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised less than 2 minutes remain in the vote.

□ 1908

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained for Rollcall votes 1142 through 1144 and ask for unanimous consent to enter into the RECORD the following statement on the series of votes held on Tuesday, December 11, 2007, beginning with Rollcall 1142.

Unfortunately, I was detained in my district; Missouri's Fifth, due to a massive ice storm, which is crippling our community. My heart goes out to those individuals who have lost power, and I salute the city and utility workers, who are working tirelessly to restore lost utilities in this freezing weather.

Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have cast the following votes on H. Res. 842, Expressing sympathy to and pledging the support of the House of Representatives and the people of the United States for the victims of Cyclone Sidr in southern Bangladesh; H. Res. 847, Recognizing the importance of Christmas; and H.R. 4343, the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act of 2007:

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for H. Res. 842, roll No. 1142, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for H. Res. 847, roll No. 1143, I would have voted "nay."

Mr. Speaker, had I been present for the H.R. 4343, roll No. 1144, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I regret that inclement weather prevented me from being here to vote today. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H. Res. 842, H. Res. 847, H.R. 4343, and I ask that my statement be placed in the appropriate place in the RECORD to reflect this.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4193

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name from H.R. 4193.

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

There was no objection.

HONORING ALBERT CAREY CASWELL OF THE CAPITOL GUIDE SERVICE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the unsung heroes of the United States Capitol. Here in the Capitol Building, we have a group of fine individuals who serve the public by giving tours of the Capitol and educating the public about the history of this great institution.

But during the few years I have had the honor to serve in Congress, I have noticed one member of the Capitol Guide Service who has consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty. Albert Carey Caswell has served as a Capitol guide for more than 20 years, and his tenure has been marked with an ethic of civic outreach. He routinely gives tours to disabled veterans from Walter Reed Medical Center and to children with life-threatening diseases through Make-a-Wish Foundation. Mr. Caswell does all of this on a volunteer basis on his own time. He insists that the tours he give to these children and brave veterans be coordinated and given on his watch.

Mr. Caswell is an accomplished poet and an extremely knowledgeable tour guide, but more importantly he is a great American. He embodies the spirit of a true patriot, someone who grasps the importance of a cause greater than himself and pursues it with energy and commitment. He is the model of a civically minded citizen who is selflessly committed to the greater good.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

□ 1915

ADMINISTRATION GETS TWO THUMBS DOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, the holiday movie season usually begins each year around Christmas Day, but this year the holiday movie season has begun early. It began this week, in fact, when the administration premiered its new movie entitled, ''Iraq: The Sequel.''

As you will recall, the first Iraq movie began with the administration warning us about weapons of mass destruction and mushroom clouds. Then we invaded Iraq where we discovered that the weapons of mass destruction didn't exist. But the administration kept coming up with new reasons to keep the occupation going.

The American people gave this first Iraq two thumbs down, but that hasn't discouraged our leaders in the White House. They have been busy writing the same exact script for ''Iraq: The Sequel,'' which is all about Iran.

In this movie, the administration warns us about Iranian weapons of mass destruction, in this case a nuclear weapons program. Then it gives us new visions of mushroom clouds by warning us about World War III. Then we discover, as we did last week, that the nuclear weapons program does not exist. In fact, it was suspended back in 2003. But the administration continues to come up with new reasons to keep the crisis going.

Yesterday we were told that Iran was dangerous, Iran is dangerous, Iran will be dangerous. So the administration's drumbeat for war in general, and against Iran in particular, goes on. Before we go back to the dark days, Madam Speaker, the dark days of shock and awe, I have a few questions to ask.

First, why did it take 4 long years to discover the truth about the Iranian nuclear weapons program? Was this another example of intelligence being manipulated for political purposes?

Why did the administration warn us in October that Iranian nuclear weapons could start World War III when the Director of National Intelligence went to the White House in August to say that Iran's nuclear weapons system ''may be suspended''?

There is nothing, nothing more reckless and irresponsible than to terrify the world about World War III when there is no basis for it.

Why did the administration continue to use threatening language yesterday? Yesterday, when the truth was already known. Instead of looking for opportunities for peace, this administration continues to look for ways to keep tensions as high as possible.

My last question, Madam Speaker, is why does the administration seem so intent on wrecking America's credibility? By doing so, this administration has made the world a much more dangerous place and has undercut our own national security. We are like the boy who cries wolf. No one will believe what we say now, and that means we cannot lead the world effectively against terrorism and towards peace.

The movies of ''Iraq'' and ''Iraq: The Sequel'' have both bombed. We need a new plot, a plot that begins with responsible redeployment of our troops out of Iraq, which would be the essential, responsible first step.

When we do that, we can begin to bring together all the parties in the region that have a stake in keeping a lid on violence and reducing tensions. We must change course because that is the only way to regain the moral leadership. And we must reshape events, and we must reshape them in ways that are favorable to the United States and to peace around the world.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1201

Mr. PICKERING. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask unanimous consent to withdraw my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 1201.

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

There was no objection.

EYE ON THE SUPREME COURT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, last week hundreds of citizens stood in the first snow of winter in Washington, D.C. for 2 hours, hoping to get a coveted seat in the United States Supreme Court building to see the oral arguments on the case of the detainees in Guantanamo prisoner of war camp and what rights, if any, they have under our Constitution; however, the Supreme Court gallery has a mere 50 seats for spectators.

One of those would-be viewers was a lawyer on my staff, Gina Santucci. I wanted her there to find out more about the case and take notes. But she, like most of the people in line, never got in to see the arguments. There was no room in the room. Those that were allowed into the proceedings were only permitted to stay 5 minutes before they had to leave and make room for other people in the room.

Public interest in what takes place in the Supreme Court is a good thing. It is important that Americans are concerned about what occurs in the Supreme Court, and citizens want to observe the most powerful court in action anywhere in the world. But most Americans will never have this opportunity to see the questions asked by the Justices of the Supreme Court or to hear the arguments over the meaning of our Constitution or hear constitutional cases that will go down in history.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 1299 to allow television cameras to televise Supreme Court proceedings. Since then, both the House and the Senate Judiciary Committees have heard arguments as to why cameras should be allowed inside the Supreme Court.

Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee marked up Senator SPECTER's bill to allow cameras in the Supreme Court. Some Senators were concerned that the Department of Justice opposed this bill. Justice Department opposed this bill because they say they want to protect the ''collegial environment'' of the Court. I don't mean to intrude on what a ''collegial environment'' is, but what is it?

I thought the business before the Supreme Court is a matter the American people have an interest in, not just the college of lawyers that appear before the court.

We have cameras in these House Chambers, and I never thought about whether the camera here on the House floor affects the collegiality between the fellow representatives that we work with. Most of us hardly notice the camera at all. And today's cameras are so small and unobtrusive, they are not noticed. They don't affect our daily routine here in the House, but they allow Americans across the vastness of the fruited plain to tune in to see what their government is up to every day.

Now, I doubt if the Supreme Court TV channel will win the fall sweeps, but it will allow Americans who live in the 50 States to observe the oral arguments that take place. Some say they are against cameras in the courtroom because attorneys play to the camera and try to impress the viewing audience.

Madam Speaker, attorneys don't play to the camera, they play to the jury. I know because I played to the jury for 8 years as a prosecutor in Texas. However, there isn't even a jury to impress in the Supreme Court. In fact, there really isn't a time to grandstand in the Supreme Court. Oral arguments in the Supreme Court involve the best appellate attorneys in the country, facing a spew of questions from nine Justices who are asking a barrage of legal questions to these lawyers making them justify their legal positions on their case.

I only explain how the oral arguments work in the Supreme Court because most Americans are unaware of the proceedings and the procedures since they don't have the opportunity to view Supreme Court oral arguments personally. Unless there are cameras, Americans will never have the chance to see what takes place in a courtroom, the most powerful courtroom in the whole world, the Supreme Court courtroom.

I know cameras can be placed in a courtroom without disruption or distraction because I did it. For 22 years,

I served as a felony court judge in Houston, Texas. I heard over 25,000 criminal cases and a thousand jury trials. Some of those were filmed by the TV media. I even televised a capital murder trial. My rules were simple and always obeyed by the media: No filming of rape victims, children, the jury, or certain other witnesses. The camera filmed what the jury saw and heard. And, Madam Speaker, I had no problem with the media at all. We need to let the public see a real trial in progress, and cameras have made that possible.

Americans have the right to watch Supreme Court proceedings in person. We have the best judicial system ever created in the history of the world. Why not prove it by filming these proceedings? Americans should not be deprived of the right to observe just because they cannot physically sit in the Supreme Court courtroom. It is time to remove the veil of secrecy from the hallowed halls of the Supreme Court and allow cameras to film these important proceedings.

Justice would be better served if we open the doors to the Supreme Court to cameras because justice is the one thing we should always find.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

JOSH MILLER HEARTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Speaker, there are no words to describe the pain we feel when a young life is lost.

To know Josh Miller was to know a kindhearted and generous young man with limitless potential. Josh was a Baberton High School sophomore with a 4.0 grade point average, a linebacker who dreamed of playing football for Ohio State one day.

But one day, without warning, these dreams were cut short. Josh had never shown any signs of heart trouble, but during the final game of the 2000 football season, he collapsed after leaving the field. By the time his heart was shocked with an automated external defibrillator, it was too late to save him.

Josh suffered a sudden cardiac arrest, which, according to the American Heart Association, claims the lives of about 330,000 Americans every year. The vast majority of these individuals, like Josh, will not have displayed any signs of heart trouble beforehand; yet there is an easy-to-use, relatively inexpensive piece of medical equipment that can more than double the odds of survival for someone experiencing such a sudden cardiac arrest.

An automated external defibrillator, or AED, is the single-most effective treatment for starting the heart after sudden cardiac arrest. And because chances of survival decrease up to 10 percent for every minute that passes, every second is critical.

It is incredibly important that we take steps to educate the public about the life-and-death difference that using these devices would make. I would like to thank and to commend my colleague, Mr. KUHL, for his efforts in promoting increased access to AEDs through the resolution passed this afternoon. Later this week, I will be introducing a piece of legislation that takes another step to increase the ability of AEDs in our communities.

The Josh Miller HEARTS Act will establish a grant program that will help schools across the country purchase these lifesaving devices. Schools are central gathering places in our communities, and placing AEDs in our schools will not only save the lives of students enrolled there, potentially, but they will be available for teachers and staff, parents and volunteers, and the many other members of the community who pass through the halls every single day.

This legislation will be modeled on a similar program recently completed in the State of Ohio. Dr. Terry Gordon, a cardiologist at Akron General Hospital, has dedicated his life to this campaign. And his tireless efforts in Ohio led to the adoption of a statewide initiative to put an AED into every school across the State. Already, this program has saved the lives of 12 children and adults as a direct result.

I hope we in Congress can build on Dr. Gordon's good work and carry out this program at the national level. Losing a young life full of promise, like Josh's, can bring about a sense of helplessness. But today, we have an opportunity to act. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this effort to bring AEDs into every single school across this country.

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HONORING THE U.S. MARINE CORPS' DECISION TO ALLOW FAMILY OF FALLEN MARINE TO ADOPT SON'S K–9 PARTNER, LEX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, too often during wartime, tragedy takes center stage and heart-warming stories never get told. Tonight I would like to share a truly touching story with my colleagues in the House and with the American people.

Corporal Dustin Jerome Lee was a United States Marine Corps working-dog handler who was killed in action on March 21, 2007, in Fallujah, Iraq. Corporal Lee and his canine partner, Lex, a 7-year-old German shepherd from Camp Lejeune were a highly trained explosives detection team. Lex, who was due for retirement after his combat tour in Iraq, suffered shrapnel wounds from the same enemy-fired rocket-propelled grenade that took Corporal Lee's life.

Following Corporal Lee's death, the Lee family began seeking to adopt their son's canine companion who was with their son during the last moments on Earth. However, after filing the necessary paperwork, contacts at Marine Corps Logistic Base Albany indicated that Lex had been medically evaluated and, although injured, was fit for duty and not yet eligible for adoption.

I first learned of the Lee family's situation by reading the short story, ''My Partner Dustin,'' written by John Burnam, author of ''Dog Tags of Courage.''

Madam Speaker, at this time I will submit the text of the story for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

MY PARTNER DUSTIN

(By John C. Burnam)

I'm a U.S. Marine and the primary element of a two-member team trained to hunt and locate explosives. My partner and I trained as a team for many months honing our expertise to save American lives in the War on Terrorism in Iraq.

The date is March 21, 2007 and I was on the job in Fallujah, Iraq when an enemy fired Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) exploded in our midst. I was blasted to the ground. I'm Stunned. My head is ringing and my body feels numb. My eyes can't quite focus on anything.

My partner is lying next to me severely wounded and bleeding. I move to him and touch him but he's not responding. I feel sharp pains in my side and back. I'm bleeding but deal with it and concentrate on comforting my partner and protecting him from further harm.

Everything happened so fast that it caused disorientation and confusion. My senses pick up the lingering smell of burnt powder and smoke from the explosion. I hear lots of American voices and heavy boot-steps hurrying all around us. They reach our location and immediately attend to my partner. And then they carry him away. I'm separated from my partner for the first time. I'm not clear of thought and then I too am carried way but to a different hospital.

I'm in a building lying on a table with lights above and people talking. Still dazed and confused I hear a strange voice say my name, ''Lex!'' I gesture a slight reflex of acknowledgement. ''Lex! You are going to be okay buddy! Just lay still. We are going to take care of your hurts, so stay calm okay, Lex?'' My eyes dart around the room searching for my partner, but he's not there and no one can interpret my thoughts.

I'm released from the hospital and well enough to travel so they transfer me from Iraq to a U.S. Marine Corp base in Albany, Georgia. I really miss my partner, Dusty. I know something has happened to him because he would never have left me alone for so long.

Yes, my name is Lex. I'm a seven year old German shepherd Military Working Dog. My master and loyal partner is Corporal Dustin Jerome Lee, U.S. Marine Corps canine handler from Mississippi. I'm well disciplined to

my master's commands and expertly trained to sniff out bombs and explosives. Where's my master, Dusty? Where's Dusty, my partner? No one can understand me but Dusty. Where's Dusty?

Iraq was to be my last combat tour before retirement. Dusty talked to me all the time about going home and adopting me. I sure do miss my Dusty. He is the best friend I've ever had. I love that crazy Marine from Mississippi!

No one can measure the love and unconditional loyalty I have for Dusty. I'd sacrifice my own life for him and he knows it. I just wish I could have stopped that RPG or pushed Dusty away from that powerful blast. It all happened in a blink of an eye and I didn't see it coming until it was too late. Now I sit alone in my kennel-run waiting for the day Dusty shows up.

The U.S. Marines are treating me very well. I get enough food and water and exercise each day. And the Veterinarian comes by to examine my wounds on a regular basis. I just can't sleep well at night. I wake up to every little noise and I think about Dusty. Where can that Marine be?

The nights are long. The days turn into weeks. Still no Dusty! My wounds are healing and the hair is growing back. The pain still resides in my back but I can walk okay. I have a piece of shrapnel near my spine that the Veterinarians avoided removing for fear of further health complications. I've been fortunate to be declared physically unable to perform in a combat zone.

One of the dog handlers gave me a real good bath and grooming. I felt so refreshed because I was on my way to meet Dusty's family. Maybe Dusty will be there waiting for me. When I arrived I sensed something was not quite right. Dusty wasn't there and everyone was sad, but very happy to greet me. I then realized that I was attending Dusty's funeral. Everyone showed up to pay their respects.

Dusty is a real American hero and he was buried with full military honors. I was so proud to have been his last best friend and partner. At one particular moment of total silence during the ceremony, I sniffed a slight scent in the air that was very familiar. It smelled like Dusty. I figured he sent me a signal that he knew I was there! I moaned a sigh of grief that he would only hear and understand.

I was greeted by the Lee family with joy in their hearts. The picture is of Dustin's mom, Rachel, and me in church. It felt so warm and comfortable to be with my partner's loving family. I wanted to stay but I was escorted away after the funeral and back to Albany, Georgia. What is going to happen to me now?

Wait a minute! I was due for retirement, right? Why did the military take me to see Dusty's family and not leave me there? I belong with them in Mississippi not here in Georgia. There is something very wrong with this picture!

The Lee family adopting me would not be too much to ask considering they will never again see their son, grandson, brother, nephew and friend. Adopting me will keep a big part of Dusty's life alive for them and for me too! I will enable Dusty's family to experience what he already knew about me. I loved and protected him everywhere we went and even on the battlefield in Iraq. It's time the U.S. Marine Corps allowed Dustin's family to adopt me. I'm not a young pup anymore, you know! I'm of retirement age and I want to spend the rest of my life with the Lee family. It's where I now belong!

After learning this story, I spoke with Corporal Lee's father, Jerome Lee, by phone on several occasions. Mr. Lee continued to express the joy and comfort that caring for Lex would bring to him and his family, and he requested my assistance in securing the adoption of Lex.

After speaking with Mr. Lee, I began contacting the United States Marine Corps to communicate and endorse their request. Recently, the Marine Corps confirmed to me that the request would be granted and the Lee family would be able to retrieve Lex from Marine Corps Logistic Base Albany within the next 2 weeks.

Allowing the Lee family to adopt Lex will not only help lessen the family's ongoing grief, but also serve as a fitting thank you to parents who gave the ultimate gift of their son for this country.

I am so grateful to the United States Marine Corps and Commandant James Conway for the tremendous gift they have chosen to bestow upon Jerome and Rachel Lee.

I am also very grateful to Brigadier General Michael Regner and Major General Robert Dickerson for their role in enabling the adoption to proceed.

Although Lex will never replace their son, caring for Lex will bring such joy and comfort to the Lee family, as well as to the dog himself. Welcoming Lex into the Lee family will keep a big part of Corporal Lee's life alive for their family.

Lex loved and protected Corporal Lee on the battlefield, and now Corporal Lee's family will have the opportunity to love and protect Lex in the peaceful surroundings of their home in Mississippi.

The United States Marine Corps has demonstrated its tremendous compassion and understanding by making this adoption a reality for the parents of one of our Nation's fallen heroes.

I close, Madam Speaker, by asking God to please bless the United States Marine Corps and all of our men and women in uniform, and may God continue to bless America.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR. The Lee family is from Quitman, Mississippi. The dad is a State Trooper. The mom is a public school teacher. I want to thank you for doing this. I regret that the request was not made of my office. But it just once again proves what a decent Joe you are, WALTER. Thank you for doing that

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I appreciate the gentleman. And I will tell the gentleman, before he sits down, when I read this story it brought tears to my eyes. And I asked Mr. Burnam, who had been in Vietnam himself as a dog handler, What should I do, what could I do. He said, Do what your heart tells you to do. And my dear friend from Mississippi, I didn't even know where this man was in Mississippi. I just picked up the phone because Camp Lejeune was in my district. But thank you for what you said. And may God continue to bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WHAT HAS NOT BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about what has not been accomplished in this Congress, and what it looks like we may be facing in an omnibus bill.

Last week we were told that we would be here on Friday of this coming week, after we had been told about a month ago that we would be able to be in our districts on Friday. I know that I made many plans to be in the district, speak to school groups that had been asking me to speak, meet with chamber of commerce people to talk about concerns that they had, and to do lots of things in the district.

We have been denied many opportunities this year to be in our district to hear from the folks in the district the things that are on their minds and what's really important in the country, because the majority has insisted that we stay in session 5 days a week. But if you look at the bills that have been passed in those days that we've been here, you'd see that they were not things that primarily the Congress needs to be concerning itself with.

We do need to be concerning ourselves with the appropriations bills, funding the war on terror, taking care of tax relief for middle-income Americans, many, many things that we should be doing. But, instead, we are literally wasting our time on insignificant issues and not dealing with those things we should be dealing with.

It was announced last week that we would be dealing with an omnibus appropriations bill. Why an omnibus appropriations bill? Because the majority has been unable to pass 10 of the vital appropriations bills that our government relies for its funding on.

We have passed the Defense bill and the President has signed it. We've passed the Labor-HHS bill. The President vetoed it and the veto was upheld. So we are coming to the end of a continuing resolution that was passed that expires on Friday, and we're facing the prospect of lumping 11 appropriations bills together and passing them in one fell swoop. Well, we know that is just a recipe for disaster.

Last week we were given the Energy bill, 15 hours before we voted on it, a 1,000-plus page bill, and it had all kinds of problems with it. Buying Lexus hybrids for the Beverly Hills police,

many, many things in there that the American people would not approve of. And I fear that in the omnibus bill we're going to see a lot of those kinds of things.

Now, we don't know yet what's going to be in the omnibus bill, but in addition to a tremendous number of earmarks, we are probably going to see sanctions against Cuba weakened. We are probably going to see the Mexico City policy overturned. The House and Senate versions of the State Department appropriations bill permits grants and subsidies for organizations that perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning, overturning the Bush administration's Mexico City policy. We don't need to be doing that. The American people do not want us to take their hard-earned money to fund abortions.

It is probably going to provide federally funded benefits for domestic partners. Before being stripped from the House-passed Financial Services general government appropriations bill, a provision would have allowed unmarried cohabiting couples in the District of Columbia to qualify for Federal benefits on the same basis as legally married couples. That provision could be brought back to life in the majority's omnibus legislation.

Ending an IRS private debt collection program, the majority spending bill could limit funding to implement the Internal Revenue Service's use of private collection firms to collect unpaid taxes. The private debt collection initiative is expected to collect $1.3 billion in taxes owed to the government that would otherwise go uncollected.

Undermining regulatory reform, a provision in the House-passed Financial Services general government appropriations bill, again, H.R. 2829, would kill efforts to increase the quality, accountability, and transparency of the Federal Government's regulatory review process. It would result in a fox guarding the hen house approach to approving Federal rules and regulations.

We don't need an omnibus bill. We need to vote on these bills one at a time, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LARSON of Connecticut addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BLOOD LEVELS OF MERCURY ARE RELATED TO DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, it's late at night here in the Capitol, and most of my colleagues are in their offices or have gone home. But I want to talk about an issue that's very, very important that we've been talking about now for the last 8 years.

I was chairman of the Government Reform Committee for 6 years, and during that time, my grandson became autistic; and we checked to find out what was the cause, trying to find out, because my daughter and her husband were just extremely upset about it, as we were as grandparents. And we found that he had received nine shots in one day, seven of which had a product called themarasol, a preservative, in it. And the themarasol was 50 percent ethylmercury. And so I decided to have hearings to try to find out if the ethylmercury in those vaccines had anything to do with the autistic problem my grandson had. And we found, by having many, many hearings over a 4-year period, we found that scientists from all over the world and leading doctors and educators here that work with autistic children, that the mercury in the vaccines did contribute to the autistic epidemic that we had.

We used to have one in 10,000 children that were diagnosed as being autistic. One in 10,000. Today the Centers for Disease Control will tell you it's one out of 150. It's an absolute epidemic in this country. And we have been fighting and fighting and fighting to make sure that those families who have been damaged and those children who have been damaged by autism get some kind of compensation. And that's why, and I think in 1986 we passed what was called the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund, and it took some of the money from the pharmaceutical companies when they sold their vaccine products to put into this fund to take care of people who are damaged by vaccines. And one of the reasons we did that was because of the issue of autism, although at that time I didn't know much about it.

In any event, the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund has about $3 billion in it, and the people who's children have been adversely affected by mercury and have autism have not been able to get anything out of that. They have to go through a process and see a special master, and he has to judge whether or not the information that he has and the information they have lead them to believe that the mercury in the vaccines caused autism. And so far the special masters have not been able to ascertain, according to them, that the mercury in the vaccines does cause autism.

Well, last week, 2 years ago, let's see, 4 years ago there was a report, 2004, that said that there was definitely no connection between the mercury and the vaccinations and the children getting autism. Well, this past November, just last month, two doctors, Dr. Catherine DeSoto and Dr. Robert T. Hitlan, both very renowned doctors across this country, they have Ph.D.s in medicine, they wrote an article in the Journal of Child Neurology. And you can't discount this. What they're saying is fact. I want to read to you the summary of what they said. They said: ''The question of what is leading to the apparent increase in autism is of great importance. Like the link between aspirin and heart attack, even a small effect can have a major health implication. If there is any link between autism and mercury, it is absolutely crucial that the first reports of the question are not falsely stated and that no link occurs.''

Now, get this: ''We have reanalyzed the data set forth originally reported in 2004 and have found that the original P value was in error and that a significant relation does exist between the blood levels of mercury and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. Moreover, the hair sample analysis results offer some support for the idea that persons with autism may be less efficient and more variable at eliminating mercury from the blood.''

The fact of the matter is the mercury in the vaccines has autism. It's not the only cause of autism. But now we have scientific evidence by two leading doctors in the Journal of Child Neurology that says without doubt, the mercury in the vaccines does cause autism, is a major contributing factor.

Well, I've written, contacted Congressman KUCINICH, who's chairman of the subcommittee that deals with this in the Capitol, and I've also contacted the special masters that decide these cases and have urged them to re-evaluate all of these cases where people who have autistic children have found that the mercury in the vaccines may have been a major cause.

Now we know that it is a cause of autism, and those people who have suffered, and those kids who have suffered need to be compensated out of the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund.

So I'd like to say to my colleagues, I hope you will join me in making sure that the information I just read gets out to everybody. These kids are going to live to be 50, 60, 70 years old, and unless there's some help for them, they're going to be a real burden on the taxpayers and on society. We have an obligation to make sure they're taken care of.

I hope all of my colleagues will read this statement tonight and help us to change the attitude of our health agencies and the special masters dealing with this problem.

In November 2007, the well-respected scientific journal, the Journal of Child Neurology, published an article authored by Drs. M. Catherine DeSoto and Robert T. Hiltlan (PhDs), detailing their findings on the relationship between mercury and autism spectrum disorders. The article was entitled "Blood Levels of Mercury are Related to Diagnosis of Autism: A Reanalysis of an Important Data Set."

To summarize the article, Drs. DeSoto and Hiltlan reanalyzed a data set the subject of a 2004 study that found no relationship between mercury and autism. By reexamining the data set, Drs. DeSoto and Hiltlan determined that the conclusions of the 2004 study were wrong,

and that a relation does exist between the blood levels of mercury and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder.

As Drs. DeSoto and Hiltlan noted in their article, there has been a marked increase in the diagnosis of autism in this country over the last 20 years. In fact we have gone from an autism rate of 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 150. So, answering the question of what is (and is not) a possible contributing cause of autism is crucial, not only to the millions of American families currently affected by autism but to future generations.

We simply cannot dismiss or downplay scientific research, which has the potential to unlock the mysteries surrounding what is causing our Nation's autism crisis. We owe it to the thousands of families living with autism to follow the science wherever it may lead.

That's why in late November, I wrote to the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Domestic Policy, Representative DENNIS KUCINICH; and the Special Masters assigned to the Congressionally-created Office of Vaccine Program within the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, alerting them to the findings in Drs. DeSoto and Hiltlan's latest research.

Specifically, I asked the Special Masters to take Drs. DeSoto and Hiltlan's latest findings into consideration as they carry out their mandate of managing and adjudicating childhood vaccine claims. I asked Chairman KUCINICH to hold a hearing on the environmental risks of mercury in childhood vaccines before the 110th Congress ends.

Given the high stakes involved, scientific reports discussing a connection between blood mercury levels and autism deserve serious consideration and review by the medical and scientific community.

During my tenure as Chairman of the House Committee on Government and Reform, I spent 6 years researching and hearing testimony from the autism advocacy and scientific communities about the autism epidemic sweeping our country. Over and over again, questions of causation, namely the use of thimerosal—the mercury-based vaccine preservative—in childhood vaccines were raised.

Here's what I learned:

A number of credible national and international scientists testified before the Committee that mercury in vaccines is a contributing factor in developing neurological disorders, including, but not limited to, modest declines in intelligent quotient, autism, and Alzheimer's disease. And the body of evidence to support that conclusion gets larger everyday.

Experience tells us that, as with any other epidemic, while there may be underlying genetic susceptibilities, there usually is also some type of environmental trigger as well—be it exposure to a virus, fungus, heavy metal, or pollutant. There has never, to the best of my knowledge, been a purely genetic epidemic.

Genetics alone cannot explain how we went from 1 in 10,000 children with autism spectrum disorders 20 years ago to 1 in 150 today. The increase happened far too quickly for a genetic shift.

As mercury is a known bio-accumulative neurotoxin, it is biologically plausible that it is a contributing factor to our Nation's autism epidemic.

Autism has no cure, and while it is a life-changing condition, it is not a life-threatening disease. This means that the autistic children of today will be the autistic adults and autistic seniors, 20, 30, 50, even 70 years from now. Our Nation is ill prepared to deal with the complex educational, financial, housing, and health care challenges posed by a generation of autistic individuals.

My only grandson is autistic, so this is an issue that is very close to my heart; and for the last several years I have fought hard to raise awareness of this disease, and increase research into the causes of autism, as well as new treatments for those suffering with autism.

As a Nation, I believe, we have a collective responsibility to do everything we can to not only stop the further spread of this disease but to help the millions of children, adults and families afflicted with it.

JOURNAL OF CHILD NEUROLOGY

BLOOD LEVELS OF MERCURY ARE RELATED TO DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM: A REANALYSIS OF AN IMPORTANT DATA SET

(By M. Catherine DeSoto, PhD, and Robert T. Hitlan, PhD)

The question of what is leading to the apparent increase in autism is of great importance. Like the link between aspirin and heart attack, even a small effect can have major health implications. If there is any link between autism and mercury, it is absolutely crucial that the first reports of the question are not falsely stating that no link occurs. We have reanalyzed the data set originally reported by Ip et al. in 2004 and have found that the original *p* value was in error and that a significant relation dose exist between the blood levels of mercury and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. Moreover, the hair sample analysis results offer some support for the idea that persons with autism may be less efficient and more variable at eliminating mercury from the blood.

Keywords: autism; mercury; environmental health; neurotoxin; neurodevelopment; blood.

There is a marked increase in the diagnosis of autism. The question of what is (and is not) related to this increase is crucial to millions of persons affected by the disorder. This article reanalyzes an original data set regarding the relation between blood levels of mercury and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by Ip et al. based on our finding of discrepancies in the original article.[1]

A review of what is known about the neurotoxic effects of mercury is beyond the scope of this paper,[2] but the observable symptoms of acute mercury poisoning have been reported to match up with many of the problems observed in autism.[4] Furthermore, mercury poisoning has sometimes been presumptively diagnosed as autism of unknown etiology until the mercury poisoning has been uncovered.[4] Because there has been a several-fold increase in environmental mercury exposure, the hypothesis that the rise in autism could be related to an environmental increase in mercury levels is a reasonable one to pursue. Autism may result from a combination of genetic susceptibility (perhaps in the form of reduced ability to remove mercury or other neurotoxins from the system) and environmental exposure at key times in development.[5,7] This would mean a generalized increase in mercury levels would be expected to co-occur with a generalized increase in autism. but some people exposed to relatively high mercury would not be affected if, for example, their bodies were very efficient eliminators of such toxins. Only if an exposed infant or fetus also had a genetic susceptibility that makes one less able to remove mercury (or other heavy metals) would normal levels of mercury exposure lead to problems. Alternatively, it could be that genes that help detoxify get switched on and start to express themselves a little later than normal in those genetically predisposed to autism; or perhaps. autism results from some combination of these theories.

Nevertheless, if mercury does play any causal role in facilitating a diagnosis of autism, there would likely be at least some relation between high mercury measured in the blood and symptoms of autism even if ability to metabolize mediates the relationship between exposure and neural toxicity. This is because even if exposure is identical, those who remove mercury less effectively should still have higher levels in the blood. Interestingly, results of hair samples could be expected to be somewhat mixed. The level of mercury in hair may be better understood as an indication of how much mercury has been removed by the body as opposed to the level in the body.[6] If people are approximately equal in their ability to remove circulating mercury from the bloodstream, then these 2 indicators should match up closely, but if a person's ability to excrete is low, their hair samples might not be elevated even when their blood levels are high.

Fido and Al-Saad found that mercury levels in hair samples were higher in children diagnosed with autism.[8] These children were aged 4 to 7. In contrast, Kern et al. reported that mercury hair levels were not significantly different, but were lower at a marginally significant level.[9] Kern et al. used younger children, ages 1 to 6. Holmes et al. performed the most direct test of the hypothesis that autistic children may be deficient in terms of ability to remove mercury from circulation.[6] This study estimated mercury exposure of the mothers via a mercury exposure survey questionnaire. They then analyzed the first haircuts of the autistic children and a group of controls (the first haircuts would reflect mercury excretion in utero and very early life). In the autistic group, severity of autism was inversely related to hair mercury levels. This means that the more severe autistic cases actually had less excretion of mercury. Furthermore, among the normal children, hair levels of mercury were correlated to the mother's mercury exposure (as would of course be expected). But among the autistic children, there was no linear relation between the mother's mercury exposure and excretion of mercury in the hair. As the authors state, this pattern of results is easily understood if one considers ''detoxification capacity of a subset of infants,''[6] such that the bodies of those diagnosed with autism appeared to be less able to excrete and/or metabolize the mercury they were exposed to.

As the rise in autism is relatively recent, it is not surprising that research into the etiology has not kept pace. Indeed, there are few published articles that consider blood levels of children with mercury that utilize a control group; a psycInfo search using the words ''autism,'' ''mercury,'' and ''blood'' yields only one hit.[1] Given the high stakes involved, it is crucial that early reports of the connection between blood mercury levels and autism not be misstated. Even a small effect size would be of great theoretical and practical consequence.

In 2004, Ip et al. reported that no relationship existed between mercury blood levels and diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder among a group of children with an average age of approximately 7 years. While attempting to estimate the effect size based on the Ip et al. statistics, we realized that the numbers reported by Ip et at could not be correct. The means and standard deviations reported in the 2004 article yielded an easily

significant t value (autism mean = 19.53 nmol/L, SD = 5.6, n = 82; control mean = 17.68 nmol/L, SD = 2.48, n = 55 gives a t = 2.283, two-tailed P = .024 or one-tailed P = .012). Ip et al. wrote that the P value was ''(P) = .15,'' [1(p432)] and that their data indicate ''there is no causal relationship between mercury and as an environmental neurotoxin and autism.''[1] After the error was brought to the attention of the authors, a new analysis was conducted by the original authors and they found the original t test to be in error and the P value to be a mistake (refer to Erratum, p. 1324). Based on their corrected analysis, the authors report the revised P value for their t test to actually be P = .056. We disagree on several grounds that these data indicate no significant effect exists, and report on a completely new reanalysis of the original data set.

METHODS

Outliers were removed prior to statistical analysis. An outlier is defined as a score that is ''substantially greater or less than the values obtained from any other individual.''[10] Outliers have an unduly large influence on the outcome of a statistical test. What actually qualifies as an outlier differs depending on the research question and the statistician analyzing the results; however, values greater than 3 standard deviations either above or below the mean generally qualify as extreme cases.[11] Within the Ip et al. data, there were 2 such values that were not removed prior to our reanalysis. These 2 values were more than 3 standard deviations above the mean, and both of these values were far from any other score. (Other scores were within 3 points of the next individual; these 2 scores were each 15 or more points away from any other score in the distribution.) To avoid the appearance that these 2 outliers were removed to influence the statistical outcome as opposed to objective criteria for cleaning a data set, it should be noted that the biggest outlier of the 2 was an unusually high blood mercury level of 98, which was in the autistic group. To be clear—if anything, removal of the outliers resulted in a more conservative test as it actually decreased the mean difference between the 2 groups.

RESULTS

Logistic regression was performed using blood mercury level as the predictor and the autistic/control group as the criterion. Results of this reanalysis indicate that blood mercury level can be used to predict autism diagnosis. Data included: r = .20, r^2 = .04, F(1, 133) = 5.76, P = .017. This finding indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between mercury levels in the blood and diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder.

There was no difference in the mean hair levels where t(135) = .24 and one-tailed P = .40; this is essentially the same result reported in the original article. However, given that hair levels would normally be expected to be highly correlated to blood levels, it might be surprising that blood levels could predict an autism spectrum diagnosis, but that hair mercury levels could not. Indeed, hair and mercury levels for the full sample were correlated (r = .86, P < .001) indicating that about 75% of the variance in hair levels was accounted for by the mercury level in the blood. To us, the question turned to what the other 25% of the variance might be due, and whether the assumptions of the t test were violated. Although not the central focus of this report, these results could certainly help to inform future researchers of the nature of the relation between autism and mercury, and we include this information for completeness.

Exploratory Analysis. If one hypothesizes that persons with autism are less able to excrete mercury, especially when their blood levels get in the higher range, one might expect that the correlation between blood and hair levels would break down at the higher blood levels among the autism spectrum group (a type of heteroscedasticity).[5] Another way of looking at it, the relationship between blood level and hair excretion may be different for persons with autism than those without autism. Levine's test of equality of variance indicated the variance in hair mercury was not evenly distributed between the autism and control groups (F = 5.98, P = .017). We calculated the correlation for persons whose circulating levels of mercury were in the top quartile separately for the autism and control groups. The correlation between blood and hair levels of mercury was r = .91 for the control group (accounting for 84% of the variance). For the autistic group, the correlation was r = .73, meaning only about 55% of the variance in the hair mercury levels was attributable to the blood mercury level differences.

To check the hypothesis that hair excretion was overall lower than would otherwise be predicted based on a certain blood level in the autistic group, a best fit regression line was calculated (y = 10.3, x = −2.48) indicting that for each unit increase in hair level, blood level increased by 10.3 units. Attest on the residuals showed that autistic participants were significantly more likely to have lower hair mercury levels than would be predicted as a function of their blood levels, t(133) = −2.92, P < .005; see Figure 1). It should also be noted that the presence of unequal variances or nonrandom residuals (in this case, autistic persons are both more likely to have greater variability at high levels of circulating mercury and a lower hair value for a given blood level) are both violations of important assumptions of the t test; a t test of hair mercury is therefore probably not a valid means to predict autism diagnosis as a function of mercury exposure. We performed an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with autism diagnosis as the independent variable and hair mercury level as the dependent predictor using blood levels as a covariate. Results indicate that hair level may be related to diagnosis of autism, not as a predictor in terms of absolute value, but such that for equivalent circulating levels of mercury in the body, those with ASD excreted less than normal such that F(1,134) = 3.9 and P = .05. To sum, the relationship between blood levels of mercury and mercury excreted in the hair is reduced for those with autism compared with nonautistic persons; furthermore, the difference between autistic and nonautistic persons is most pronounced at high levels of mercury.

DISCUSSION

In statistics, obtaining a probability value of P < .05 indicates that the obtained test statistic (based on one's sample) is extremely unlikely (less then 5% chance) to have been obtained by chance alone. By convention, this value is usually set at .05 (as a balance of type 1 and type 2 errors); however, this value is, in fact, arbitrary and statistical probability tables for hypothesis testing always include a range of probability values—not only probability at the .05 level. Given that this is the first direct test of this hypothesis and considering the potential importance of finding a relation between mercury blood levels and autism, it is just as important to avoid a false negative as a false positive. As the original authors have now currently calculated, the obtained difference suggests that there is probably a real difference (specifically that the chance that a real effect exists is about 94%, or, conversely, that the chance null effect is true is less than 6%, which misses the conventional .05—or 5%—mark of statistical significance). Given the close value to conventional significance, most researchers would not call this a firm rejection of the hypothesis, but might say it was marginally significant. Most researchers facing a P value of .056 would not want to categorically state that results ''indicate that there is no casual relation between mercury level . . . and autism.''[1] It concerns us that the original authors would want to let this conclusion stand in light of the new P value (which differs markedly from the .15 previously reported in 2004).

Another issue to consider is the question of a one-tailed or a two-tailed hypothesis test. Usually, researchers use a two-tailed test, which tests if there is a ''difference'' between 2 groups. However, when the literature leads a researcher to propose a specific direction of the difference, a one-tailed test is called for, ''Often a researcher begins an experiment with a specific prediction about the treatment effect. For example, a special training program is expected to increase student performance, or alcohol consumption is expected to slow reaction times . . . The result is a directional test, or what is commonly called a one-tailed test.''[10]

Whether to use a one-tailed test or a two-tailed test can be decided based on considering what would happen if the results ended up in the opposite direction of what one suspects. In this case, it would mean that the blood mercury levels were lower in the autistic group. Would this support the original hypothesis? (No!) However, if this were to happen, that is, if the autistic group were significantly lower in their blood mercury levels than the normal group, the researchers would find themselves in the incongruous position of having to accept their hypothesis that autism is related to elevated levels of mercury in the blood! The key point here is that their hypothesis was directional, and a one-tailed test should have been used. In this case, the just missed significance of their new analysis using a two-tailed t-test (P = .056) would have reached a conventional level of statistical significance (with P <.03).

Although the statistics can be tedious, the bottom line is that only by an apparent error in the original data analysis was the original lack of effect found. The authors' revised calculation (t test) still has problems (two-tailed test for a directional hypothesis, not removing clear outliers). And finally, the willingness to characterize a t test with a .056 level of statistical significance as no effect is questionable, especially in this particular case.

Of utmost importance (which outweighs the discomfort of writing about an error made by colleagues whom we know are generally competent researchers) is that potential researchers who are trying to understand what is and is not behind the rise in autism are not misled by even the slightest misinformation. It is imperative that researchers, medical professionals, and the public at large have the full set of information. To put it in perspective, the connection between taking aspirin and prevention of heart attack has an effect size equal to .038 which represents an effect size approximately equal to what we find between circulating levels and ASD diagnosis in this age group.[12] Just as important is the fact that for those physicians in the aspirin group who did have a heart attack, the heart attack was less likely to be fatal. The effect size for this latter effect was .08 and did not represent a significant difference from the placebo group by traditional dichotomous significance testing.[13] Yet, this does not mean no effect exists or that the effect is not of practical importance. We would encourage all researchers to not only report whether a

test of mercury and autism reaches significance with the sample size used, but to report the exact statistic and also effect sizes to help future researchers resolve all the factors involved in the etiology of autism.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. PELOSI addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PUBLICATION OF THE RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE, 110TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, in accordance with clause 2(a) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I respectfully submit the rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The Committee on Energy and Commerce adopted these rules by a voice vote, a quorum being present, at our organizational meeting on January 10, 2007.

RULES FOR THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 110TH CONGRESS

(Adopted January 10, 2007)

RULE 1.—GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Rules of the Committee.—The Rules of the House are the rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce (hereinafter the ''Committee'') and its subcommittees so far as is applicable, except that a motion to recess from day to day, and a motion to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution, if printed copies are available, is nondebatable and privileged in the Committee and its subcommittees.

(b) Rules of the Subcommittees.—Each subcommittee of the Committee is part of the Committee and is subject to the authority and direction of the Committee and to its rules so far as applicable. Written rules adopted by the Committee, not inconsistent with the Rules of the House, shall be binding on each subcommittee of the Committee.

RULE 2.—TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS

(a) Regular Meeting Days.—The Committee shall meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m., for the consideration of bills, resolutions, and other business, if the House is in session on that day. If the House is not in session on that day and the Committee has not met during such month, the Committee shall meet at the earliest practicable opportunity when the House is again in session. The chairman of the Committee may, at his discretion, cancel, delay, or defer any meeting required under this section, after consultation with the ranking minority member.

(b) Additional Meetings.—The chairman may call and convene, as he considers necessary, additional meetings of the Committee for the consideration of any bill or resolution pending before the Committee or for the conduct of other Committee business. The Committee shall meet for such purposes pursuant to that call of the chairman.

(c) Vice Chairmen; Presiding Member.—The chairman shall designate a member of the majority party to serve as vice chairman of the Committee, and shall designate a majority member of each subcommittee to serve as vice chairman of each subcommittee. The vice chairman of the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be, shall preside at any meeting or hearing during the temporary absence of the chairman. If the chairman and vice chairman of the Committee or subcommittee are not present at any meeting or hearing, the ranking member of the majority party who is present shall preside at the meeting or hearing.

(d) Open Meetings and Hearings.—Except as provided by the Rules of the House, each meeting of the Committee or any of its subcommittees for the transaction of business, including the markup of legislation, and each hearing, shall be open to the public including to radio, television and still photography coverage, consistent with the provisions of rule XI of the Rules of the House.

RULE 3.—AGENDA

The agenda for each Committee or subcommittee meeting (other than a hearing), setting out the date, time, place, and all items of business to be considered, shall be provided to each member of the Committee at least 36 hours in advance of such meeting.

RULE 4.—PROCEDURE

(a)(1) Hearings.—The date, time, place, and subject matter of any hearing of the Committee or any of its subcommittees shall be announced at least one week in advance of the commencement of such hearing, unless the Committee or subcommittee determines in accordance with clause 2(g)(3) of rule XI of the Rules of the House that there is good cause to begin the hearing sooner.

(2)(A) Meetings.—The date, time, place, and subject matter of any meeting (other than a hearing) scheduled on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday when the House will be in session, shall be announced at least 36 hours (exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays except when the House is in session on such days) in advance of the commencement of such meeting.

(3) Motions.—Pursuant to clause 1(a)(2) of rule XI of the Rules of the House, privileged motions to recess from day to day, or recess subject to the call of the Chair (within 24 hours), and to dispense with the first reading (in full) of a bill or resolution if printed copies are available shall be decided without debate.

(B) Other Meetings.—The date, time, place, and subject matter of a meeting (other than a hearing or a meeting to which subparagraph (A) applies) shall be announced at least 72 hours in advance of the commencement of such meeting.

(b)(1) Requirements for Testimony.—Each witness who is to appear before the Committee or a subcommittee shall file with the clerk of the Committee, at least two working days in advance of his or her appearance, sufficient copies, as determined by the chairman of the Committee or a subcommittee, of a written statement of his or her proposed testimony to provide to members and staff of the Committee or subcommittee, the news media, and the general public. Each witness shall, to the greatest extent practicable, also provide a copy of such written testimony in an electronic format prescribed by the chairman. Each witness shall limit his or her oral presentation to a brief summary of the argument. The chairman of the Committee or of a subcommittee, or the presiding member, may waive the requirements of this paragraph or any part thereof.

(2) Additional Requirements for Testimony.—To the greatest extent practicable, the written testimony of each witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of any federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two preceding fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness.

(c)(1) Questioning Witnesses.—The right to interrogate the witnesses before the Committee or any of its subcommittees shall alternate between majority and minority members. Each member shall be limited to 5 minutes in the interrogation of witnesses until such time as each member who so desires has had an opportunity to question witnesses. No member shall be recognized for a second period of 5 minutes to interrogate a witness until each member of the Committee present has been recognized once for that purpose. While the Committee or subcommittee is operating under the 5-minute rule for the interrogation of witnesses, the chairman shall recognize in order of appearance members who were not present when the meeting was called to order after all members who were present when the meeting was called to order have been recognized in the order of seniority on the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be.

(2) Questions for the Record.—Each member may submit to the Chairman of the Committee or the subcommittee additional questions for the record, to be answered by the witnesses who have appeared. Each member shall provide a copy of the questions in an electronic format to the clerk of the Committee no later than ten business days following a hearing. The Chairman shall transmit all questions received from members of

the Committee or the subcommittee to the appropriate witness, and include the transmittal letter and the responses from the witnesses in the hearing record.

(d) Explanation of Subcommittee Action.—No bill, recommendation, or other matter reported by a subcommittee shall be considered by the full Committee unless the text of the matter reported, together with an explanation, has been available to members of the Committee for at least 36 hours. Such explanation shall include a summary of the major provisions of the legislation, an explanation of the relationship of the matter to present law, and a summary of the need for the legislation. All subcommittee actions shall be reported promptly by the clerk of the Committee to all members of the Committee.

(e) Opening Statements.—(1) All written opening statements at hearings conducted by the committee or any of its subcommittees shall be made part of the permanent hearing record.

(2) Statements shall be limited to 5 minutes each for the chairman and ranking minority member (or their respective designee) of the Committee or subcommittee, as applicable, and 3 minutes each for all other members. With the consent of the Committee, prior to the recognition of the first witness for testimony, any Member, when recognized for an opening statement, may completely defer his or her opening statement and instead use those three minutes during the initial round of questioning.

(3) At any hearing of the full Committee, the chairman may limit opening statements for Members (including, at the discretion of the Chairman, the chairman and ranking minority member) to one minute. At any hearing conducted by any subcommittee, the chairman of that subcommittee, with the consent of its ranking minority member, may reduce the time for statements by members or defer statements until the conclusion of testimony.

RULE 5.—WAIVER OF AGENDA, NOTICE, AND LAYOVER REQUIREMENTS

Requirements of rules 3, 4(a)(2), and 4(d) may be waived by a majority of those present and voting (a majority being present) of the Committee or subcommittee, as the case may be.

RULE 6.—QUORUM

Testimony may be taken and evidence received at any hearing at which there are present not fewer than two members of the Committee or subcommittee in question. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of reporting any measure or matter, of authorizing a subpoena, or of closing a meeting or hearing pursuant to clause 2(g) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House (except as provided in clause 2(g)(2)(A) and (B)). For the purposes of taking any action other than those specified in the preceding sentence, one-third of the members of the Committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum.

RULE 7.—OFFICIAL COMMITTEE RECORDS

(a)(1) Journal.—The proceedings of the Committee shall be recorded in a journal which shall, among other things, show those present at each meeting, and include a record of the vote on any question on which a record vote is demanded and a description of the amendment, motion, order, or other proposition voted. A copy of the journal shall be furnished to the ranking minority member.

(2) Record Votes.—A record vote may be demanded by one-fifth of the members present or, in the apparent absence of a quorum, by any one member. No demand for a record vote shall be made or obtained except for the purpose of procuring a record vote or in the apparent absence of a quorum. The result of each record vote in any meeting of the Committee shall be made available in the Committee office for inspection by the public, as provided in Rule XI, clause 2(e) of the Rules of the House.

(b) Archived Records.—The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with Rule VII of the Rules of the House. The chairman shall notify the ranking minority member of any decision, pursuant to clause 3(b)(3) or clause 4(b) of the Rule, to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination on the written request of any member of the Committee. The chairman shall consult with the ranking minority member on any communication from the Archivist of the United States or the Clerk of the House concerning the disposition of noncurrent records pursuant to clause 3(b) of the Rule.

RULE 8.—SUBCOMMITTEES

There shall be such standing subcommittees with such jurisdiction and size as determined by the majority party caucus of the Committee. The jurisdiction, number, and size of the subcommittees shall be determined by the majority party caucus prior to the start of the process for establishing subcommittee chairmanships and assignments.

RULE 9.—POWERS AND DUTIES OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive testimony, mark up legislation, and report to the Committee on all matters referred to it. Subcommittee chairmen shall set hearing and meeting dates only with the approval of the chairman of the Committee with a view toward assuring the availability of meeting rooms and avoiding simultaneous scheduling of Committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings whenever possible.

RULE 10.—REFERENCE OF LEGISLATION AND OTHER MATTERS

All legislation and other matters referred to the Committee shall be referred to the subcommittee of appropriate jurisdiction within two weeks of the date of receipt by the Committee unless action is taken by the full committee within those two weeks, or by majority vote of the members of the Committee, consideration is to be by the full Committee. In the case of legislation or other matter within the jurisdiction of more than one subcommittee, the chairman of the Committee may, in his discretion, refer the matter simultaneously to two or more subcommittees for concurrent consideration, or may designate a subcommittee of primary jurisdiction and also refer the matter to one or more additional subcommittees for consideration in sequence (subject to appropriate time limitations), either on its initial referral or after the matter has been reported by the subcommittee of primary jurisdiction. Such authority shall include the authority to refer such legislation or matter to an ad hoc subcommittee appointed by the chairman, with the approval of the Committee, from the members of the subcommittee having legislative or oversight jurisdiction.

RULE 11.—RATIO OF SUBCOMMITTEES

The majority caucus of the Committee shall determine an appropriate ratio of majority to minority party members for each subcommittee and the chairman shall negotiate that ratio with the minority party, provided that the ratio of party members on each subcommittee shall be no less favorable to the majority than that of the full Committee, nor shall such ratio provide for a majority of less than two majority members.

RULE 12.—SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

(a) Selection of Subcommittee Members.—Prior to any organizational meeting held by the Committee, the majority and minority caucuses shall select their respective members of the standing subcommittees.

(b) Ex Officio Members.—The chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee shall be ex officio members with voting privileges of each subcommittee of which they are not assigned as members and may be counted for purposes of establishing a quorum in such subcommittees.

RULE 13.—MANAGING LEGISLATION ON THE HOUSE FLOOR

The chairman, in his discretion, shall designate which member shall manage legislation reported by the Committee to the House.

RULE 14.—COMMITTEE PROFESSIONAL AND CLERICAL STAFF APPOINTMENTS

(a) Delegation of Staff.—Whenever the chairman of the Committee determines that any professional staff member appointed pursuant to the provisions of clause 9 of Rule X of the House of Representatives, who is assigned to such chairman and not to the ranking minority member, by reason of such professional staff member's expertise or qualifications will be of assistance to one or more subcommittees in carrying out their assigned responsibilities, he may delegate such member to such subcommittees for such purpose. A delegation of a member of the professional staff pursuant to this subsection shall be made after consultation with subcommittee chairmen and with the approval of the subcommittee chairman or chairmen involved.

(b) Minority Professional Staff.—Professional staff members appointed pursuant to clause 9 of Rule X of the House of Representatives, who are assigned to the ranking minority member of the Committee and not to the chairman of the Committee, shall be assigned to such Committee business as the minority party members of the Committee consider advisable.

(c) Additional Staff Appointments.—In addition to the professional staff appointed pursuant to clause 9 of Rule X of the House of Representatives, the chairman of the Committee shall be entitled to make such appointments to the professional and clerical staff of the Committee as may be provided within the budget approved for such purposes by the Committee. Such appointee shall be assigned to such business of the full Committee as the chairman of the Committee considers advisable.

(d) Sufficient Staff.—The chairman shall ensure that sufficient staff is made available to each subcommittee to carry out its responsibilities under the rules of the Committee.

(e) Fair Treatment of Minority Members in Appointment of Committee Staff.—The chairman shall ensure that the minority members of the Committee are treated fairly in appointment of Committee staff.

(f) Contracts for Temporary or Intermittent Services.—Any contract for the temporary services or intermittent service of individual consultants or organizations to make studies or advise the Committee or its subcommittees with respect to any matter within their jurisdiction shall be deemed to have been approved by a majority of the members of the Committee if approved by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee. Such approval shall not be deemed to have been given if at least one-third of the members of the Committee request in writing that the Committee formally act on such a contract, if the request is made within 10 days after the latest date

on which such chairman or chairmen, and such ranking minority member or members, approve such contract.

RULE 15.—SUPERVISION, DUTIES OF STAFF

(a) Supervision of Majority Staff.—The professional and clerical staff of the Committee not assigned to the minority shall be under the supervision and direction of the chairman who, in consultation with the chairmen of the subcommittees, shall establish and assign the duties and responsibilities of such staff members and delegate such authority as he determines appropriate.

(b) Supervision of Minority Staff.—The professional and clerical staff assigned to the minority shall be under the supervision and direction of the minority members of the Committee, who may delegate such authority as they determine appropriate.

RULE 16.—COMMITTEE BUDGET

(a) Preparation of Committee Budget.—The chairman of the Committee, after consultation with the ranking minority member of the Committee and the chairmen of the subcommittees, shall for the 110th Congress prepare a preliminary budget for the Committee, with such budget including necessary amounts for professional and clerical staff, travel, investigations, equipment and miscellaneous expenses of the Committee and the subcommittees, and which shall be adequate to fully discharge the Committee's responsibilities for legislation and oversight. Such budget shall be presented by the chairman to the majority party caucus of the Committee and thereafter to the full Committee for its approval.

(b) Approval of the Committee Budget.—The chairman shall take whatever action is necessary to have the budget as finally approved by the Committee duly authorized by the House. No proposed Committee budget may be submitted to the Committee on House Administration unless it has been presented to and approved by the majority party caucus and thereafter by the full Committee. The chairman of the Committee may authorize all necessary expenses in accordance with these rules and within the limits of the Committee's budget as approved by the House.

(c) Monthly Expenditures Report.—Committee members shall be furnished a copy of each monthly report, prepared by the chairman for the Committee on House Administration, which shows expenditures made during the reporting period and cumulative for the year by the Committee and subcommittees, anticipated expenditures for the projected Committee program, and detailed information on travel.

RULE 17.—BROADCASTING OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Any meeting or hearing that is open to the public may be covered in whole or in part by radio or television or still photography, subject to the requirements of clause 4 of Rule XI of the Rules of the House. The coverage of any hearing or other proceeding of the Committee or any subcommittee thereof by television, radio, or still photography shall be under the direct supervision of the chairman of the Committee, the subcommittee chairman, or other member of the Committee presiding at such hearing or other proceeding and may be terminated by such member in accordance with the Rules of the House.

RULE 18.—COMPTROLLER GENERAL AUDITS

The chairman of the Committee is authorized to request verification examinations by the Comptroller General of the United States pursuant to Title V, Part A of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (Public Law 94–163), after consultation with the members of the Committee.

RULE 19.—SUBPOENAS

The Committee, or any subcommittee, may authorize and issue a subpoena under clause 2(m)(2)(A) of Rule XI of the House, if authorized by a majority of the members of the Committee or subcommittee (as the case may be) voting, a quorum being present. Authorized subpoenas may be issued over the signature of the chairman of the Committee or any member designated by the Committee, and may be served by any person designated by such chairman or member. The chairman of the Committee may authorize and issue subpoenas under such clause during any period for which the House has adjourned for a period in excess of 3 days when, in the opinion of the chairman, authorization and issuance of the subpoena is necessary to obtain the material set forth in the subpoena. The chairman shall report to the members of the Committee on the authorization and issuance of a subpoena during the recess period as soon as practicable but in no event later than one week after service of such subpoena.

RULE 20.—TRAVEL OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

(a) Approval of Travel.—Consistent with the primary expense resolution and such additional expense resolutions as may have been approved, travel to be reimbursed from funds set aside for the Committee for any member or any staff member shall be paid only upon the prior authorization of the chairman. Travel may be authorized by the chairman for any member and any staff member in connection with the attendance of hearings conducted by the Committee or any subcommittee thereof and meetings, conferences, and investigations which involve activities or subject matter under the general jurisdiction of the Committee. Before such authorization is given there shall be submitted to the chairman in writing the following: (1) the purpose of the travel; (2) the dates during which the travel is to be made and the date or dates of the event for which the travel is being made; (3) the location of the event for which the travel is to be made; and (4) the names of members and staff seeking authorization.

(b) Approval of Travel by Minority Members and Staff.—In the case of travel by minority party members and minority party professional staff for the purpose set out in (a), the prior approval, not only of the chairman but also of the ranking minority member, shall be required. Such prior authorization shall be given by the chairman only upon the representation by the ranking minority member in writing setting forth those items enumerated in (1), (2), (3), and (4) of paragraph (a).

BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, this evening, as most Tuesday evenings, I'm joined by members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition as we come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives to talk about the debt and the deficit and what that means for the future of this country and how so many of today's priorities continue to go unmet because of this.

Today's national debt is $9,169,206,830,867 and some change. For every man, woman and child in America, their share of the national debt, $30,205.

As you walk the halls of Congress, Madam Speaker, as you walk the halls of the Cannon, Longworth and Rayburn House Office Buildings, you will easily know when you're walking by the door of a fellow Blue Dog member because you will see this poster that reminds us of the national debt, as well as your share.

This evening we want to talk about PAYGO. It's an acronym for pay-as-you-go, and basically there was a lot made to do about the first 100 legislative hours in this new Democratic majority. Well, the 47 of us in the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition were proud of what we were able to accomplish in this first legislative hour under this new Democratic majority, and that was reinstating the PAYGO rules, which means pay-as-you-go. If you have got a new program you want to fund, you've got to show us how you're going to pay for it. If you want to cut a tax, you've got to show us how you're going to pay for it.

The business of borrowing money from China to fund programs and tax cuts in this country are over, and we want to thank the new Democratic leadership for their commitment, their commitment not to bring a bill to this floor that's not paid for.

At this time to talk more about this issue and a lot of talk about AMT, the alternative minimum tax is going to touch a lot more people this year. We want to protect those people. We want to make sure they're not taxed, but we also want to make sure that that bill that comes to this floor is paid for. It doesn't make sense to protect people from taxes if we're simply borrowing the money from China and then asking our children and grandchildren to foot the bill.

That's why I was very disappointed last week when the Senate voted 88–5 to fix the AMT. They took the easy way out. It wasn't paid for. The Senate's plan borrows $50 billion just for this year, $50 billion from China to pay for a fix to the alternative minimum tax. We have a plan in the House not only to fix it but to pay for it, and we voted for that a couple of weeks ago on the House floor and we're going to vote on it again this week.

And to talk more about this and what it all means for this country and for future generations is one of the founders of the Blue Dog Coalition, my friend, JOHN TANNER from Tennessee.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, thank you very much, and I will be brief because we have a lot of Blue Dogs here tonight that are going to speak to this issue, and they will elaborate on what I have to say.

The PAYGO rule, as we have here now as Mr. ROSS pointed out, is basically what all of us do in our private lives. We live within our means. We pay our bills, and we hope we have some left to invest in the future. This

government has done none of that. And some people around here have argued about the AMT situation that you alluded to, that we don't have to pay for that because it wasn't intended to affect these people; therefore, it doesn't exist. If I said that in Tennessee, they would say that fellow's been in Washington too long. Only in Washington would somebody even dare make a statement as ludicrous as that is.

We've also heard people here in this town say deficits don't matter. Well, if deficits don't matter, why don't we abolish the tax code and just borrow what we need? Of course deficits matter; they matter to all of us.

Some people around here think the laws of arithmetic stop at the steps of the Capitol and the front door of the White House. Well, they don't, and this is why.

As we are plunging this country into debt that's been done on a massive scale in the last 6 years, that no political leadership in the history of this country has gone there, we are transferring more and more of our assets to foreign-held powers. We transferred over $700 billion in the form of interest payments overseas just in the last 72 months.

They talk about, well, we don't have to pay for this because we didn't intend it. Somebody's going to pay for it. There's no free lunch. People have been looking for a free lunch since the dawn of civilization. It does not exist, and I would contend that if we are going to keep our moral authority to govern as stewards of this country, then the time and place where we are now, elected to public office, if we do not reverse this and start paying our bills, we will undermine, I believe, that and we'll also undermine this country.

I think this is a defining moment for us, and we're going to fight. Davy Crockett was from my district. We're going to make this an Alamo-type situation around this issue because this is a critical tool of this Congress and the American people in order to act financially and responsibly.

I can't thank the Blue Dogs enough for their devotion to this idea of we're going to leave this place better than when we found it, and that's what this is all about.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee, a founder of the Blue Dog Coalition, JOHN TANNER, for joining us this evening for this Special Order.

Madam Speaker, there's 47 of us in the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. The Blue Dog Coalition is just another name for fiscally conservative Democrats, and one of our newest members who has joined us for the 110th session of Congress, and we're just delighted to have her, is our friend KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND from New York's 20th district.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman ROSS.

For the sake of our children's future, I'm strongly urging the Senate to ensure that the AMT patch that we're going to be considering this week complies with the PAYGO rules. The House has already passed a responsible AMT bill, which will prevent 23 million taxpayers from being hit by the AMT, while also finding appropriate offsets so that the national debt will not be increased.

I have introduced a resolution, H.J. Res. 45, which is a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. If my constituents in upstate New York have to balance their checkbook every month, so should the Federal Government.

The AMT affected 4.2 million Americans last year. If Congress does not act, it will affect 23 million Americans this year, most of them middle-class families.

In my district, 66,000 families will be affected if this bill is not passed. Almost half of the 23 million taxpayers that will be affected are married with children. The average AMT taxpayer will owe over $6,000 in additional taxes. Small business owners are going to be one of the hardest hit by the AMT.

The reason why we have to pay for this and ensure we follow pay-as-you-go standards is because America's debt is over $9 trillion. Our Federal debt increases by $1.4 billion a day, at an astonishing rate of $1 million a minute. Our national debt is equal to over $30,000 for every man, woman and child and infant in this country.

The Federal Government spent over $400 billion last year on interest payments on the national debt. After Social Security, Medicare and defense spending, interest payments on the debt are the third largest expenditure by the Federal Government. The amount of money that we spend on interest payments will decrease the amount of money America will have in the future for spending on our national priorities such as health care, education, energy independence, our troops.

Lowering the debt is essential not only for our economic security, but it is essential for our national security. Foreign governments and investors now hold $2.2 trillion, which is 44 percent of all publicly held U.S. debt. That's up nearly 10 percent from last year. China owns the second-most amount of our debt, and oil exporting countries such as Saudi Arabia account for the fourth-most held U.S. debt.

Paying for AMT is possible. The House has already passed in a bipartisan way a PAYGO-compliant bill. For future generations, we must be responsible and not add to the national debt.

Just to give folks at home an understanding of what this money means, let me just give you a couple of translations. This year we paid $239 billion in interest on the national debt. That same amount of money, if we use it for other purposes, would literally pay for every U.S. family's refrigerator to be stocked for 7 months. It would pay for filling every U.S. family's gas tank for 10 months at today's gas prices. It would pay for providing 4 years of in-state public tuition for 10 million students, and it would pay 1 year's salary for 8 million new teachers.

The Federal Government has sent over $709 billion abroad in the form of interest payments since President Bush took office, $155 billion in 2007 alone. The same amount would fund any of the following: 12,000 new elementary schools, 7,000 new veterans clinics, and all road and bridge construction and improvements for the next 10 years.

I beseech the Senate to follow a fiscal, responsible and prudent course of action and pay for the AMT.

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York. For those just joining us, to set the stage, Madam Speaker, the Senate, we sent the Senate an AMT fix, alternative minimum tax fix, to ensure people didn't get hit with this unfair tax, and we paid for it. They sent it back to us without being paid for. Instead, they want to borrow $50 billion from China, and that's what got 47 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition worked up, and for a good reason.

I'm pleased to be joined by a fellow Blue Dog member from California's 20th Congressional District, my friend JIM COSTA.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to discuss the importance of this pay-as-you-go system that my colleague from Arkansas, Congressman ROSS, and my other colleagues have spoken on thus far.

What you're going to hear this evening across the breadth and width of Representatives from throughout the country is a common and reoccurring theme, and that is, as Blue Dogs, we believe that putting our fiscal House in order is among the highest of priorities that we are sent here back to Washington to do. And so, therefore, it is a very important discussion that we are having with you this evening, as many Americans sit at their home having dinner and wondering just really what's going on in Washington.

What's going on is really trying to draw a line in the sand. Are we about trying to establish and stay with fiscal responsibility or not?

Now, PAYGO is a tool, as was mentioned, to try to ensure that any additional expenditures of our Federal budget be paid for. That's not the only tool, but it is one of the few tools that we now have in place. Certainly as Blue Dog members, we are looking and trying to figure out how we can do other efforts to focus on budget cutting and reestablishing our priorities. But right now pay-as-you-go is the most important tool that we have available to us.

Now, let me give you a little history of how all this took place. In 1990, when the Budget Enforcement Act was passed, there was an attempt to reign in deficits that had occurred for over 30 years, Federal deficits that had been

experienced since 1970. This Act, passed by a Democratic Congress in 1990 and signed by a Republican President, President George Bush the First, sought to control the budgetary impact of legislation through the enforcement of the provisions that we now refer to as pay-as-you-go.

Now, that was law and that was enforced for 10 years, about. Then in 2001, with a new Republican majority in Congress, our current President, President George Bush the Second, abandoned the PAYGO provisions.

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And that, I think, among other factors took our projected budget surplus, then at $5.6 trillion over a 10-year period, and created the current budget deficit that we have today, which is over $2 trillion over that same time period. Yes, I think it's disappointing for all Americans that a sensible tax policy, an investment in smart growth in our country that was achieved between 1990 and 2001 on a bipartisan basis, has been squandered in the last 6 years to the large unsustainable deficit that we have today.

Now, where are we? Well, at the beginning of this year, the new Democratic majority returned to Congress a path of fiscal responsibility. As Congressman ROSS and others mentioned, PAYGO was one of the first provisions we enacted. Under these rules we have in every piece of legislation that we have acted on this year enforced the PAYGO principle. This promise we made to the American people we intend to keep true to our word. We have already made great strides in bringing our fiscal house in order; but if we want to continue that, we must include this with all legislation, which includes the alternative minimum tax. It needs to comply with PAYGO.

Currently, our national debt is over $9 trillion, with much of it being held by foreign governments. In 2007, China alone had increased the holdings of U.S. Treasury securities by nearly 500 percent in the last 6 years, from $74 billion in July, 2001, to $408 billion in July of this year. Overall, and it has been said before, this administration has borrowed more money from foreign sources throughout the world than the previous 42 Presidents combined. Let me repeat that: overall, this administration has borrowed more money from foreign sources than all the previous 42 Presidents combined.

As a proud member of the Blue Dog Caucus, I strongly believe that fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets are essential to make our economy and our country strong and prosperous. Government should not be allowed to spend more than it takes in. Common sense tells us that. Any strategy of our Nation's budget must include a strategy for reducing these record deficits so that we don't pass them on to our children. Without adequate controls, prolonged deficit spending will weaken our ability to fund worthwhile domestic spending programs and jeopardize our national security. That's at the heart of this discussion.

I further believe that it's fiscally and morally irresponsible, therefore, to place the burden of today's deficit on our children and grandchildren. And that's why PAYGO is so important, that we draw the line and make this fight this week.

The alternative minimum tax is important. We passed that relief on that over a week ago. But it's not worth borrowing from China to pay for the alternative minimum tax. We can do this in a commonsense way, and that's what the Blue Dogs are asking you to support our efforts in.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California for joining us.

And, Madam Speaker, this is a Special Order hosted by the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. And at this time, as we discuss this PAYGO and AMT issue deeper and further and put it in context, I'd like to call on a former co-Chair of the Blue Dog Coalition, BARON HILL from Indiana.

Mr. HILL. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of Blue Dogs here this evening to talk about this issue because Blue Dogs feel very passionate about PAYGO rules and our national debt. The national debt exceeds over $9 trillion. One of the largest expenditures in our Nation's budget, second or third only to military spending, is the interest that we pay on that national debt.

Now, we are at a critical time because now we are at a stage of the legislative process where the rubber meets the road. As has already been mentioned here, there is a large issue looming next year for millions of Americans, and that issue is the alternative minimum tax. The alternative minimum tax was passed many years ago with the idea that only the wealthy who didn't pay any income taxes ought not to have that advantage, and so the alternative minimum tax was put in place. Little did we know when it was passed many years ago that we would advance up to 2007, which is the present time, and we would find that next year when people have to pay their income taxes, they will learn that many middle-class Americans will have to pay this tax as well.

So not only the wealthy will have to pay the alternative minimum tax but also many millions of middle-class people will have to pay the AMT. We need to fix that. And the Blue Dogs are committed to making sure that we provide tax relief for those millions of middle-class Americans who are going to be hit with this tax next year.

But this is where the rubber meets the road, because by giving millions of middle-class Americans tax relief, it's going to cost more than $50 billion. We have got to figure out a way to pay for that because in this House, we have pay-as-you-go rules, which simply means that if we are going to cut taxes or we are going to increase spending, we have got to figure out a way to pay for it. The many Blue Dogs here this evening are here passionately to make sure that we hold our ground because a storm is brewing here, Madam Speaker.

By passing this new alternative minimum tax, there are those in this Chamber and those in the other Chamber who do not want to pay for it. And the Blue Dogs stand before you today in front of America to make sure that we have the political courage to pay for this tax relief for millions of Americans in this country. Because if we don't do this, that $9 trillion that we are already in debt increases to $10 trillion and $11 trillion and then $12 trillion, and it goes on and on and on and on.

There are those in this body and the other who don't believe that this is an important enough issue and therefore we should ignore the PAYGO rules. That's the storm that is brewing in the next couple of days. And the Blue Dogs stand before the American people to say that we are still going to fight the battle of making sure that we restore fiscal discipline to this body. And that's the reason why so many passionate Blue Dogs are here this evening, because that storm is brewing. The time is ticking away. The threat of exceeding our expenditures over what we take in from income is at a threshold. And that's the reason why so many Blue Dog Democrats are here to talk about it this evening. And I hope the American people are listening.

To put it in perspective and why these rules are so important to be in place, it's important to note that since President Bush took office, the gross national debt has increased by $3.427 trillion. And since President Bush took office, we have borrowed $1.2 trillion from foreign sources. We've got to stop this madness.

Now, there are those in this body and outside this body, certain newspapers that consider themselves conservative newspapers like the Wall Street Journal, who believe that this issue is not important, that the Blue Dogs are wrong on this. We are not wrong on this. We have got to stop this madness, and we have to implement those PAYGO rules. It worked in the 1990s up until 2002 when we actually reversed our Nation's budget deficits and had surpluses. And it was because we stuck to the very rules that we are talking about tonight. And if we don't stick by these rules, then the days of deficit spending are going to return.

When the Democrats took over control of Congress in last year's elections, we promised to implement these PAYGO rules and stop the madness of these huge deficits that we had in place. And now we're on the verge of breaking the very rules that we put in place, and that is the reason why the Blue Dogs stand before you this evening.

I am proud to be a Blue Dog. I'm proud that the Blue Dogs have pushed

this issue to restore fiscal sanity to our Nation's budget. And I think it's the reason why we have so many that are about to speak about it.

I give the gentleman from Arkansas my appreciation for allowing me to speak on this very important issue.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) for his insight on this issue.

Madam Speaker, let me make it clear that the Blue Dog Coalition wants to ensure that no additional taxpayers are liable for the AMT tax this year. Let me also make it clear that, unlike the Senate, we want a bill that's paid for. We don't want to simply borrow the money from China to fund a tax cut or to provide tax relief in this country. And that's what makes us different in this new Democratic majority from what we had in the previous Congresses under the Republican control. They have given us the largest debt ever, the largest deficit ever; and the time has come to put an end to that. And someone that understands that better than anyone is the Blue Dog co-Chair for policy, my friend DENNIS MOORE from Kansas.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Thank you, Congressman ROSS, for the time this evening to speak to the American people about what's happening in our country with our deficit, with our debt, and what we need to do to correct this problem for future generations in our country.

You've heard several speakers talk tonight about the debt that our Nation has accumulated, $9.1 trillion. That's gone up almost $3.4 trillion in the past 6 years since President Bush took office.

As policy co-Chair, I had an opportunity to go with about eight other Democrats to the White House to meet with the President a few months ago. We each had 2 minutes to speak. And when it was my turn, I said, Mr. President, I'm a year older than you are. I had 7½ grandchildren at the time, eight now, and I said, Mr. President, we have mortgaged their future. I said, We've got to start living like most American families living within a budget. This should not be about Democrats and Republicans. We have got to be responsible. It's our moral duty to our kids and grandkids.

And he looked at me and he said, You've got a point.

Well, I know I have a point, but we need to work on this together. That's what we are all saying here tonight is we have mortgaged the future of our children and grandchildren, and that's absolutely the wrong thing to do.

In the first days of this new Congress this year, Congress, at least the House, passed a pay-as-you-go rule and reinstated a rule that expired in 2002. And for several years without that rule, our deficit and our debt rose dramatically. That's why all of us, the 47 Blue Dog Democrats here, think it is so important that we reinstate that rule, and it has been reinstated now, but that we follow this rule and make sure that we don't spend more money as a Nation than we take in; that we live within our means like most American families do.

You've been told by other speakers here tonight that China, Japan, and other foreign nations own more than $1 trillion of United States debt. That is a disgrace. It's something that we have got to change. We can't afford to let other nations make important decisions about our future. It's our future. It belongs to future generations in this country. And we have got to make sure that we are in control and not other nations in this world.

And I will just stop by saying this: PAYGO sounds funny. All it is, is pay-as-you-go. If you have a new spending proposal, a new program proposal, or a tax cut, section 1 is here is my proposal and section 2 is here's how it's paid for so it's revenue neutral, doesn't add to our deficit or our debt.

Again, Madam Speaker, we need to start living like most American families do within a budget. It's the right thing to do for our country, and it's certainly the right thing to do for future generations in our country.

Thank you, Congressman ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from Kansas for joining us.

Madam Speaker, in the next 35 minutes, we've got a number of Blue Dogs, fiscally conservative Democrats, that have taken to the floor of the House tonight to join me in talking about the importance of PAYGO, pay-as-you-go, the kind of principle that was in place in this Chamber when President Clinton gave us the first balanced budget of any Democrat or Republican in about 40 years.

At this time I would like to call on a former co-Chair of the Blue Dogs from the State of Tennessee, someone that has helped lead this effort and who brings a lot of insight to this issue, the former co-Chair for policy of the Blue Dogs, and that's my friend JIM COOPER from Tennessee.

Mr. COOPER. I thank my friend from Arkansas for yielding, and I will be very brief.

This PAYGO principle is fundamental to good government. All it means is that you pay as you go, you pay your bills. That's what this Congress should do, just as every American family knows that they should pay their bills. It's a fundamental principle. We cannot afford to let this principle lapse. It was in place from 1990 to 2002. That was the period of the greatest economic expansion in American history, under the Clinton administration.

Unfortunately, the Republican majority in this House allowed PAYGO to lapse. But none other than Alan Greenspan, the former head of the Federal Reserve, has said that this is the single most important reform that this Congress could undertake to address fiscal discipline.

So I support my colleagues in supporting PAYGO. We have got to make this principle stand. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. ROSS. I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee, former co-Chair of the Blue Dogs, for joining us and in being a part of standing firm on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of PAYGO.

Some people may say, what's this business all about? Well, the House passed a bill to provide tax relief for millions of people, and it was paid for. We sent it to the Senate and they didn't like it; so they sent it back unpaid for. Their idea was to borrow $50 billion from someplace like China to pay for it.

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Well, we're going to send it back again, probably tomorrow, Madam Speaker, with another pay-for. And some people are maybe saying, ''Huh? So how are you going to pay for it?'' Well, it's not glamorous, but it makes sense to me. We're going to pay for it by closing loopholes allowing hedge fund managers to defer compensation in offshore accounts. There's no reason why the Senate shouldn't be able to join us in supporting that. It pays for it instead of borrowing the money from China and provides the tax relief that we need for middle-class working families all across this country.

I would like to call on a former co-chair for communications of the Blue Dogs, my friend from California, a member of the Rules Committee, very involved in this whole issue, and that's DENNIS CARDOZA.

Mr. CARDOZA. I would like to thank the chairman for recognizing me and yielding to me. I also want to thank Mr. ROSS for being such a leader on this issue and for being a leader on so many of the Blue Dog causes that he brings to the floor every week. And there is no question, Mr. ROSS, that there is no issue that's more important to the Blue Dogs than this issue of PAYGO.

Madam Speaker, passing PAYGO rules at the beginning of the 110th Congress fulfilled an absolute pledge to the American people that this new Congress was going to spend taxpayers' dollars and money responsibly and without continuing to run up the deficit. It was a very important initial step when we passed the House rules this year. Waiving this rule now would break that pledge to pay for the alternative minimum tax and would be a rollback in what we've committed to do for the American people. And I believe that breaking the PAYGO rules would return us to the disastrous fiscal policies of the past Congresses under the Republican administration of this House and would be a terrible mistake.

After allowing the PAYGO rules to expire, the Republicans enacted legislation increasing the national debt by nearly $1.4 trillion over 6 years. Twenty-one percent of all individual income taxes of the year 2008 will go towards paying the interest on the national

debt. They won't help cure a sick child, they won't help educate one of our bright young people in this country, your tax dollars, 21 percent of which will go strictly to pay interest on the $9 trillion that have been run up in the national debt.

This ''debt tax,'' as we call it, is a direct consequence of the reckless fiscal policies that have happened, for the most part, over the last 6 years. The President and the Republican majority have put us on a fiscally unsustainable path, and the Blue Dogs are unwilling to pass this undue burden onto future generations of Americans.

The Blue Dogs demanded a new rule, as we talked about earlier, that put PAYGO back into place. And when we took over the Congress, the Democrats restored the PAYGO rules to ensure that the government spends within its means, just like American families have to do.

In complying with the PAYGO rules, this House has overwhelmingly relied on spending cuts to offset increases in higher priority programs. Over 80 percent of the increases in spending for priority programs passed by this House have been offset by cuts in lower priority or wasteful spending programs.

The Blue Dogs are committed to addressing this country's long-term fiscal challenges, and that is why we have insisted that PAYGO rules be applied to all mandatory spending increases.

This Democratic Congress has made great strides to get our fiscal house back in order. If we want to continue down this path towards fiscal sanity, we must ensure that every piece of legislation we consider, including the AMT bill that we're going to be considering this week, comply with the PAYGO rules.

Mr. Chairman, again, I very much appreciate your leadership, and I thank you for recognizing me and yielding me time.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from California, who has contributed greatly as the former cochair of the Blue Dogs and now a member of the Rules Committee.

The reason all of this is so important is because of this: Today, the U.S. national debt, $9,169,206,830,867, you divide that by every man, woman and child in America, and your share, Madam Speaker, is $30,205.

Since President Bush took office, the gross national debt has increased by nearly $3.5 trillion, $3.427 trillion. That's $41.54 billion per month. That's $9.57 billion per week. That's $1.37 billion per day. That's $56.93 million per hour. That's $948,907 per minute. And that's $15,815 per second. Any way you divide it out, Madam Speaker, for a country boy from south Arkansas, that's a whole lot of money. And this group, the Blue Dogs, fiscally conservative Democrats, are trying to restore common sense, accountability, and fiscal discipline to our national government. And right in the middle of it all is my friend from Louisiana, a fellow Blue Dog member, CHARLIE MELANCON.

Mr. MELANCON. I want to thank you, Congressman ROSS, for reserving this time. And I would like to thank the leadership, Madam Speaker, for taking the initiative to reinstate the PAYGO rules.

As has been stated previously by my counterparts, my colleagues and the Blue Dogs, this is one element of government that we need to adhere to. It's shameful that the government hasn't been doing this all along. As stated earlier, we have a debt that far exceeds all 42 previous administrations collectively. That does not bode well for this country.

We were a strong Nation prior to World War II. We have been a strong Nation for centuries. But as you look at the devaluation of the dollar, the fact that China controls a large portion of our debt, that they, at one point in time last January, considered selling off some of their treasury notes, but were fearful that they may devalue the American dollar, thus lowering their value of their investments, that tells you something. And now that the dollar is sliding, China is reconsidering that.

And where does that put us? That puts us really in a trick bag. We are facing a comparative value of dollars, or currencies. Canada has passed us up. The Euro is far and away. The British pound is far exceeding the value that the average American can even afford to think about going to Europe to visit.

You know, I grew up in south Louisiana in a conservative household, in a conservative community for that matter, but one of the things that we were taught by our parents in our household was if you don't have it, you can't spend it. And even if you get a credit card, you've still got to pay for it someday. And that's basically what the Blue Dogs are about, trying to bring some fiscal responsibility to our government. Regardless of what party you're in, this is about our future.

Now, up until recently I was not a grandfather, but now I am. Before, when I ran for the Congress in my late fifties, I wasn't running for the Congress as a career, I wasn't running for the Congress to make a career later, I was coming to the Congress that the people so decided to try and help right this government and do what's right by the people of this country. The frustration is that you can't have it both ways. And the both ways is you can't help the people back home that need the help, whether it's building schools, whether it's building, in our case, levees, building highways and roads and bridges, educating the kids, doing cancer research. These things cost money. And without the involvement of our government, we wouldn't be the most advanced country that we are today. But we're moving down a slippery slope. We have spent ourselves into a debt that is estimated to be in excess of $9 trillion, $30,000 plus for every man, woman and child. So, that means my two kids and their spouses and my grandson have a debt that will take them quite a bit of time if they were to decide, well, I want to pay my share, take them quite a bit of their lifetime to put that money aside. And that money that they would put aside would be better served to educate my grandson, for them to build a house when the time comes, for them to be able to afford to do things, to live a quality of life that all Americans would love to and expect to have.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today with my colleagues, the Blue Dogs, and worry about the people of this country. That's what we were sent here to do, worry about their welfare, worry about their well-being, and to take action that illustrates that we do care about them and this country. And by not adhering to the PAYGO rule, by not finding the pay-fors in these pieces of legislation, we endanger the future of all citizens of this country.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana. And as our friend JOHN TANNER from Tennessee has said so eloquently, this administration, this President has borrowed more money from foreigners than the previous 42 Presidents combined.

Since President Bush took office, our Nation has borrowed $1.23 trillion from foreign sources. That's a big number. Let's break it down. That's $15.45 billion per month. That's $3.54 billion per week. That's $505.6 million per day. That's $21.07 million per hour. That's $351,113 per minute. And that's $5,852 per second.

So, Madam Speaker, that's why we're here. We want to restore common sense and fiscal discipline to our national government. We want to put an end to this reckless spending and this debt and this deficit, and to help us do that is my friend from Ohio, new member of the Blue Dogs, serving his first term in the 110th session of Congress, ZACK SPACE from Ohio's 18th congressional district.

Mr. SPACE. I thank my friend from Arkansas.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to be a part of this group that places such a high priority on fiscal responsibility, the Blue Dogs.

I really believe that we live in a crossroads of history and that there are several seminal issues of our day that in and of themselves would be considered the seminal issue of virtually any other era, whether you're talking about the war in Iraq, the war on terror, the challenges posed by globalization, the challenges facing our environment, all very important issues, and indeed, seminal. But yet another seminal issue, one which is much more insidious and not so readily identifiable, but nonetheless serious, is that posed by our national debt. $9.17 trillion, a number that by any account is virtually incomprehensible; $236 billion a year being paid in interest on that debt. I have not done the math, but I suspect that if you broke that

down for every one of the 435 congressional districts in our country, you would find that each Member of Congress, each congressional district could use several hundred million dollars a year from that figure to build roads, repair bridges, cure diseases, educate children and do the kinds of things that make us a strong Nation.

This debt is sapping us of vital resources, and it is, in the words of my colleague earlier today, the gentleman from Tennessee, one of our leaders, JOHN TANNER, making us a weaker Nation.

PAYGO, a simple concept, one that, again, my colleague from Tennessee referenced as something we expect of our government in the same way that we expect it from our families, live within our means. The alternative minimum tax is poised to draw in 23 million Americans who were never intended to be the victims of that tax. We need to fix it. We must fix it. This House has voted to fix it in a fiscally responsible way, in a way that is paid for.

Now, the Blue Dogs stand for the proposition that we stand behind that and that we don't irresponsibly fix the tax, we do it in a responsible fashion. Back home in Ohio's 18th District, in towns like Chillicothe and Zanesville and New Philadelphia, Ohio, we can't understand what $9.1 trillion is. I certainly don't get it. It's incomprehensible. But we do understand the need, the pressing need of this Nation to once again engage in fiscal responsibility, acting in a way that we expect our citizens to act.

And with that, I am very proud to be a member of this organization and will continue to stand behind that basic and fundamental principle of fiscal responsibility.

□ 2030

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his insight.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Indiana, BRAD ELLSWORTH, from Indiana's Eighth Congressional District. A new member of the Blue Dogs in the 110th session of Congress, BRAD ELLSWORTH.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. I appreciate the gentleman from Arkansas recognizing me, Madam Speaker.

It is an honor to follow my good friend from Ohio in his eloquent words about what we are here to talk about tonight. When I ran for Congress, the good people of the Eighth District of Indiana sent me and gave a message. I heard that message loud and clear, that they wanted me to come, if they would hire me to come and do my part to get the House's fiscal orders back in shape.

When I came to Congress a year ago in January, I started looking for people that thought the same way I did, that pay-as-you-go was just a natural thing. And I found a group called the Blue Dogs. Now, I have got to admit I didn't know what a Blue Dog was. And I would venture to guess that most of the people in Indiana didn't know what a Blue Dog was. But I know now. And it is a group that I am proud to associate myself with.

I have got to tell you, Madam Speaker, that the folks back in the Eighth District in Indiana in Terre Haute, Greencastle, and Evansville probably feel like they are being choked blue now. That is how the Blue Dogs got their name. They were being choked blue. And the people of our country are being choked blue by our constant running up the debt and deficit in this country.

One thing I learned as a little kid growing up in school was you say what you are going to do, and then you do what you say you are going to do. And that includes everybody in this House, the 435 Members. People like to complain about their taxes. They like to complain about this debt, and they have a right to. But what they do know is they expect government services, and they expect us to spend their money wisely. And so they know that when they want to drive on our Federal highways, and they know that when they call, they want our homeland protected by border security. So when they hear about government contracts gone bad, military spending, that waste, fraud and abuse accounts up to $88 billion in a few investigations, they get a little weary of that, and so do I.

We can't run this House like this. We wouldn't run our personal homes like this, we wouldn't run a personal business like this, and we can't run the people's House like this. We have done some good in this House. We passed the PAYGO legislation, one of the first things we did in the first week of this 110th Congress. We have cut earmarks in half. We have closed tax loopholes. But it is not enough.

Congressman ROSS, the poster you show when you speak has gone up since I came into this office and displayed my poster. It was $29,000 per person for every man, woman and child in this country when we started, and now it is 30, even though we have done some good. So we can't relax now until we start chipping away piece by piece, chunk by chunk and bring that back down so that we are not strapping every man, woman and child in this country with now a $30,000 debt.

It is imperative that we continue to observe the PAYGO rules of this House. And when and only when we do that will we see this number start going in the reverse and get our affairs back in order.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Indiana. Madam Speaker, if you have any questions, comments or concerns you can e-mail us, Madam Speaker, at bluedog@mail.house.gov.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. SPACE) was saying that he didn't have his calculator with him, but he knew it was a lot of interest that had been paid. This year we have paid $239 billion in interest on the national debt. That is close to $1 billion a day, without a calculator. But with a calculator, and to put it in perspective, the same amount we would pay for any of the following, stocking every family in America's refrigerator for 7 months, filling every U.S. gas tank, and that is not easy to do this these days, for 10 months, filling every American's gas tank for 10 months at today's gas prices, providing 4 years of in-state public tuition for 10.2 million students. I have a daughter in college now. I can appreciate that one. Paying 1 year of salary for 8 million new teachers. We could do any one of those things, Madam Speaker, with the amount of interest we have paid on the national debt this year.

The whole point here, Madam Speaker, is we will continue, this demonstrates it right here, the reds, the amounts we are spending on interest, the light blue, or the turquoise as we would say back home, is the amount we are spending on education. The dark green is how much we are spending on veterans. And the purple is how much we are spending on homeland security.

America's priorities, Madam Speaker, are out of whack. And they are going to remain out of whack until we get our fiscal house in order. And no one understands this better than the leader of the Blue Dogs, the administrative co-Chair for the Blue Dogs who spends a lot of time on these issues, and I can't thank him enough for being here and waiting patiently all night and letting all our fellow Blue Dog members go, we have had a dozen tonight, that is a lot, to come to the floor of the House tonight to talk about these issues. We have about 10 minutes left. The gentleman from Florida, ALLEN BOYD, can have as much of it as he wants.

Mr. BOYD of Florida. I thank my friend, Madam Speaker, for yielding, and it is a great privilege to join my Blue Dog colleagues here on the House floor to talk about these issues that are of such great import to the American people and to the children of America today, because they are the ones who will be, in the end, mostly affected by these policies that we are having great debates about today.

Now, my fellow Blue Dog colleagues have spoken very eloquently and succinctly about PAYGO, what it is, how it got started, how it works, and the importance of it. Just in brief summary, I will remind our viewers that PAYGO was a principle that was first put in place in 1990 by then-President George H.W. Bush, commonly referred to around these parts of the country as Bush 41.

With a Democratic Congress and Republican administration, they began to realize the misguided policy of deficits, large annual deficits, so they did something about it. After the election in 1992, when President Clinton became President, and then in 1994, the Republican revolution where you had a

Democratic President and Republican-led Congress, in 1997, those principles of PAYGO were continued in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

In 1999, we saw for the first time in 30 years a balanced budget. And we could see surpluses, Madam Speaker, as far as the eye could see. It looked great for America at that point in time. We had money to deal with national security. We had money to fix the problems that we know exist in Medicare and Social Security, the long-term problems, which are so important. Those two programs are so important to the future of this country.

What happened? In 2001, we got a new President, President George W. Bush, commonly known in these circles as Bush 43. And this administration, along with the Congress back then, decided that PAYGO wasn't a good idea because they couldn't do the policies of their tax cuts they wanted, as much as they wanted to do and live within those rules of PAYGO, so they abandoned the PAYGO rule, the PAYGO principle.

As a result, from 2000 to today, 2007, you have had a swing of several trillion dollars in terms of the surpluses versus the deficit. So we are in a bad situation. We are in a bad situation; and during the campaigns last year, people running for the House and the Senate across this country campaigned on this issue, that we had to restore fiscal responsibility to our government. You heard from four members of the Blue Dog, freshmen members, who are brand-new here tonight. This is their first term as Members of Congress. They campaigned on this issue. They understand it. They understand the importance of it. Their constituents back home do.

Madam Speaker, our Speaker, NANCY PELOSI, our majority leader, STENY HOYER, our Ways and Means chairman, CHARLIE RANGEL, and our budget chairman, JOHN SPRATT, and other Democratic leaders, in addition to the Blue Dogs, vowed to put an end to the reckless fiscal policy that has existed in our government for the last 6 years. And under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI and Majority Leader HOYER, and with the help of the Blue Dogs, we put in place this PAYGO principle on the very first day when this new Congress took power in early January of this year.

That is what the American people wanted us to do. They wanted us to stop acting foolishly when it comes to fiscal management. We are like a board of directors, Madam Speaker, of a major corporation. It is our job to manage the resources, the fiscal financial resources, of this country in a prudent way for our stockholders, who are our people back home.

And we said we have to stop spending more than we take in. There are lots of tools that you can use, as has been said here earlier, but the one that we have in place right now, the one that we have been able to get in place, given the current political environment, is this PAYGO rule, and we need to abide by it. We don't need to abandon it.

Congress without those tools in place has not exhibited the willpower, if you will, to make tough choices when it comes to spending or tax cuts. So that is why it is important that we have tools like PAYGO. If you don't have the ability, the will or the backbone to make choices about how we responsibly spend the taxpayers' money, then what are we doing here? This Congress, under the leadership, under the Democratic leadership of NANCY PELOSI and STENY HOYER has shown that it has the ability and the will and the backbone to be good stewards of the taxpayers' tax dollars that they send here for us to spend. Every single bill, Madam Speaker, that is passed by the House this year has complied with PAYGO rules. Whether it was the farm bill, SCHIP reauthorization, or AMT relief, every bill has complied with the PAYGO rules. And do you know what, Madam Speaker? Seventy-five percent of the pay-fors have been spending cuts and not revenue raisers.

Sadly, very sadly, the Senate last week failed in their duties as leaders of this country and as responsible stewards of our taxpayer dollars when they passed an AMT bill that was not paid for. The Senate was held hostage by the Republican caucus in the Senate and they blocked a House AMT bill that was paid for from even being heard on the Senate floor.

The Blue Dogs, Madam Speaker, and the House leadership are standing behind PAYGO for one simple reason: it is the right thing to do. It may not be the easy thing to do or the politically easy thing to do, but, Madam Speaker, I didn't take this job because I thought it was going to be easy. I took this job to do right by the people of the Second Congressional District of Florida and the American people.

The House of Representatives will again pass an AMT bill this week that is paid for. It is possible to do it. The Senate will have another opportunity to do what is right and responsible. And I strongly urge the Senate to have the gumption and the will and the good sense to keep the promise they made to the American people to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars and pass an AMT bill that does not violate the PAYGO rules and that is paid for.

□ 2045

Again, I want to thank my fellow co-chair, MIKE ROSS from Arkansas, for his steady leadership on this issue and so many others, but also steady leadership in forming these Tuesday night Special Orders, in which we have had a chance to come talk to the American people about issues of much importance.

Mr. ROSS. I thank the gentleman from Florida, the administrative co-chair of the Blue Dogs, Mr. ALLEN BOYD from Florida's Second Congressional District, for being a part of this Special Order this evening, as he is so many Tuesday evenings.

What we are talking about here, Madam Speaker, is the Republican Congress, the Republican administration, after having a balanced budget under President Clinton for the first time in 40 years, gave us the largest debt ever in our Nation's history, largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, and there has been a lot of talk about all this.

Mr. TANNER was talking earlier about how this administration has borrowed more money from foreigners than the previous 42 Presidents combined. That has to be paid back with interest. And to put it in perspective, the Federal Government has sent $709 billion abroad in the form of interest payments since President Bush took office, and $155 billion in 2007 alone. The same amount would fund any of the following: The amount of money this administration has sent to foreigners to pay interest on the debt that we have borrowed from them to fund tax cuts in this country for folks earning over $400,000 a year. With the interest paid on this debt, this foreign debt, the amount of your tax money, Madam Speaker, that we have sent overseas, with that amount of money, we could have built 12,000 new elementary schools, 7,000 new veterans clinics, and I might remind you, Madam Speaker, we have a new generation of veterans coming home from Afghanistan and Iraq. And get this: We could have funded all road and bridge construction and improvements for 10 years.

It's about priorities, and it's time this Nation got its priorities in order. It's time we got our fiscal house in order. Make no mistake about it, Madam Speaker, for the second time this week we are going to send to the Senate an AMT fix that ensures that no, not one, additional taxpayer is liable for the AMT tax. Not one. Madam Speaker, we are paying for it, and as conservative Democrats we are reaching across the aisle and we are begging, we are begging Republicans to join us in doing the right thing and fixing this the right way.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2082, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

Mr. CARDOZA (during the Special Order of Mr. ROSS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–487) on the resolution (H. Res. 859) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2082) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1585, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

Mr. CARDOZA (during the Special Order of Mr. ROSS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–488) on the resolution (H. Res. 860) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4351, AMT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

Mr. CARDOZA (during the Special Order of Mr. ROSS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–489) on the resolution (H. Res. 861) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4351) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide individuals temporary relief from the alternative minimum tax, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4299, TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. CARDOZA (during the Special Order of Mr. ROSS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–490) on the resolution (H. Res. 862) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4299) to extend the Terrorism Insurance Program of the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman GARRETT for this privilege of this time.

Madam Speaker, I believe the cornerstone of all human freedom is that of religious freedom. Indeed, a small separatist church congregation in England possessed a desire so strong to practice their faith freely that it compelled them to cross the ocean in a little wooden ship called the Mayflower.

While theirs was a quest to be able to practice the faith of Christianity, a central tenet of their Christian faith was the belief that all human beings were given the right by God to embrace whatever religious conviction they truly held in their hearts, and that human beings should protect that right for each other.

Madam Speaker, today we considered and passed H. Res. 847, ''recognizing the importance of Christmas and the Christian faith.'' Of course, Madam Speaker, there will be those who will criticize any effort to recognize a particular faith or holiday. However, Madam Speaker, aside from the debatable aspects of this resolution, or any other, those who are even slightly acquainted with history know that the Bible, the founding document of the Christian faith, was the essential rationale and substance that inspired our Declaration of Independence and was, further, the bedrock foundational document of the Western world.

The objective of this resolution is to honor those Judeo-Christian principles that have shaped American history and policy since the founding of our Nation and that have informed and influenced our ideas of justice and equality 7 years into the 21st century. Indeed, Madam Speaker, it was the Christian principles hailed in this resolution that led our country to be the very first beacon of religious freedom in the history of the world and, further, to finally reject the practice of human slavery that had plagued civilization across the world for nearly 7,000 years.

Madam Speaker, I believe that it would be wrong for this body to ever pass any law that would compel or forbid any person in this Nation or any other nation to accept or reject any article of faith, so long as they did not deprive their fellow Americans or human beings of those same constitutional rights. However, in recognizing the influence of Christianity upon Western civilization, we are also commending the unshakable commitment of Christian principles, the very ones that compelled our Founding Fathers to resolutely declare that all men are created equal by God himself, and that because they are created equal, they are also created free, Madam Speaker, and that includes being free to embrace the religion of their own conviction.

Religious freedom is a central component of the Christian faith this resolution references. Indeed, the message of the one born on Christmas Day was from a savior who came to offer every member of the human family ultimate and eternal freedom, even at the cost of his own life.

Madam Speaker, as we enjoy our religious freedom in this season of peace, may we not forget that at this very moment American men and women in uniform are fighting a battle across the world so that all Americans might continue to freely exercise their faith, and that that right might ultimately some day be extended to all of mankind. President Roosevelt probably said it best, Madam Speaker. He said in his Christmas Eve Nation message to the Nation, December 24, 1941, ''Our strongest weapon in this war is that conviction of the dignity and brotherhood of man, which Christmas Day signifies more than any other day or any other symbol. Against enemies who preach the principles of hate and practice them, we set our faith in human love and in God's care for us and all men everywhere.''

So, Madam Speaker, with those feelings in mind and with love in my heart for people of every faith, let me here on this floor exercise my own religious freedom and wish you and everyone else under the sound of my voice a happy, holy, and merry Christmas.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. As I come to the floor tonight, the first week of December, standing here in the Nation's Capitol of the greatest Nation on Earth, today, and has ever been, I think about our constituents back home in the great State of New Jersey and across the country as well as they look to our Nation's Capitol and expect us to do the responsible things on their behalf and on the behalf of freedom and liberty around the world as well. And a portion of that responsibility, of course, is handling their hard-earned tax dollars as they send them to us here in Washington to administer this government and spending, some of which was just addressed by the other side of the aisle.

For the next hour, I would like to engage in a discussion of these issues and shed some light on them, perhaps pointing out some of the fallacies in some of the arguments that we just heard from the other side of the aisle on these points.

As we begin there, I think there is no place better to begin as to try to address some of those points that have been raised. So at this time I would be honored to have a fellow colleague join us at the floor right now. I yield the floor to Ms. FOXX.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you so much, Congressman GARRETT. I appreciate your putting together this Special Order tonight and focusing on spending and on where we are here, as you said, in the second week of December in the greatest country in the world.

I was listening for a few minutes to our colleagues who preceded us, who called themselves the Blue Dog Democrats, and I was really fascinated to hear them talk about how fiscally responsible they have been, and I know that you're going to talk a little bit later about the total tax increases that they have proposed, the total spending that they have proposed. And I am fascinated that our colleagues can stand

here and talk about being fiscally responsible, I think, and assume that nobody is adding up what it is they are doing. And they show their charts about the debt and how much each person is responsible for that debt, and I am intrigued that if you look at the record, you would see that most of the Blue Dogs vote every time for these fiscally irresponsible bills that are being brought up. So I want to say to the American people, if they believe that these folks have been fiscally responsible, then I have got some swampland in Mexico that I'd like to sell them.

I felt like, in listening to them, that I was like Alice in Wonderland, where the language means the opposite of what it is, or 1984, particularly 1984, where white is black and black is white. That is what it feels like when you're listening to them talk about being fiscally responsible. It's unbelievable.

One thing I do agree with them, it is about priorities, and it's obvious that their priorities and our priorities and the priorities of the American people are two different things. For one thing, our colleague used the example that we could be building 12,000 new elementary schools. Well, the Federal Government has absolutely no business building elementary schools. There is absolutely nothing in the Constitution which gives us any right to be involved in education, and particularly in building buildings at the local level.

I am astonished at some of the things that they say, again, and assume that nobody is going to question them.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Will the gentlelady yield?

I think the gentlelady makes an interesting but important point at the same time, in that if we see our role here in Congress as to satisfy every desire, wish, whim, and I am not saying education is a whim, but desires, wish, needs, as well of our constituency back at home, in your State and mine, then of course that wish list or the desire list or that need list would go on ad infinitum. Then we can become here, as one may say, as the 51st State, the 51st State legislature, trying to solve every single issue, whether it's building new schools, filling in potholes back at home on the street in front of someone's house, or any other minutia that is back in the States. Obviously, some of these things are quite vital to you and I and our constituents, but the question is where do those dollars and cents come from, where do the responsibilities lie? If we are going to assume at all, then I can tell you that this budget is going to balloon even further than where the Democrats already want the budget to balloon.

But it is, just as you said before, an issue of, and I will probably say it 22 more times before the night is over, an issue of setting priorities, and part of setting priorities is setting what are our responsibilities. So you hit the nail on the head when you begin to look at that, how do you set priorities, what is our responsibility. If we can just hone in on what our responsibility is and if we can get doing those things well first, then everything else comes in time.

I yield back.

Ms. FOXX. Well, I hope you will repeat that 22 more times tonight, and we need to be repeating that every single day. It's one of the issues I talk about over and over again, what are our priorities, what is the role of the Federal Government. As you say, we could be seen as a 51st State and be trying to deal with every single issue, but the Constitution is really clear about what our role is, I think.

As you point out, here we are in the middle of December, and what has this Congress accomplished? So much was promised by the majority last year when they were running for office and condemning Republicans for being profligate spenders and being irresponsible about the way we spent money. I will tell you that we can't hold a candle to what it is they want to do.

□ 2100

I think it was bad enough that Republicans before I got here ballooned the budget beyond where it should have been. And I have to say that I understand why the American people got upset with us last year, why we lost our majority. They felt that we were profligate spenders, as I said. But the Democrats promised something different. We are standing on our principles now, and they are stunned by that. We are earning our way back into the majority by living up to the image and the reputation that Republicans have had over the years of being careful with the way money is spent.

And, of course, today I heard other Democrats talking about the fact that this was going to be a cut in the budget. Well, only in Washington is a smaller increase than what they want considered a cut or level funding considered a cut. The increase in what the President asked for, and again I know you are going to go into much greater detail about this, a 3.1 percent increase in spending overall was requested by the President; and yet, the majority party is saying that the fault is with the White House and it refuses to negotiate, that the President won't negotiate with them. They say we are engaged in political posturing. If that isn't the pot calling the kettle black, I certainly have never seen that. They are totally surprised by the fact that the President and we are standing on our principles.

They think they can get by with simply increasing spending. They asked for $22 billion plus a lot of money in emergency spending; so then they come back and say, well, we will just split the difference. It will only be $11 billion and you should compromise with us. And the fact that we don't want to increase spending that much more over the 3.1 percent requested by the President stuns them. So the way they get around it is, here we are again the middle of December, and they have not passed the appropriations bills that we should have passed. And I want to talk some about what they promised they would do and what they have done. And we have compiled a list of promises.

On November 8 of last year, Speaker-elect PELOSI said: Democrats are prepared to govern and ready to lead.

Here we are, only one appropriations bill that has passed, and that is the Defense bill. Thank goodness that has happened.

Another Democratic promise: open, honest, and ethical Congress. Speaker-elect PELOSI: we will make this the most honest, ethical, and open Congress in history.

And what do we get? We get bills brought on the floor at the last minute, thousand-page bills. We get no time to read them, and we are asked to vote on them.

We are also told by the Blue Dogs and by others that they believe in something called PAYGO. Now, PAYGO, they would have you believe, is a way for us to get back fiscal responsibility. Well, I want to say that if you look up PAYGO in the dictionary, it means new taxes. That is what PAYGO means to them, new taxes. It doesn't mean cutting spending. And it only applies to a very small part of our budget, but they want to try to fool the American people into thinking that it means something different than what it means.

They criticize the Senate for having passed an AMT bill last week, which is a clean bill. It simply delays the increase in taxes that would go to about 23 million Americans, something they have never paid. And to the House, the fiscally responsible way to do this is to add new taxes to other Americans to, quote, pay for, that is, offset, taxes that have never been paid by another group of Americans.

That is some of the most twisted logic that I have ever heard in my entire life. I know that these people never could have taken logic in high school or in college.

They also promised no more borrowing from Social Security. But what that means is that the money that is currently being spent from the Social Security fund will not be spent from the Social Security fund. But that is not what they are doing. They are spending that and a whole lot more. And ROB ANDREWS last year, or this year, promised that we would not borrow any more money from the Social Security fund. Every one of their promises has been broken, and they are taking us down a very fiscally irresponsible budget.

The energy bill that was passed last week is a no-energy bill. It included nothing to increase domestic energy production. As Christmas approaches, 5,000 troops are going to return from Iraq; but they are holding hostage the bipartisan legislation to fund key benefits for them and their families. It has

been 6 months since the House overwhelmingly passed the veterans and troops funding bill and 3 months since the Senate did the same, but they have put that bipartisan bill into this omnibus bill that we are going to be dealing with, which will have billions in wasteful, unrelated pork.

We are seeing a tremendous problem here with only one of the 12 appropriations bills passed, a year wasted while they have brought before us unnecessary bills to vote on and while they have voted 41 times on measures to withdraw from Iraq, and they have let the important work of this Congress go by the by.

I hope again that the American people are paying close attention and reading between the lines on the things that they are saying, and I am going to yield back to my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina, and I do believe that the American public is paying attention; and they are doing better than that, they are reading between the lines. And they know when they are being talked to straight and honestly, just as you have been for the last few moments now setting forth what the record is with regard to what the Republicans' intentions have been and will be in the future with regard to getting the fiscal house in order of this country, and what the actual record has been for the last 11-plus, almost 12, months now, as we stand here under Democrat control.

Some of the numbers, I must say, that we talk about when we discuss this issue are quite large. It is really hard to get your hands around them, to get a handle on them. When you are talking about total spending in 2008 in the fiscal budget of $2.9 trillion, who can imagine that size number? When you are talking even a smaller number about an increase of $118 billion over 2007, $118 billion? We just can't relate to it.

What we have to all bring it right down to is the fact that this is the American public tax dollars at heart, and it does mean dollars and cents to people at home listening to us tonight, working all week long, paying their bills. It does mean something to the American family's budget, how the tax increases that have been proposed by the other side of the aisle are going to impact upon them and their lack of responsibility when it comes to the issue that curbing spending will have an impact upon them as well.

I am very pleased that I have been joined here tonight by another strong stalwart leader on this entire issue of fiscal responsibility. I have the pleasure of serving with him on several committees, but most importantly right now on the Budget Committee where he has been an outspoken critic of wanton expenses and spending, both now under Democratic control but also, too, when the Republicans controlled. So I would like to yield such time as he needs to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for leading this Special Order this evening. I thank him for his leadership on behalf of the people of New Jersey and behalf of the people of New York. The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) never loses an opportunity to fight for the family budget.

And we know that families are struggling during this Christmas season; we know that their energy bills have increased. We know the price at the pump is high. Home heating oil for those, particularly in the Northeast, not in my part in the country in Texas, they face challenges there. They face challenges in trying to deal with their health care costs.

And what is the answer of this new Democrat majority? Well, it is the same answer as all Democrat majorities: tax more and spend more.

I am unacquainted with any society in the history of the world that somehow has taxed its way into prosperity. And, ultimately, more spending leads to more taxation; and this is a Congress that continues to spend more and more and more. Already, the Federal Government is spending on average over $23,000 per family of four, Mr. Speaker. And this is the highest level, the highest level since World War II on an inflation-adjusted basis. And yet this Democrat majority wants to spend even more of the people's money.

Earlier in the year, in their budget they had the single largest tax increase in American history that, when fully implemented over a 5-year period, is going to add $3,000 per year for an average family of four.

Now, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, what will that extra $3,000 in taxes taken away from American families to be given to the Federal Government, what is that going to do to the hopes and dreams of the average American family? How is that going to help them fill up their F–150 pickup trucks? How is that going to help them pay their home heating oil bills? How is that going to help them send a child to college? Well, the answer is that it is not.

Often, when we are having spending debates in the Nation's Capitol, Mr. Speaker, we are not really debating how much we spend, but we are debating who is going to do the spending. Is it going to be American families? Are they going to be allowed to keep what they have earned, what they have worked hard for? Are they going to be able to keep the bread on their table? Or are they going to have to give even a larger share to Washington? Notwithstanding the fact, notwithstanding the fact that they are already paying on average $23,000 per family of four.

Now, when you come to the floor of the House, you often hear our Democrat colleagues decry how we are not investing in this budget function or we are not investing in this budget function enough. Well, people are entitled to their own opinions; they are just not entitled to their own facts. And if you look over the last 10 years, for example, the international affairs budget has increased 130 percent; the energy budget, 293 percent. Now, transportation, 71 percent; health, 79.4 percent. And the list goes on and on. And in that same 10-year period, the family budget has grown by about 34, 35 percent. And so you have government on average growing over twice the rate of the family budget, and inflation over that same period has been just a little over 2 percent. So if you wanted to keep the same government that you had, you would have grown it at 2 percent a year; and, instead, it is being grown at closer to 6 to 7 percent.

Ultimately, American families will not be able to pay this bill. More and more taxes are being imposed on them. And so every time one of our Democrat colleagues comes to the floor to suggest another great new government program to be added to the other 10,000 programs, Federal programs that are already on the books, it puts pressure on the family budget. And, again, it is not fair to their dreams, their hopes, their aspirations for their families, on top of this $3,000 a year increase to the average family of four that will be phased in over 5 years in their budget. They have gone through and offered to increase taxes at least half a dozen times on American families and the American economy.

□ 2115

Mr. HENSARLING. We passed H.R. 6, $7.7 billion over 10 years; H.R. 976, $1.3 billion over 10 years; H.R. 1562, $241 million over the next 10 years; H.R. 2419, $12.1 billion, and the list goes on and on and on.

Again, as Americans are striving to pay for their health care costs, their transportation costs, their education costs, why should they be giving more money to Washington, D.C.? And at this time when they are trying to make ends meet on top of the tax increase in their budget, on top of at least seven or eight tax increases propose this year, you have the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), propose what has now become known in the press as the mother of all tax increases.

He will put a huge, almost 30 percent tax on millions of small businesses all across this Nation. Ninety percent of all Americans will pay more taxes under this bill. It will bring in an estimated $3 trillion taken away from American families and American small businesses. This threatens millions of jobs.

If we truly care about the American family and the economic perils and struggles that they face, then we want to make sure, number one, they keep the job that they already have instead of sending jobs overseas through excess taxation, regulation and litigation. And again, all of this spending ultimately has to be paid for, and it has to be paid for by a larger tax burden on

the American family and a job-killing tax burden on American small business.

So here we are when most American families are trying to put together a budget so they can participate and make sure that all of the children and grandchildren are taken care of at Christmas, and here we have a Democrat majority in Congress who are trying to pass an even larger budget, the largest budget in the history of the Federal Government, taking more money away from their Christmases, taking away the goodies in their stockings to feed this ever-increasing, tax-and-spend beast that they have created.

Again, I am unfamiliar with any society in history that somehow has taxed its way into prosperity, and that's what all this spending is resulting in now. So I am happy to join the gentleman from New Jersey to come to the floor now and make sure that the American people are seeing what is happening.

There is a process, and process ultimately leads to policy. We had a process in place that was supposed to pass separate spending bills so Members of Congress could actually read the bills. Wouldn't that be a novel idea, that you actually have an opportunity to read the bill before you vote on it. And Democrats would absolutely come to the House floor and criticize and excoriate Republicans if they didn't pass these bills on time, and now they have passed one out of a dozen. So they are going to roll them all into this thing called an omnibus, and the only bus quality about it is it is a fiscal bus; it is going to flatten the American taxpayer.

So, soon we will be presented with a thousand-page bill that we have hours to read that will be filled with pork-laden special interest projects which this Democrat majority claimed they were going to clean up. But instead, they have made it worse with all of their special earmarks, be it the tribute to the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee who takes $2 million of American family money to create a museum to himself; be it the gentleman from Pennsylvania who set up what the Wall Street Journal has referred to as Murtha, Inc., where now companies go out and hire lobbyists, and if they locate in his district, all of a sudden earmarks appear. There is no transparency there. There is no accountability there. But all of this is going to get wrapped up into one great big omnibus bill.

So when many of us would like to be with our families, and many of us have our families back home in our districts, not in Washington, D.C., instead we are here doing what we have to do, and that is protect the American families out there from this tax-and-spend machine that threatens their education and housing dreams, threatens their health care dreams, to ensure that the Federal budget does not grow beyond the ability of the family budget to pay for it.

Already the unfunded obligations of the Federal Government are in excess of $144,000 per individual, and yet the Democrats keep on spending along. There will be a day of reckoning. And so I am sure that the Democrats will come to this House floor and say we are only debating $22 billion in this omnibus spending bill.

Number one, I hope I am never in Washington so long that I have concluded that $22 billion is not a lot of money. $22 billion is more than we are spending on veterans health care in this Nation. It is a lot of money. And due to this artifice called baseline budgeting, that is going to grow in 5 years to be a $200 billion figure, imposing again thousands of dollars of taxes on the average American family when they are struggling to make ends meet.

And so this debate is really about two different roads. One road leads us to the largest tax increase in American history to be followed by an even larger tax increase in American history, one that threatens our children and grandchildren with a lower standard of living. And that is not my words. Those are the words of the comptroller general, the chief fiduciary officer of the Federal Government. He said right now the government we have, and I paraphrase, the government we have, if left on automatic pilot, no new spending programs, no new benefit increases, threatens the next generation with either, one, a doubling of their tax burden or, two, a Federal Government that consists of little more than Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. And yet the Democrats won't reform these programs. They keep on taxing and they keep on spending.

I don't plan to be a party to that. There is another path. It is a path to fiscal responsibility. It is a path to make sure that the Federal budget does not grow beyond the ability of the family budget to pay for it. That is why Republicans will come to this House floor to make sure that this omnibus doesn't run over the American taxpayer and to make sure that the American people can have greater freedom and opportunity than we have had before. But to do that, we have to put America on the path of fiscal responsibility and to live within a budget.

Don't let the Federal budget grow beyond the family's budget to pay for it. You cannot grow government at 6 and 7 and 8 percent a year and have the family budget grow at 3 percent a year. You can't sit here and tax American families at 3 and 4 and $5,000 more per year and then somehow claim that you have the Nation's priorities right. The priority of this Nation ought to be protecting the pocketbooks and security and freedoms of the American family.

So again, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey. He is one of the stellar leaders in this body in fiscal responsibility. He is a man who is always committed to principle, a real workhorse in this institution, and I am honored to be on the House floor tonight.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I again thank the gentleman from Texas for your work and for coming to the floor and for the points you make here.

You point out several significant points. One is the dichotomy between what has been said by the other side of the aisle, both before the election and now during the course of the year, and literally just moments ago before I came to the floor this hour as the Blue Dogs were on the floor speaking.

Let me take a moment to remind those here with us what was said by the other side when it comes to fiscal responsibility and their ability to get going rolling forward, because the gentleman from Texas made reference to the point we are likely to see an omnibus bill that none of us had an opportunity to consider, just as has been the case with other bills that have come to the floor.

Back on November 8, 2006, a little over a year ago, Democrat Speaker PELOSI said Democrats are prepared to govern and ready to lead.

Would that be true, whether she was prepared to govern and lead a year ago, here we are a year later, and we are still waiting for their appropriation bills to make the way through the process. Here we are in the second week in December, which means we are already, October, November, December, all those months, a quarter into the next fiscal year, and we are still waiting for those appropriation bills to make it through the House, Senate, and onto the President's desk. Were they really ready to lead a year ago if they can't get it done at this point in time? I guess not.

A year ago their Democrat caucus chairman, Mr. CLYBURN, said Democrats offer a new direction which includes fiscal responsibility. If you just put the period after ''they offer a new direction,'' maybe that would be more telling. Their direction is deeper in debt for the country, and therefore for the American family's budget as well, because their solution is always increase taxes.

You might find that odd to think their solution is always to increase taxes if you simply listen to their rhetoric, because back in March of this year their majority leader said there are no tax increases in this budget, referring to the budget which came through the Budget Committee and eventually came to the floor of the House.

If there are no tax increases, why do we know that the tax increases are going up significantly, upwards to $400 billion on the American public because of the bills that the Democrat majority has put through?

I would point out to the gentleman from Texas that just prior to coming to the floor, the other side was speaking. It was the Blue Dog Democrats, and their solution, and you don't have to, as the gentlelady from North Carolina

says, read between the lines. Their solution to this issue of fiscal responsibility is only one-sided, and that is revenue, revenue enhancement, which is a nice way of saying tax increases.

How do we know that? The RECORD proves the case. The chart to my left shows the Republican minority attempted during various appropriation bills that were coming down to say that maybe the solution when your fiscal house is not in order is not always to raise taxes; maybe part of the solution is to rein in spending, something that every family has to do from time to time. When an American family has a problem with their budget and they are not able to make ends meet at the end of the month or week, what do they do? They usually have to rein in spending and set priorities. We suggested that. I know that the gentleman from Texas was part of this process as well to suggest perhaps what we should do is not make any draconian cuts, not say we are going to eliminate this program or that program, although some programs are certainly worthy of being eliminated. We had a much more modest proposal, and that was simply to say can we go for a 1-percent reduction in spending.

What was the Democrats' response to that? Well, on bill after bill after bill after bill, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven of the House appropriation bills proposed by the House Democrat majority, on each case we suggested can we afford a 1-percent across-the-board reduction to try to bring our House in fiscal responsibility.

Mr. HENSARLING. Would the gentleman yield on that one point?

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I would definitely yield.

Mr. HENSARLING. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't that really a 1-percent reduction in the requested increase? And so, for example, the Democrats may have suggested that some account grow by 6.7 percent, and this amendment said no, let's let it grow at 5.7 percent instead. So what we are calling a reduction, was that not really a reduction in the requested increase? Because at the end of the day, the Federal budget was still going to grow.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I appreciate that point. The gentleman is absolutely correct. It is not a reduction in overall spending so we can say today we are spending a dollar and tomorrow we would be spending 99 cents. In fact, today we are spending a dollar and we may be going up to $1.05, let's bring it down to $1.04-something as far as the actual spending. So the actual spending would still be going up, but we were suggesting going up on a slightly lower curve.

□ 2130

Democrats voting in favor of that modicum of fiscal responsibility. Well, we could get into single digits several times, with 10, 7, 11, 13, 11, 11, 11; only 11 votes out of that entire side of the aisle. I'm not sure where any of the Blue Dogs were on that one when they had the opportunity to rein in spending.

You know, I think if I recall correctly, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, the reason they said that they could not be supportive of being more fiscally responsible and support any measure was that we were not being compassionate enough. But the element of compassion in Washington, DC. apparently is measured by simply how much more money you throw at the problem. Whether or not that program is efficient, whether that program has been rated as being adequate and getting the job done, the measure of compassion in Washington is always whether or not you are throwing even more money than the party next to you is doing.

I guess it comes down to a very simply thing like this: at the end of the day they want to be able to go home to their kids or grandkids and say, well, we were more compassionate than those Republicans because we spent more money than they did on a particular problem.

Mr. HENSARLING. Would the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I shall yield, yeah.

Mr. HENSARLING. It is interesting. Rarely do you come to the House floor that somebody says, don't you have compassion? Don't you want to take money away from this American family and hand it over to this program over here?

And, again, I want our society to spend more money on education. I want them to spend more money on health care. I want them to spend more money on housing. I'm just not indifferent as to who does the spending. I want American families to do the spending. They want the Federal Government bureaucrats to do the spending after taking a huge hair cut for all the waste and fraud and abuse and duplication that takes place in the Nation's Capitol.

What I hear from my constituents, and I have the great honor of representing the Fifth Congressional District of Texas, which is Dallas and east Texas, and I hear from people like the Kirkendahls in Garland who wrote me: ''Congressman, at this point, between taxes and utilities we are at the breaking point of being able to keep a home. If we have an increase of over $2,000 per year in taxes, it may well be the straw that broke the camel's back.''

Well, where is the Democratic compassion for the Kirkendahl family as they try to keep their home?

I heard from the Taylor family in Forney, Texas also in my district: ''Dear Congressman, I'm on the verge of foreclosure after 15 years in my house. I won't be able to make it if taxes continue to rise.''

Well, where is this Democrat compassion for the Taylor family in Forney? I'm having trouble seeing it.

And so they forget about the people who actually do the work and pay the taxes, because it's their dreams once again. And so compassion, I believe that compassion ultimately shouldn't be measured by the size of a government check. It ought to be measured by the size of a paycheck. And all this Democrat spending is fueling more taxes, which will kill the jobs, kill jobs in this American economy. We start replacing paychecks with welfare checks; there's no compassion in that.

And I'll yield back to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Just a quick two points, one on the compassion issue is perhaps it is appropriate when you're dealing with money to say that if I'm taking money out of my own pocket and deciding that I will spend this on a particular program, I can honestly say if I wish to be so boastful that I am being compassionate for that individual.

But we know that the Federal Government is in debt right now. We are involved in deficit spending, which means that we are not only spending more money than we are currently taking in from the current taxpayers in this country, but also we are going into debt borrowing as well. So where are we borrowing from?

Well, we are borrowing from the next generation. So in that hypothetical conversation that a Member from the other side of the aisle must have when they go back to their children and say, well, I was compassionate today because I decided to vote ''no'' on all these fiscally responsible measures that the Republicans propose as far as reining in the spending on this side. Well, the compassion that the father or mother Member would have to say to his child, I am being compassionate because I am simply basically giving you an additional debt on my children, and my children and your children will be obligated for all of these expenses.

Now, to the other point that you were raising as far as the letters and the phone calls that you get from your members or from your constituents who are concerned about what we are doing here and that they are on the brink of foreclosure, or brink of fiscal solvency in their own right, well, that's perfectly understandable, especially in light of all that has transpired over the last 11 months with regard to new taxes that have been proposed by this Democrat majority. And I'll just refer to the chart here for a moment. And if you care to speak on any of these, you're welcome to.

These are new majority proposals, new taxes at every turn. I digress. What was Senator HILLARY CLINTON's statement with regard as running as a Presidential candidate, which I believe she said something to the effect of, I have more ideas than this country can afford to spend dollars on, or something to that effect. Well, apparently the other side of the aisle, the Democrat side of the aisle, has the same idea, that they have more proposals, more bright ideas to spend on than we

have money in the bank nor does the American family have in their bank as well. But they're going to still go and try and spend them, and they're going to do it by raising taxes.

So what do we have here? One, two, three, four, five, about seven different new tax proposals. Fiscal year 2008 budget $392.5 billion tax increase. Of course the gentleman from Texas recalls that we saw that at the very beginning of this year in about March or April of this year when we saw at that time that was the largest tax increase in U.S. history. The largest tax increase. And where is that going to be on? It's going to be on the backs of American families.

Secondly, $15 billion in new energy taxes. Well, we just passed 2 weeks ago, or last week I guess it was, we passed the energy bill, and that's even in addition to that as far as the tax increases that will be on energy production in this country. $5.8 billion in new tobacco taxes, $7.5 billion, again these are all in billions. If you can't get your hands around it, those large numbers, but that's what we're talking about. $7.5 billion in new taxes in the farm bill. A nickel-per-gallon tax increase on gas for infrastructure. So if we're not already paying enough at the pump and, remember, that also was one of the promises that the gentlelady from North Carolina was referring to before, a whole list, before you came in a whole list of promises made by the new majority that they were going to do.

One of them was an energy policy to reduce the price of gasoline. I can tell you in my neck of the woods prices are higher now substantially than when the majority came in. Now they want to add a nickel tax on top of that. A 50 cent-per-gallon tax, increase on gas for global warming. So now you're up to 55 cents on gas.

New taxes on homeownership by ending mortgage deductions and a new tax on every American with a private health plan. And actually this list is an abbreviated list that can go even further than this as far as taxes on the American public.

And with that I'll yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HENSARLING. Well, I thank the gentleman for yielding once again. And it is sometimes difficult for people to understand billions and trillions of dollars. But they certainly understand hundreds and thousands of dollars coming out of their paycheck. And so to put this in some kind of context, this largest single tax increase in history that was part of the Democrat budget resolution earlier this year, that equates to roughly $3,000 per year per family of four tax increase, $3,000. So I hope people all across America who are listening to this debate will listen very closely and write their Members of Congress, call their Members of Congress, e-mail their Members of Congress.

Do you really want that $3,000-per-year tax increase on your family? Can you afford that, to send more money to Washington, D.C. when they're already spending an average of $23,000 per family of four, the highest level since World War II?

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. And if the gentleman will yield.

Mr. HENSARLING. I'd be happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. The gentleman and I also, besides being on the Budget Committee, I also have the honor of serving with him on the Financial Services Committee. And one of the issues that we're dealing with right now of course is with the subprime situation, subprime situation as far as the tightening of the credit market of course and the decline of home prices that is probably going to continue for some period of time, peaking with regard to the resets sometime in February or March of next year. But most experts would agree that the price of homes in this country on average will be going down 3, 4, 5 percent; and this will continue during the course of 2008. And it's one of the reasons, as well, why we see consumer confidence beginning to erode, after a substantial period, a lengthy period of where consumer confidence was up.

So when you think about the economic situation of the American family right now, energy costs going through the roof. I heard a figure the other day, I think they said on average American homeowners are going to spend around $2,000 more this year just to heat their homes. There's 2,000 bucks more out of their wallets. That's in addition to more money out of their pockets for gasoline, going to and from work. And that's in addition to the fact that the values of the house in certain pockets of this country will be going down. Their financial situation for the American public is being constricted.

And what is the solution that we are hearing from the other side of the aisle while the family budget is being tightened like that?

Well, it's Uncle Sam reaching out and saying, can we have, Washington, have 2, $3,000 more so we can spend it down here on who knows what. And some of those who-knows-whats, you remember earlier on in this year, with all the pork spending that was coming from the other side of the aisle, you recall this discussion of some of the pork that was thrown into legislation, $50 million for wild blueberry subsidies, farm bill, $17 million for the National Sports program, $20 million for the National Writing Project, $6 million for unused plane tickets, $36,000 for Kentucky to protect bingo halls and on and on infinitum.

Anyone who listens to the gentleman from Texas or the gentleman from Arizona talk about earmarks will know about the wasteful spending that goes on here. But that's what's going to continue to go on so long as Washington is controlled by the other side of the aisle that says we can continue to spend without limitation because we are not setting those priorities. But we will be willing, the Democrats will be willing to reach out and take more money out of the family's pocket. So that really is the issue here at home.

And I always remember this expression from the gentleman from Texas: the focus has got to be on the family budget and not on the Washington budget. The other side of the aisle obviously has misplaced that axiom and has put the focus entirely on the Washington budget, as opposed to the Federal, the individual budget.

Again, if you were here earlier when the other side of the aisle was saying that their solutions to the fiscal dilemma that we're in right now and the problems need to be addressed in a fiscally responsible manner, never once during that entire hour discussion, and never once during any of our hearings that I can recall in the Budget Committee, have we heard from them the basic suggestion that the answer lies in the spending side of the equation as opposed to revenue.

In Washington, we really do have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. The revenue continues to come in at unprecedented rates, and that despite the fact that we had tax cuts going back as far as 2003, despite the fact that we lowered the tax rates for Americans so that they can keep more money in their pockets. The amount of revenue coming into Washington continues to go up, most times over the last several years, actually in the double-digit range year over year.

So it's not a revenue problem that we have experienced. It is a spending problem. I'm just waiting for the day that the other side of the aisle begins to realize that and will begin to work with us on some of these issues that you and I and others in the RSC as well have decided is the appropriate approach, reining in this budget as the family does.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding once again. And although I haven't kept a running tally, to the best of my knowledge, I'm unacquainted with any Federal program that has met its demise in this Congress. Instead, when you think about the 10,000 Federal programs that are already on the books, this Democrat majority is adding to them, with the exception of one agency in the Department of Labor that's supposed to provide accountability to labor union bosses to make sure that they don't misuse labor union funds. That was the only single agency that I'm aware of that has received a budget decrease of roughly 10,000 Federal programs, one to ensure the integrity of labor union funds to be protected from misuse and fraudulent use and criminal use by labor union bosses.

And so, again, the tax and spend machine goes on. And American families have to decide for themselves as they watch this debate during the holiday season what's going to be best for their families. Do they want to have a tax

increase in the neighborhood of $3,000 per family of four? Is that going to help them? Will sending that money to Washington help them with their fuel bills? Will sending that money to Washington better help them send their children to college? Will sending that money to Washington help them meet their mortgage payments, particularly if they have an adjustable rate mortgage and it resets?

□ 2145

We're talking about the here and now, but we also have to look at the future. As the gentleman was talking about, we hear the word ''compassion'' thrown on this floor frequently. People will quote scripture and talk about what have you done for the least of these. I always thought the least of these were those who do not vote and those who have yet to be born. They're the ones who tend to get ignored in this process.

So why now with all of this spending that the Democrat majority is doing, where is it leading us? Well, let me quote from the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke: Without early and meaningful action to address the growth of the Federal budget, particularly entitlement spending, the U.S. economy could be seriously weakened with future generations bearing much of the cost. Again, where is the compassion there?

Let me quote from the Brookings Institution, not exactly a bastion of conservative thought: The Nation's fiscal situation is out of control and could do serious damage to the economy in coming decades, sapping our national strength, making it more difficult to respond to unforeseen contingencies and passing on an unfair burden to future generations. Again, the least of these.

The General Accountability Office: The rising costs of government are a fiscal cancer that threatens catastrophic consequences for our country and could bankrupt America.

And these aren't my words. These aren't the words of the Republican minority. I mean, this is the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, the head of the General Accountability Office, the liberal Brookings Institution.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. And to get an idea, again, as to how that all plays out or actually where that all comes from, I gave you before a list, just a partial list of the tax increases that would be coming down the pike under the new Democrat majority.

Let's look at it as you would look at your own income tax return in a way. Part of the tax increases that you will see will go from the top to the bottom. So you can say compassion to either the richest or the poorest. The ordinary income tax at the top rates will be going up, 35 percent to 39.6 percent. Capital gains tax, which are not only for the rich, it's for our senior citizens as well who are relying on their retirement accounts, the annuities that they have put away during the course of their life, their pensions and the like which are invested, and now they're taking those funds out as far as capital gains. That's what they're living on on a fixed income. What do we see there with capital gains, 15 percent to 20 percent. That's a 5 percent increase, or actually a 30 percent increase over the 15 percent.

Dividends, likewise, increase 15 percent up to 39.6 percent, more than a double increase there.

Estate taxes. Well, estate tax, of course, is something we've debated on this floor for a long time, for the small farmer, for the small business person. Their taxes are going to go from 0 percent to 55 percent, basically making a lot of small farmers and little families when they sit down at the end of the year saying we may actually have to sell our business to hold on, and this is why.

Finally, for the lower income tax bracket, child tax credit from $1,000 to $500. Now, to people who actually really need that money, that extra $500 can be crucial. That could be a month's rent payment. That could be a food bill. That could be a car payment. They're reducing it from $1,000 down to $500.

And finally, the lowest income earners, the bottom income individuals and families in this country, they, too, will be bearing the brunt of the tax increases and the prolific spending that we see down here by seeing the lowest tax bracket go from 10 percent to 15 percent. Percentage-wise, of course, that's a 50 percent tax increase when you think about it, from 10 percent up to 15 percent, as far as a percentage increase.

So from the richest to the poorest will all be suffering, and the dollars and cents, as you make out, the gentleman from Texas, very well, comes out to how they pay their bills at the end of the month.

I yield back.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey in talking about how terrible these tax increases are going to be on the American family, but it will be not only in direct terms to having a lesser paycheck, it also threatens the very existence of their paycheck.

I toured a small business in my district about a year ago called Jacksonville Industries. They're kind of an aluminum dye cast manufacturer, and before we had passed tax relief, they were on the verge of having to lay off two people.

And when I look at what's happening in capital gains and dividends, which really help fuels job creation, you can't have capitalism without capital.

Because of the tax relief the Republican Congress has passed, they were able to go out and buy some new machinery. I don't recall what it's called, and I don't exactly know what it does, but it was big and it was noisy, and most importantly, it made them more competitive. And because they were more competitive, and I want to say they had about 20 workers, instead of laying off two workers, they hired two new workers, all because of tax relief. Tax relief allowed them to invest in the American free enterprise system.

And so instead of having four people who could have been on unemployment and four people who could have been on welfare and four people who could have been on food stamps, instead, you had four people who had jobs, who had a future, who put a roof over their head, who put groceries on the table because of a paycheck, and yet the Democrat tax increases threaten that very paycheck.

Now, they offer compassion. Oh, we have this welfare check over here. We're going to increase the government budget over here. But you cannot increase the Federal budget without decreasing the family budget, and that's what this debate is going to be about this week.

Which path do you want to be on? Do you want to be on the path of increasing the Federal budget, threatening future generations with bankruptcy, with this fiscal cancer that's going to grow throughout our Nation, or do you want to be on the path where the Federal budget doesn't grow beyond the family budget ability to pay for it, a budget that doesn't include tax increases at a time when American families are struggling to pay their health care bills, their heating bills, their housing bills?

That's what it really is. It's a debate about two different paths. Now, they may look small to Democrats. They claim $22 billion isn't a lot of money. Maybe $22 billion today, and that is a lot of money, but that's quickly going to grow to $200 billion, and within a generation that's going to cause a doubling of taxes on the next generation. And children and grandchildren of America, if we don't stop this and stop it this week, will have a lower standard of living, less freedom and less opportunity, and that's why it so's critical that we win this debate this week.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman again.

You can see this sort of going on in a microcosm from the State that I'm from, the great State of New Jersey, where a poll was done a month or so ago I understand that said if you had the opportunity, would you leave the State, and 50 percent of the respondents said, yes, they would. If you look at the actual demographic numbers over the last year, between 72- or 76,000 New Jerseyans have left the State of New Jersey. One of the reasons why they indicate they've left the State is because taxes are so high. They cannot afford to live in that State. So the individuals leave, the families leave, businesses leave the State, which will cause obviously a death spiral, if you will, to the overall economy of the State of New Jersey if it's going to continue.

Mr. HENSARLING. Would you be happy to tell the citizens of New Jersey who are fleeing the high taxes that they can come to the Lone Star State where we have low taxes and great economic growth? We'd be happy to have them.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I'm sure the gentleman would like to have them. I would like them to stay in the State of New Jersey and just see that our fiscal house is set in order in the State of New Jersey, where the Democrats just raised the sales tax by a penny and corporate taxes as well, and property taxes continue to go through the roof.

But that's a microcosm of the United States of America as well. People are doing what Ronald Reagan once said, and that is they're voting with their feet and leaving the State. Businesses will be doing the exact same thing as we begin to see taxes go up across the board in the United States if those hard decisions are not being made of prioritization.

I believe we're getting near the end of our time here. I will extend a hand to the other side of the aisle, as we continue this debate during the course of the week, to the Blue Dogs or any other Members who came down to the floor during this night or other nights as well who are looking for fiscal responsibility. If we can come to an agreement that the answer is not raising taxes but, rather, reining in spending, I believe it was the RSC a year ago that came up with a list of, correct me if I'm wrong, approximately a half a billion dollars in savings in overall spending by the Federal Government. We'd be glad to share that information with the Democrat majority if they would just take even just less than 5 percent of that to rein in their spending to keep it under the control of where the American public would like to have it.

A NEW VISION FOR OUR ENERGY FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to talk about a great vision for America's clean energy future, and it's very timely that America adopts a new vision for our energy future because we know Americans have some challenges when it comes to energy right now.

We're going to, tonight, talk about a vision for a way to revolutionize how we use and how we generate our energy that will solve some of the problems that Americans are experiencing tonight, and I think there shouldn't be any debate about what those challenges are.

We are paying well over $3 a gallon for gasoline, with no relief in sight. We've seen it go from, I don't know, $30 or $40 a barrel during the start of the Bush administration to now approaching $100, $95, $100 a barrel. Again, fossil fuel costs continue to go up.

We're engaged in a security threat from the Middle East where we are sending about a half a million dollars a minute to the Middle East to the place, to the terrorists who come to attack us, and sending money to the Middle East and have them turn around and attack us as the 22 generals who testified in front of our global warming committee told us is not a very prudent security policy.

We're engaged in a war in the Middle East, the place that there is security concerns because that's where a significant part of the oil is in the world.

So we know we have economic challenges because of rising gas prices. It's hitting us right in the pocketbook every time we go to the pump. We know we have security concerns because of our addiction to the Middle East, and now we know that global warming is an additional threat that we simply have to respond to.

Now that Americans have seen 1 million square miles of the Arctic melt, the size of six Californias simply disappeared, melted in the Arctic this year, together with the melting of the tundra, the changing weather patterns. We've certainly seen it with our rainstorms we had in my State. I represent the State of Washington. We had 10 inches of rain in 24 hours, an unprecedented event. This type of heavy precipitation events are consistent with global warming. We know we have a global warming threat that we've got to deal with.

So we know that we have some challenges when it comes to energy, and we know none of those challenges are going to get better unless we do something about it. This energy problem is not going to get solved by the tooth fairy or simply sort of pleasant wishes for the market to solve the problem. We know we have to act. We know we have to have a plan. We know we have to have a vision. And we know it has to rely on something that we're rich in in America.

And there's one thing I've got some good news tonight we'll talk about at length. We are rich in intellectual talent in America. We are the best innovators, best tinkerers, the best inventors humans have ever seen. And there was a fellow back in May 25, 1961, who really understood that. He came to this Chamber on May 25, 1961, John F. Kennedy, and John F. Kennedy came and stood right behind me in here and said that America was going to accept the challenge of putting a man on the Moon in 10 years and bringing him back safely. Now, that was a President who understood the innate capability of the American people to invent their way to solve any challenge we set our mind to.

And President Kennedy really, that was a gutsy thing to say again. He was ahead of the curve. He was ahead of the technology. That technology to get to the Moon was hardly even on the back of an envelope at that time. You know, at that moment, our missiles were blowing up on the launch pad. The Russians were way ahead of us in the space race. We'd only put Spam in a can up for 15 minutes. We hadn't even invented Tang yet.

We didn't know how we were going to get to the Moon, but John F. Kennedy knew that we could invent our way to solve this technological challenge and we did it. And we're here tonight to say that Americans have the same level of can-do spirit, the same level of optimism, the same level of technological prowess that we had in the 1960s, and that we can do for clean energy what John F. Kennedy did for space, which is to create a whole new clean energy revolution for the economy of America and grow our economy at the same time.

So I've introduced with some of my colleagues a bill called the New Apollo Energy Act. The New Apollo Energy Act basically uses the word ''Apollo'' because it's the inspiration for what we know we can do, which is to invent our way to a new clean energy future just like Kennedy in the original Apollo project did for the Moon project.

□ 2200

Well, I have some really good news. The House of Representatives last Thursday, with 235 votes, with some bipartisan support, essentially committed ourselves and accomplished five steps towards this clean energy future, and we are shortly going to take a fifth large leap for mankind in clean energy. So stealing a little bit of the language from the original Apollo 11 project, we now have had five small steps for energy independence and clean energy, and we are now starting to work on one giant leap for America's clean energy revolution.

And I wanted to talk tonight about those five steps that we have taken in the House, and the bill is now over the Senate, and one of the reasons we are here tonight is to encourage the Senate to follow the House's lead to the extent we can and move forward on these clean energy steps. And before I yield to my friend, RON KLEIN, who has been a great leader in the freshmen class on these issues, I want to start with just the first step that we took last Thursday.

Last Thursday the House of Representatives, in a history-making step forward, passed the first improvement in our fuel economy standards in 30 years. For 30 years Americans' efficiency standards have been frozen, locked in stone and haven't made 1-mile-per-gallon improvement since 1983. In fact, and this blows my mind, the cars we drive get less mileage today than they did in 1983. We have mapped the human genome. We have invented the Internet. But the cars we drive get less mileage.

Well, we're doing something about that. After 30 years of Congress being

captured by forces against and in opposition of progress, we have increased by 40 percent the mileage standards by the year 2022 from 25 miles a gallon to 35 miles a gallon. That is a square deal for Americans. It is common sense, and we have done it in a way that protects our domestic manufacturers so that they are not exposed to a flood of new imports from across the seas, and we do that by having what is called the two-fleet rule that has been preserved.

Now, the reason this makes sense and the reason it's going to work is a combination of a couple of factors. First, it is a fact that we have got the best geniuses in the world right here in America when it comes to designing cars, and I know because they are designing some cars that are going to blow this record out of the way. By 2022 we are going to have cars that are way beyond 35 miles a gallon. I want to talk about one of those cars.

One of them is the General Motors Volt. And I have here today a picture of the General Motors Volt, a car that General Motors hopes to have in production 5 years from now. This car exists. I saw it at the Anaheim Electric Car Association Convention last weekend in Anaheim, California. And this car is a miracle because it is what's called a plug-in hybrid car. This car uses new lithium-ion batteries designed by A123 Battery Company in Massachusetts. And this car you plug in. You go home at night and plug it into your garage outlet. You unplug it in the morning. You drive 40 miles with no gasoline at all, free of gasoline from the Mid East or anywhere else, for that matter; 40 miles, zero pollution for 1 to 2 cents a mile. Gasoline costs 9 to 12 cents a mile to run your car for 40 miles. After 40 miles if you want to drive 40 miles, and 40 percent of Americans' average trips are over 40 miles a day, then you use hybrid technology to use a combination of gasoline and someday cellulosic ethanol and electricity like the hybrids now run to run your normal 250-, 300-mile range.

Now, that is a tremendous deal for Americans who get low-priced fuel for 40 miles, zero CO_2. Similar cars that are on the road today get 100 miles a gallon of gasoline today using this combination of electricity. And when we use cellulosic ethanol, we'll get 500 miles a gallon of gasoline using a combination of electricity, a hybrid. Now, this technology is going to blow that CAFE standard away. And after talking to the scientists at this electric car convention, I am very convinced that this is going to happen, and GM has certainly put big money behind this. So I'm very excited about the first step, which is to improve automobile efficiency, to talk about that tonight.

With that I would like to yield to my friend RON KLEIN from Florida, who has been a leader in the freshmen class. Thank goodness this freshmen class has shown up. That's one of the reasons we are making these strides tonight.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I would like to thank my good friend from Washington, who has been working on these issues and talking and moving toward getting the Congress to act on behalf of the American people on energy issues for 10 years-plus.

And as you and I have talked about this this year, I have learned a lot from you. I know that I personally have had 20 years of my own personal beliefs that Americans can accomplish anything. You've talked to me about the Manhattan Project. We all know about Sputnik. And these were callings of a generation ago to say when America wants to do something, we want to focus our scientists, our education, our entrepreneurs, all the elements that come together so that Americans can accomplish anything, we did it. And this is the moment in time in the national security side in making sure that we never have to make another foreign policy decision based on where the next drop of oil is coming from; the new economy side, and that's the job creation that you are talking about and many people are talking about, the entrepreneurs at home in our communities that are developing the GM Volt and the other car companies and all the entrepreneurs that are developing the alternative means of furnishing energy that are different from fossil fuels; and certainly the environmental side.

And being from Florida and your being from the other corner of our country, we have a great sensitivity to our environment. And I represent a coast of 75 miles at sea level; so we are particularly sensitive that we do everything we can to make sure that our environment is protected, that we don't do things to affect the global temperature, which may, in fact, change the level of the ocean and, of course, do a lot of other damage.

These are very exciting times. And, again, as a member of the freshman class and with Democrats and Republicans in our class, we have all come to that same conclusion that you have come to along with many others and the leadership of this Congress to say this is not a choice of drilling more off the coast of Florida or in Alaska. Those are false choices. When you hear the discussion that we have to drill or we can't become energy independent, that's ridiculous. What we really need to be doing is focusing, as this bill does, on alternative renewable energy sources.

And one of the things that I am very excited about also is the correcting of something that Congress did a year or so ago, and I know you were against this at the time, but it was passed by the leaders at that time in the Congress and the President signed it. The President correctly said a couple of years ago in his State of the Union we are addicted to oil.

So what did Congress do over your objections and others? They basically gave some $15 billion or some number like that to the oil companies to subsidize them for more oil drilling. Now, we all believe in a capitalist system. We believe in for-profit and companies prospering. And the oil companies right now are making more money than any company in the history of the United States. So I find it particularly offensive as a taxpayer like everybody in the country to have to add frosting on the cake and give Federal tax subsidies to those oil companies over and above that. That's not right.

And what this bill does, and I know you are going to talk about this, is it redirects that type of incentive, those tax incentives, to change consumer behavior, to incentivize our entrepreneurs and our scientists to come up with the kinds of products that will move us toward energy independence, because it is all about this next generation. And when I speak to kids in school, I know we charge them up and say this is your calling. This is something that we as adults and our children have to really work together to make sure that we do this together.

So I'm very happy to be here in support of what you are doing tonight. And I look forward, when you are done with that, talking about a specific kind of energy alternative that is very exciting that I have been watching in my community. But I appreciate your bringing this up tonight.

Mr. INSLEE. Yes. And I want to dovetail the second step. We've got five steps we're going to talk about tonight. The second step is on the taxes to really level the playing field for new technologies.

I don't think our constituents are very happy about paying $3-plus for gasoline. They are less happy on top of that to then throw in some serious change, about $21 billion, with a ''b,'' of the money they send to Uncle Sam on April 15 that is now shelled out to the largest oil companies that are making more profits than any corporation in the history of this solar system. And there is nothing wrong with profits, but there is something wrong with taxing Americans to add to those profits to, frankly, a very mature industry. This is not like this is a new industry that we are helping to get going. They've been around since 1880 or 1890 from the fields of Pennsylvania. This is a very mature, very profitable industry.

So what we have done in this bill is reel back in the misbegotten largesse that has been shelled out to the oil and gas industry to the tune of $21 billion. And what we are using that for is to help Americans adopt new clean energy technology. And it's going to be taken away from about five major oil companies, and it is going to be given to 300 million Americans that can use tax breaks when they buy a fuel-efficient car like this plug-in hybrid car or when they weatherize their house and put in more insulation or when they want to buy energy-efficient heating or cooling.

This is like taking from the few, if you will, who never deserved it and giving to the many who need this help

now to adopt their old infrastructure, houses, cars, businesses, to the new clean energy. And it is going to do something for our business community too, and I want to talk about that. And this is Florida-specific. Mr. KLEIN represents Florida. I want to talk about a technology that is a kind of technology that we should be assisting.

This is a picture of technology called solar thermal technology. This is designed by the Ausra Company, A-u-s-r-a. The Ausra Company has developed a way to concentrate the Sun's radiant energy on a pipe. You can't see this very well, but this is a pipe of water that is essentially heated up by the reflected Sun rays. And they have discovered a way to make these mirrors very inexpensively and then heat this water and develop steam and drive a steam turbine and generate electricity. This company just signed a contract for 300 megawatts for a utility in Florida, enough for somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000 homes that they are going to produce electricity for with zero carbon dioxide, zero greenhouse gas emissions in Florida, 177 megawatts in California. And they believe that, within about a decade, once you make enough mirrors so you bring down the cost per unit of mirror, they will be able to compete with coal-based electricity.

Now, what makes sense, and what we have done, with a few Republicans' help, and it's not many but a few, we have reeled back in that $21 billion from the oil and gas companies and we have redirected some of that assistance to a company like the Ausra Company so they can develop this new technology. Now, that is a proactive action, and I am very happy to report that second small step.

Now, the gentleman wanted to talk about a specific technology. I would like to yield to him to talk about that.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I would like to thank the gentleman for the recognition about solar. Being from Florida, we call ourselves the Sunshine State. It seems like one of the most appropriate places to be one of the founding areas of solar, and yet many other States, including the State of Washington, which has a fairly active solar program, have been developing this further. But I am very excited about this project that you have mentioned in Florida or anywhere in the United States. Of course, we all know about wind power. We have large utilities in the country. We have one in our area, Florida Power and Light, FPL, that is one of the largest wind generators in the country, in Texas and other places, California. There is no one solution here.

The good news is there is a competitive economy out there. There are competitive scientists that are coming up with different ideas. I am going to mention another very interesting one.

Part of what this bill does, as you correctly mentioned, is it provides grants and seed money and challenge grants to new industries and entrepreneurs that are developing new ideas. The Gulf Stream, we have all heard about the Gulf Stream, it is a current that runs along the eastern United States from the southern part all the way up to the eastern coast of the United States and Nova Scotia. It's a fast-moving current. Billions of gallons per minute pass off the coast of Florida, for example. We have a Centers of Excellence at Florida Atlantic University that has been developing, and there is a program out in Oregon that is doing something similar, where with turbines in the Gulf Stream itself, they can generate enough electricity, they believe, over time, to power one-third of the power needs of the whole State of Florida.

Now, we have 18 million people that live in the State of Florida. Think about that opportunity. And there are other places along the eastern seaboard of the United States that if this technology can be captured and the electricity can be generated, again, as you point out, no greenhouse gas emissions. This is totally 100 percent clean, renewable. They are working through all the environmental issues right now. They believe there will not be any as they continue to develop this.

□ 2215

It is still at midstage testing, but the opportunity is there.

And again, what's exciting now is we're capturing this excitement. The American people understand this is a necessity that we have to do these kinds of things. This is one particular program I'm interested in because I've already seen the potential that it may accomplish.

But along with solar, along with some of the other things that we're going to talk about, there are great opportunities for the United States to become energy independent in a relatively short period of time, no different than Brazil, no different than other countries around the world that have found their own natural resources that can be used, Iceland and other places, that can be used to generate the power needs for growth, for success, for a clean environment. And again, it's just very exciting.

I'm glad to be here to support this bill and encourage not only the Senate, but the President, too, when this bill gets to him, because I'm confident that Congress is going to pass a bill that's going to include most of these items that we're talking about today. When it does pass, we are going to really get the American people behind this. So, Mr. President, I hope that as we get this to you, that you join us in really taking this mission that we have to the American people and our next generation.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, I hope that that occurs.

And I'm really excited about power off our coastline as well. We have a little coastline off the Pacific coast which actually has the potential to generate power from waves. Mr. KLEIN talked about power from currents, where you can have turbines that turn, like a windmill or rotary moving mechanisms, but we also have huge power from waves that simply go up and down that are generated by the wind. And off our coast right now, we have some buoys going into the water, and as they bob up and down, they compress water, and that generates compression that turns the turbine that generates electricity. And this is a technology that is in its infancy, but there is enormous power in our wave power. In a 10x10 mile stretch off the Pacific coast, there is enough electricity for all the electrical needs of California, for instance. So, here's another technology.

I want to compare this technology to wind power. I've got a picture here of the largest wind farm in the western hemisphere, it's in southeastern Washington, in my State. These are, I think, almost three-quarters to one megawatt. That's enough for 1,000 homes, each one of these turbines. They are somewhere between 250 and 300 feet high. And what that power represents now is absolutely clean power, which today is the least expensive power that we can buy in the Pacific Northwest. If you want to get the cheapest power you can buy right now, this is the cheapest power essentially that you can buy, cheaper compared to even coal fire, or as cheap as a coal fire plant. That's why there is huge demand for these turbines. Actually, the pricing has gone up because there is so much demand for them, people want to buy them.

The reason I mention wind in conjunction with wave power and tidal power is a lot of people think that wave power and tidal power is sort of where the wind industry was about 20 to 25 years ago, in its infancy. When this started, people laughed at it. They thought it was like a big tinker toy with a bunch of folks living in a teepee that were dreaming up. And for a long time it was ahead of its time. Now it is commercially viable, it is supporting thousands of jobs. The Speaker's State of Pennsylvania has a company called Gamesa that is manufacturing these turbines. In Iowa, the Clipper Turbine Company is manufacturing. We want to make these and put them out to the world.

That's why the third step, we've talked about the first two, the auto efficiency standards, the tax fairness provisions, and now the third step we've taken is what we call the renewable electricity standard, which requires 15 percent of our electricity to come from a combination of renewable energy, clean energy sources, wind, solar, wave, enhanced geothermal, and efficiency. And we believe if we simply create those demands for these technologies, if you demand it, they will come. And these technologies will take off once we have these demands.

So, this is an important part of the package. Some of our colleagues across

the Chamber and in the Senate are balking at this. If we don't get this through now, we will next time. We will make some adjustments to it and get it through, because once people find out about these technologies, they're ready to rock and roll.

I yield to Mr. KLEIN.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. If I can just add something to the gentleman's thoughts about that.

Part of what we're doing here is creating market. That is the exciting part. Obviously entrepreneurs are going to invest and make the capital investments if they know that they can sell the product. As you said with the windmills, the turbines, a market has been created. It has now justified itself to the point where the price is actually going up because the demand is there, which is great. That's great news. And some of these technologies that are being developed are at different stages. But the whole notion of creating an obligation to have 15 percent of the electricity we generate, instead of from fossil fuels, coming from these renewable energy sources will, again, move in a way which are your public utilities will come together and find ways to enhance and encourage companies to come forward and provide these products.

We are behind the curve in Europe. Europe is way ahead of us on this. Most European countries already generate a much larger percentage of their energy from renewable energy sources. And they have recognized and they've taken it upon themselves to do this, by law, voluntarily, or otherwise.

The whole notion of the environmental impacts of global warming and things like that, these are not limited to anybody's border. They're not limited to the United States' borders. They're not limited to any State. They're not limited to China. It's a worldwide issue. But Europe, in fact, has shown some good leadership here. And I think that the United States, and I know that Americans, as I said before, are very innovative people who respect their environment, that we can all work together. And this notion in this bill of making the 15 percent obligation is good because it not only makes the statement, but it creates the market which will in turn create the jobs and the new economy that will sustain and build these types of products, which is very exciting.

Mr. INSLEE. And what we have found, the genius of this, like you said, once the demand is created for these renewable energy prices, there is a very, very tried and tested rule that kicks in, which is, they become cheaper over time. And people say, well, gee, some of these things cost more than coal right now or oil and gas. Well, that's true right now, but look at what the experience has been over the last two decades. These are graphs from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory of the renewable energy cost trends over the last 25, 27 years, and there is remarkable consistency.

Wind energy started out in 1980 about 30 cents, 32 cents a kilowatt hour. It came down dramatically, until now it's down to in the range of 6 to 8 cents in this graph, that actually might be a little optimistic, in the year 2000. Look at this enormous reduction over the last 20 years because of improvements in technology, and the fact that once you have scales of economy, you manufacture more of these, they cost less.

Same thing with solar thermal technology, that type of technology I showed earlier with the mirrors, heating up the water, started out at 60 cents a kilowatt hour in 1990, gone down to about 8 cents a kilowatt hour now in the year 2000. Again, these are, frankly, a little optimistic. These charts are a little less than the numbers I've heard quoted, but you get the general trend that it's incredibly down.

Photovoltaic solar energy, that's the kind most of us are familiar with, which you have a silicone panel, and it just takes the sun's energy and spins off an electron and creates an electrical current, started at 100 cents a kilowatt hour, now it's down to 22, 24 cents a kilowatt hour.

And what we find in these charts, in almost all these technologies there is almost this kind of law, I don't know if it's got a name yet, when you increase by a factor of 10 the number of units of these renewable sources, the price comes down 20 cents. Now, what does that tell us? We know two things for sure; the cost of fossil fuels is going up, and it isn't coming down. China is coming on like gang busters. They're demanding. They want to start buying the oil for their cars, too. And as their economy grows, that demand is going up. And we know we're not producing, we're not keeping up with the pace of demand for the increase in our oil production, so fossil fuel is going up over time.

We know these renewable sources are coming down over time, including geothermal, which is coming down dramatically again, from 1 dollar in 1980 down to about 26, 28 cents now. So, we know these are coming down. These lines are going to cross. And if we're going to hitch our economic star to some technology, let's hitch our star to the technologies that are getting cheaper, not the ones that are getting more expensive over time. And that's what this bill has done.

I yield to Mr. KLEIN.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. And to further your point, the supply is indefinite. It's infinite. It's perpetual. It's forever. Oil is not. And it's not a question of whether there is going to be enough oil on the ground for the next generation; it's the question of the people that are supplying the oil are not reliable sources, they're not necessarily friends of the United States. We're at their whim. We've seen the statistic, when President Bush was sworn into office in 2000, oil was at $28 a barrel. It is now $90 to $100 a barrel, depending on what day is going on here. OPEC, we have no control over that. This is a cartel of people that are not acting in our best interests at best, and at worst, in some cases, some of these organizations, these countries are financing people who are out to harm the United States. So, we are totally off in the wrong direction in terms of oil, and that has obviously been a mainstay.

Now, oil will continue to be part of our source, and that's fine. But in terms of our future, as you correctly said, where do we want to put our efforts, our resources, our energy? It should be in these renewable resources because they are coming to the point where there is going to be a crossover, and the sooner we have total control over our energy destiny, the better off we're going to be from a national security point, from an economic growth point, and everything else.

Mr. INSLEE. I would now like to turn to the fourth small step that we've taken, and the fourth step that we've taken is to embrace what we call the first fuel of clean energy. And the first fuel of clean energy is not wasting it. What we have found, and I've done a lot of research in this field, almost always the cheapest energy and the most effective energy you can get is the energy you don't waste. The efficient use of energy is the first place we've got to look.

Our bill in many ways demanded more efficiency for Americans. It demands that our lighting industry produce lighting that is 40 to 60 percent more energy efficient. It demands that our air conditioning units become much more efficient, that our buildings become much more efficient. There is a provision in there that we want to create model building codes, that when we build our buildings they won't waste as much energy as they do.

Many people believe that probably 30 to 40 percent of the road we have to travel we will get there simply by not wasting energy. And I want to go to exhibits A and B on that, show you a picture of a couple of folks in Redmond, Washington, Mike and Meg Town. They're standing in their doorway here. Mike is a science teacher at Redmond High School. It's a rainy environment out northeast of Seattle. And a few years ago when he was teaching his kids about clean energy, one of his kids said, Hey, Mr. Town, if you think this is so hot, why don't you build a house like this? And he said, I think I'll do just that.

So he basically set out to build a zero electrical net usage home by using efficiency, conservation, and a little bit of photovoltaic, and he did it. And here is a picture of his home. It didn't cost much of anything more than a normal home of this site. I think you'll agree it's a nice-looking place. It's in a rainy environment, but he managed to make it zero net electrical usage by doing some commonsense things. He used a little additional insulation. He used energy-efficient windows. He designed a home that uses a little bit of what's

called passive solar heating, so the solar rays, when we get them in Seattle, which is twice a year, I think, on August 12th and 13th, heats the inside of the home. And he did some photovoltaic array. He put on himself these darker panels up here on the roof that he actually put on.

And now Mike says one of the great joys is, first off, he uses about half as much energy as a normal home. And when he does use it, he's producing it largely with his PV system. And when he's generating more than he uses, his meter runs backwards. And he says there is nothing more fun than going out and watching your meter run backwards as you're feeding electricity back into the grid.

So, Meg and Mike Town are sort of walking examples of what our bill is going to do, which is to help Americans weatherize their homes, make sure their businesses are using energy-efficient appliances, and when we do that, we're going to use this first fuel. That's kind of a commonsense thing to do.

So, I want to move to the fifth step now. And the fifth step that we took is we adopted what's called a renewable fuel standard. In a renewable fuel standard, we guaranteed that we will have 32 billion gallons of biofuels that will be homegrown in the United States in the next 20 years. And the reason we said that is we think it makes more sense to get our energy from middle western farmers rather than Middle Eastern sheiks. And it doesn't make a lot of sense to take our subsidized agricultural products, export them, take the money from the international buyers, and then just ship it to Saudi Arabia. It's just kind of a shell game with money. Let's cut out the middle man and grow our own.

For those who doubt we can do that, I want to refer them to a little company in Grays Harbor, Washington, and I like to tell a little story about this company.

□ 2230

This is a picture of the Imperium Biofuels biodiesel plant in Grays Harbor, Washington. It is on the coast of Washington State. Imperium Biofuels is the largest biodiesel plant in the world, and it is in Washington State. It produces 100 million gallons of biodiesel, principally using canola oil, some additional oils that they are using, soybean and a couple of others. This company started from a guy in Seattle, Washington, who was a pilot, who got tired of flying airplanes, he got bored of flying airplanes and decided he would start an energy company. He started brewing up biodiesel in his garage. And the part of this story I like is he went to the Rainier Brewing Company and he got two old brewing vats from the Rainier Brewing Company, and he started brewing up biodiesel. What a great can-do story. He went out and raised some capital and now built the largest biodiesel plant in the world, and plans on building 10 or 20 more of these.

Now, with the capacity of biodiesel and with advanced forms of ethanol, and I am talking about advanced forms of ethanol, we have the capacity to provide 25 to 30 percent of all our transportation fuels from homegrown United States crops without jeopardizing our food chain, without jeopardizing the production of our domestic food supplies. And the reason for this is, and if you talk to John Plaza he will tell you about this, we have the capability of using whole new types of biofuels. We know we use corn ethanol now. But we only use the seed of the corn. We only use the kernel. We are now going to have cellulosic ethanol which uses the whole plant, all of the carbohydrates, from the stalk, the stem, what they call the corn stover, from wheat chaff that is now left on the ground. There is a company called Iogen in Idaho that is planning to bale it up and make that into cellulosic ethanol. When we do this, we will be able to produce a significant part of our transportation fuel.

So this is our fifth step. It is common sense. It is home grown. And for those who have heard a lot of controversy about corn ethanol, I have been talking to the scientists on this. You will be blown away by what is coming. There are crops now in development, one called miscanthus by a company called Mendel Biotechnology in Hayward, California. It is a crop they have developed that is four to five times more productive than corn per acre of ethanol. Now when farmers can start selling four to five times more ethanol per acre than they are today, we will decrease the pressure on our land. This crop uses less fertilizer and less water than corn today. So we look at corn ethanol as sort of the DC–3 of biofuels. It is a start. We are going to move forward to the Boeing 787, which is cellulosic ethanol.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I am going to add another form of ethanol out there that I think people around the world are familiar with in Brazil, which is a very large country, it is a fully industrialized country. They decided a generation ago to move towards energy independence for the same reasons we are having these discussions here today in this country. And they have oil. They have lots of other things, but they use sugar-based ethanol, a different type of ethanol based on a sugar product, and it is cellulosic based.

I have heard and some of the research that has been done, well, it is not as efficient, and there are food-chain issues and everything else. As far as I am concerned, and I know that many Members of Congress and most Americans believe, where there's a will there is a way. If there are any technological limitations to anything we have talked about tonight, they can be overcome. I think this entire conversation needs to be about how can we move forward in all these areas. If there is a limitation, let's figure out how to overcome that.

Again, sugar-based ethanol in Brazil, their ethanol that is a big part of their production. The cost is slightly different from here, but, again, let's figure it out. It could be a question of production; it could be a question of greater efficiency of production of sugar cane, where in Florida we have a very large production of sugar cane, and obviously most of it is used for production of food. In other parts of the country, sugar beet and other things are used to produce sugar.

But the point of all this, and I think the part that is so interesting, is that various types of alternative or renewable energy sources are already in production as you have in Washington in different stages. And we are allowing every one of these to compete. That is the greatest thing about our economy. It is a system where the great ideas, the great science will move forward and whatever is most efficient over time, it could be any combination of ways that we are going to achieve energy independence in this next generation, we will do it. So when I hear people, the naysayers, the people who say, oh, we can't do this, there is this problem, there is that problem, we can do it. We are going to do it. We will do it. It is going to require everybody to partner together, consumers to drive this, industry to drive it, education and scientists to drive it, government partnering with the private sector to drive it. It is going to happen.

Again, I am so proud to be part of a Congress that recognizes this and is moving this notion forward, and I'm proud the American people are finally coming together and saying, hey, this is something that is all about who we are, how we define ourselves, we being the great leaders in the world; and science and other things are going to use our scientists and our technology to achieve these great goals. It is exciting to see a plant like that with all the silos and all the great things going on there. They are already the largest in the world. That is pretty exciting.

Mr. INSLEE. What is neat about this is a lot of these things are happening in areas that have previously been quite depressed. This is an area that has really been hurt when the timber industry has had some tough times. And now we have got this, and there are two other very green industries that have developed in Grays Harbor, Washington.

You look around the Midwest where the ethanol plants have gone up, these communities have really revitalized. A lot of them have been using co-ops. This is not all money from Wall Street. These are co-ops where people have banded together and built their own industry. It is a very unifying experience when these communities do this.

We see this happening in the inner city where we are developing green collar jobs, where we are improving the efficiency of older buildings. When you have a green collar job to rebuild a building to make it energy efficient, that job doesn't get shipped to China.

It is right here. It is a local green collar job. That is why we are excited about that.

We talked about the five steps we took last Thursday: number one, auto efficiency, which we are calling for; number two, commonsense tax fairness to move some of these things away from oil and gas to these new businesses and consumers to help them; number three, the renewable energy standards so we can have clean energy electricity; number four, the efficiency standards that Mike and Meg Town used to such effect to allow your home to be efficient; and, number five, the renewable fuels standard where we are calling for advanced fuels.

And by the way, our renewable fuels standard requires these advanced biofuels. It requires about two-thirds of this to be from these advanced forms, not just corn ethanol, but advanced forms of ethanol in the future. So those are five significant steps.

Just to note how significant they are, there has been an independent group that evaluates energy policy that has evaluated a very similar plan to this and concluded that when this plan is implemented, it will save more carbon dioxide from going into the atmosphere, the principal global warming gas, than all of our cars and trucks are putting into the atmosphere today. This is a big, big deal. We know we have to reduce our carbon dioxide by probably 80 percent by the year 2050 to prevent carbon dioxide from going over twice preindustrial levels. This is about maybe 35 or more percent of the way we need to go. So it is a very significant first five steps on that path.

For those who are interested in this subject, I want to congratulate Vice President Al Gore for winning the Nobel Peace Prize. I read his acceptance speech, which anyone who is interested in the subject I would recommend it to them. It is available on some Web site somewhere. It is a brilliant statement of the planetary emergency we now have, and I would encourage people to take a look at it because it will give you a sense of urgency that we have.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I am going to give you a plug because not only did Al Gore obviously earn the Nobel Prize for what he did, but Mr. INSLEE you have also taken upon yourself not only to work in this Congress, but you also have independently written about this subject and you have brought forward a publication called ''Apollo's Fire.'' I don't know if you talked about it in the very beginning. I am going to give you a little plug because I have had a chance to take a look at it. It is an inspirational book that talks about what we have talked about tonight and where the country is going.

I will read one quote which I thought was very self-descriptive, and this is a quote out of your book. It says: ''A new Apollo Project for energy is really a mission to rebuild our economy. Smart energy policy is, in fact, good economic policy. The two are inextricably intertwined. Done right, solving our crisis of climate change and oil dependence can create tremendous opportunity for America and the world, not only by avoiding the severe economic harm of climate disruption, but also by driving new investment into local and metropolitan economies, increasing social justice and reducing economic disparity by creating new career ladders and skilled domestic jobs across the economic spectrum.''

And I think in that quote you have captured a lot of what America is interested in: the environmental issues, the impact on our whole society and the job opportunities that go on. It doesn't touch the national security issues because I think people clearly already know it is a bad deal for us to depend on other countries. But the internal things that operate inside the United States, our economy, our daily lives, our jobs, the fact you are spending $60 for a tank of gas on something that is creating problems in the economy, in the environment, and instead we can go in a totally different direction. The book you have entitled ''Apollo's Fire'' I think lays it out very nicely. And I just wanted to mention that because I commend you and I recommend the Members of this body to take a look at that because I think it lays it out very clearly in a very simple fashion so that Americans can take that charge and move forward with it.

Mr. INSLEE. Well, this is why this is something that can unify us, because it is an economic growth plan, it is something that can unify us, red State, blue State, urban, rural, all of us can get behind economic development. And we have seen instances of that tonight when we have talked about that. I think the bill that we have promoted ought to be able to promote that economic development in rural and urban areas, red and blue States. I really think it is a unifying message.

We mentioned these five steps, but there is a giant leap for mankind that will be on our plate when we return in January, that is, we have to find a way to limit the amount of carbon dioxide that is going into the atmosphere. And the ultimate way to do that is what we call a cap-and-trade system, which we hope to embrace and pass in this House next year.

A cap-and-trade system does two things. First, it caps the amount of total carbon that goes into the atmosphere, the total amount of pollution, the total amounts of carbon dioxide and methane that contribute to global climate change. And we have done this in a variety of pollutants, particularly sulfur dioxide, which we have a cap on. Previous Congresses have put a cap on sulfur dioxide. But we have a giant loophole in that there is no cap today for carbon dioxide and some of these other global warming gases.

So next year, we will be working on a plan to cap the total amount of these global warming gases that go into the atmosphere and give the Americans the confidence and the security to know that their grandkids aren't going to be exposed to runaway climate change associated with global warming. And then we are going to insist that polluting industries that put that pollution in the air have to pay for that. They can't do it for free any more.

Essentially, they have been using the atmosphere like a private garbage dump, like they back their truck full of junk and dump it into your county park. We don't let them do that, dump their junk in our county park, and we are not going to let them dump their CO_2 in the atmosphere any more with zero cost.

So there will be a charge associated with that and that will be tradable amongst industries to make it efficient. So when we adopt this cap-and-trade system, we will truly have the ultimate incentive for the geniuses of America to create these technologies, and we will be looking for people's input on this. We hope to have a bipartisan bill to do this, because there is no Republican or Democrat, or shouldn't be in this debate. We want to have something that all our kids can have a future on and we hope to do that. So, Mr. KLEIN, I wonder if you have any final comments.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. I thank the gentleman for bringing this issue forward and allowing us to discuss this in the Congress. I certainly am going to recommend to our colleagues here in the Congress, the House and the Senate, while we go home and have a chance to have some working days at home during the holidays, to speak to our business entrepreneurs in our local communities, speak to our universities, speak to the scientists, speak to consumers.

I think, number one, that people are excited about these ideas; but as you are suggesting, this is just the first step. Whatever law we pass ultimately you can pass all the laws you want and it is up to Americans to say, this is our priority. This is something we are going to embrace. And this is something we are going to follow through. The private sector ultimately is going to drive this. We encourage our businesses. We encourage our academics to work together and come up with new ideas, express those ideas to the extent that government can partner, if there are things we can do to eliminate regulation or change policy to make things easier to move it in a direction where businesses and homeowners can do things to create more environmentally friendly pieces of property improvements, things like that and industry. It is good for all of us.

So I look forward to working with you and the rest of the Members of Congress and moving our country forward on this very important topic.

□ 2245

Mr. INSLEE. Well, we have a ways to go, but we have made five maybe not-

so-small steps for a few people here in Congress and in America. We have one giant leap for mankind to come. But we have got a great start, and this is going to help Americans, both their environment, their security and their economy, and that is three bold steps.

Thanks for your participation, Mr. KLEIN.

THE GROWING AND DISTURBING TREND OF FOOD AND CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY RECALLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the floor tonight and discuss a growing problem that we seem to be seeing, a disturbing trend in food and consumer product safety recalls.

Mr. Speaker, the danger is very real. It has been widely documented, discussed in the media, in committee hearings, and around the water cooler at work. We have just come through a summer of recall after recall after recall after recall.

What is the upshot of this, Mr. Speaker? The upshot is that parents are afraid. Parents are afraid that their children are playing with lead-tainted toys. Parents are afraid that magnets in toys or charms may cause internal damage if a child accidentally swallows them. Families are afraid that the food they feed their pets may actually have little bits of plastic in it and poison their beloved pet. People are afraid that their toothpaste may contain antifreeze and poison them. People are afraid that the fish they serve to their families may have dangerous levels of antibiotics contained within them.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about specific concerns, but generally people are afraid. They are afraid about the source of these products and dangers, and rightfully so.

Mr. Speaker, people are afraid about defective products being imported into our country, and it seems like almost all of those imports come from a single source, a single country, the People's Republic of China.

Consumers' health and well-being are being endangered on two fronts; in the food we eat and the goods we use. I want to use some time tonight to talk about both fronts and what we in Congress are doing, what we have done, and what we should be doing to protect American families from harmful products.

Let's first consider the issue of consumer product safety recalls. It seems like the Nation has also turned its attention to this issue. Every time you turn on the TV, every time you open up a newspaper, you learn about yet another consumer product safety recall. While people are concerned generally about the issue of recalls, many people, many people, myself included, are concerned with the source of the recall. Again, Mr. Speaker, I stress, it appears that the majority of recalled products originate in and from the People's Republic of China.

Now, I have signed up for e-mail notification for recalled products through the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, and I seem to get almost daily e-mails announcing the latest recalls. And, yes, most of the recalled products were manufactured in China.

As a parent, as a physician, one recall that was announced last month was extremely disturbing. I am referring to the infamous recall that literally had a child's product, the Spin Master Aqua Dots, laced with the chemicals that are contained in the drug Rohypnol, the infamous date rape drug.

Mr. Speaker, it is an innocent enough looking product, an innocent enough looking toy, a little bit interesting. I bet if my daughters were still little, they would have loved this. However, while it may look innocent, this product is actually a wolf in sheep's clothing.

In the recall notification, and I encourage everyone to sign up for the recall notification at CPSC.Gov, the Consumer Product Safety Commission listed the injuries that these beads caused, these beads that were available just a few weeks ago on the shelf of any store that any of us could go to in our communities back home.

''The Consumer Product Safety Commission has received two reports over the last several days of children swallowing Aqua Dots. A 20-month-old child swallowed several dozen beads. He became dizzy and vomited several times before slipping into a comatose state for a period of time.''

Well, that is a pretty serious situation. A 20-months-old child? It doesn't say how long the comatose state lasted, but I submit to you any length of time that a 20-month-old child spends in a comatose state is alarming, frightening, disturbing and upsetting to the parents. And to think it was caused by a toy that they bought to amuse their child, well, it is almost unthinkable, unthinkable as a parent, that that could happen.

A second child also ingested some dots, vomited and slipped into a comatose state and was hospitalized for 5 days.

Mr. Speaker, according to a report on ABC News, quoting here, ''Scientists say a chemical coating on the beads, when ingested, metabolizes into the so-called date rape drug gamma hydroxy butyrate. When eaten, the compound, made from common and easily available ingredients, can induce unconsciousness, seizures, drowsiness, coma and death.''

While it is not yet clear how the chemical wound up in the child's product, it is clear, it is very clear, where this product was manufactured. It was manufactured in the People's Republic of China.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are here working away trying to finish up our business, because Christmas is right around the corner, and with the Christmas season upon us, I cannot help but think there has to be a huge market in this country for something that not only doesn't say ''made in the People's Republic of China,'' but says ''made in America,'' ''made in America'' on the toy, on the goods that we buy. Wouldn't that be something?

I encourage retailers to stock as many ''made in America'' products as they can. Since the majority of products that are being recalled this year were made in China, this year, this year my family and I have made the personal decision to try not to buy anything with the ''made in China'' label. Given all of the circumstances, it seems like the right thing to do for my family. And I am certain that other American families have come to a very similar conclusion. You can't turn on the television at night without hearing Lou Dobbs talk about this, and I bet his family is one of those families as well.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at just a few of the products that have been recalled, shall we? The concern about these imported products is real and it has been substantiated with real data. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, which is tasked with the job of trying to safeguard our society from unreasonable risk of injury and death associated with consumer products, informed me in that in fiscal year 2007 there were a record-breaking 472 consumer product safety recalls. Of the 472 recalls, more than 60 percent, over half, were manufactured in the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Speaker, more than 60 percent of all recalled products this past year were made in China.

Furthermore, of the 472 total consumer product recalls, 61 of those recalls affected our most innocent and vulnerable members of society, our children. Sixty-one consumer product recalls were toys. And how many of those products were manufactured in the People's Republic of China, you might ask? Well, Mr. Speaker, I am glad you did. That figure is even more staggering. In the United States, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated that over 90 percent of the toy recalls originated in the country of China. It is clearly now becoming a common business practice for Chinese toys.

So here is the question: Does the label ''made in China'' translate into ''this product may be hazardous to your health or to your child's health?'' Here they are, just a few of the products. This poster was actually made a little bit earlier, it was close to Halloween and you see some Halloween type motifs here, but products that any child would delight in owning. But these are products that have been found to be unsafe and recalls have been issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Well, let's look at a little bit more recent picture. How about today? Is that recent enough? December 11, 2007. From today's Wall Street Journal, ''China stands for quality'' was the title of the piece, and it had this cute little teddy bear cartoon associated with the article.

In the article, China's Vice Premier says some interesting things, and I would like to share some of those interesting things with you tonight, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps I will even offer an opinion or two about those claims.

First she says, ''The Chinese government takes product quality and food safety seriously.'' I say prove it.

She also states, quoting again, ''China has come a long way in strengthening product quality and food safety control supervision.'' I would tell you, I would submit that that country has not gone nearly far enough in this regard.

Here is the kicker, Mr. Speaker. She ends the piece by saying, and I am going to paraphrase here for brevity, China will live up to its responsibilities, but we would appreciate understanding, support and help from our trade partners. That is the end of the paraphrase.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, with all due respect, we are past the point of understanding. Mr. Speaker, there are lives on the line. These are the lives of our friends, our neighbors, our children, our neighbors' children. It is time, it is time, Mr. Speaker, that we act, that we act in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I previously was a physician in my former life before coming to Congress 5 years ago, just a simple country doctor. But you have got to keep asking yourself over and over again, what can we do to protect ourselves and our families? For the safety of our families, we have to get to the bottom of what is the cause behind all of these recalls.

Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I sit on four subcommittees that have conducted intense investigations on the issues of food and product safety matters. One subcommittee on which I serve, the Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over consumer product safety issues, has systematically investigated this issue this past fall.

We passed individual bills recently that have dealt with specific issues of consumer product safety concerns, including a bill that I amended in order to increase the safety of ornamental pools in our parks and public spaces in our cities.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee will be marking up bipartisan legislation later this week that will strengthen the consumer product safety system in this country. Mr. Speaker, the bill is H.R. 4040, for those keeping score at home, the Consumer Product Safety Modernization Act, and almost 80 other Members of this body have cosponsored the legislation, and I am an original cosponsor of the legislation as well.

It is an important piece of legislation, and it has, as promised, promised by our chairman of the subcommittee, it has come through the regular process. All Members have a chance to comment and, if they wish, to submit amendments, to try to make amendments to try to perfect this important bill. This, quite honestly, is the way we should formulate legislation. Not just in the Committee on Energy and Commerce, but in the whole House as well. I want to thank the leadership of the House Energy and Commerce Committee for being committed to the legislative process, because I think it has worked and served to make this a better bill as it has come through the process.

The version in the House is truly a bipartisan effort. I commend the chairman of the full committee, Chairman DINGELL, and Ranking Member BARTON, for their participation and leadership in getting the process to this point.

I would also like to commend the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission Acting Commissioner Chairwoman Nancy Nord for her honest assistance in trying to get a good bill through the committee. We asked for technical assistance and we asked for constructive criticism, and it was provided to us.

Mr. Speaker, in H.R. 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Modernization Act, the House was able to craft a comprehensive, commonsense bill that boosts the funding for the Consumer Product Safety Commission. It boasts their personnel. It bans lead in children's products. It requires third party testing. It increases the penalties for those that break the law.

H.R. 4040, again which has almost 80 bipartisan cosponsors, also has the support from consumer groups, industry, and in fact from the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The full committee, the Committee on Energy and Commerce, has realized finally that in order to protect our children, we have to work together.

□ 2300

We were able to put politics aside and do it in a very pragmatic, cooperative way. The House, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the consumer groups, and the industry all worked together to get this done. A lot has been reported about a bill in the Senate, but in reality it is because our House committee worked in such a cooperative manner with all of the stakeholders that we are now just perched on the very threshold, literally the eve, of passing H.R. 4040 through our committee. The Senate hasn't been able to do this, so the legislation may languish a bit longer, but I hope they take the lead from this inspired and bipartisan piece of legislation.

Now, both sides of the aisle, both sides of the dais in the committee had to compromise on several things, but I don't believe we ever compromised the safety of our children. I am an original cosponsor of the bill; I don't think it is a perfect bill. I have proposed amendments in the subcommittee process, and I am going to propose amendments when we mark the bill up later this week. For instance, I firmly believe that we have to improve the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission's ability to notify consumers and retailers about dangerous products more quickly and in a much broader scope.

During a hearing earlier this year with the chief executive officer of a large toy company in this country, I started wondering about some of the nonprofits in my district, people that do good work. They collect items for resale; they sell a large amount of resale items and collect money for other good works that they do. But I wondered, how do they find out about recalls? If the product is recalled, do they know it? Will they be able to remove it from their shelves so it doesn't then pass into the hands of some other unsuspecting consumer or child? And if they don't know about them, what can we do? What can we do in the United States Congress to make sure that they are indeed aware?

Well, after discussing this issue, I must tell you, I have got an outstanding nonprofit corporation in my district back in Denton County, back in north Texas, Christian Community Action. After talking about it with them, I became very concerned that there may be a large group of people and associations that are not receiving the information about product recalls in a timely manner. As we all know, products are recalled because they have been found to have some element of danger to the consumer, and they need to be immediately discarded or handled in some other way.

Nonprofits like the Salvation Army, Goodwill, and my own community Christian Community Action, and even smaller nonprofits that serve an even more specialized segment of the community, they provide many valuable resources. Often, these nonprofits run second-hand retail shops to additionally help some of the neediest members of society, certainly members of society that you really don't want a recalled product ending up in their hands. However, as I said before, I have been informed by some of the nonprofits in my district that, through no fault of their own, they are unaware of the recalls. And, therefore, the fear is that they may inadvertently sell a recalled product to a family or to an individual or to a child.

This gap had to be closed, and I was able to offer an amendment that subsequently was accepted and the amendment will help us close the gap. This happened in the subcommittee markup on the Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection Subcommittee. That

amendment makes it unequivocally clear that the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission must reach out and educate second-hand retailers, like Christian Community Action back home in my district, and must provide additional educational materials about the recalls. This new provision will help make our second-hand retail shops safer, and that makes our communities safer. It makes our children safer.

Now, I am pleased that the amendment was accepted, and I have also been working on other ideas. I want to talk about them just a little bit more in a moment. But I have also introduced legislation dealing with food imports, which basically will give the Food and Drug Administration a big red button to push to be able to stop a dangerous food or drug from entering the country. We see the little teddy bear coming down a conveyor belt there. Well, if we know that the teddy bear has got rohypnol in his running shoes or polonium in his paws or formaldehyde in his fur, we want to be able to stop this product from coming into the country. And this is something that I have become very concerned about.

I want to give similar authority to the Food and Drug Administration to give them a big red button to push to stop dangerous foods from entering the country. At a hearing that we had at the beginning of November, I asked Chairwoman Nord if she had the authority, that same authority for the Consumer Safety Commission that I was trying to give to the FDA, and she said no.

Therefore, over the past several weeks I have been working on trying to incorporate these same ideas into H.R. 4040, which, again, deals with consumer product safety. So this Thursday, when we do our markup in full committee on H.R. 4040, I will be offering two additional amendments at the full committee markup.

Right now, the current law lists five ways that an imported product can be refused admission into the United States. Now, I was somewhat chagrined to learn that the list did not include products that had been recalled. That seems just common sense. Do we ever need that stop button. We need to stop dangerous products from other countries from entering into our shores and certainly from entering into our stream of commerce. It seems to be common sense that products that have been found to be dangerous should be stopped at the border and denied entrance into this country; but, unfortunately, that is not always the case.

And think about that for a minute, Mr. Speaker. You have got a product that has been recalled because it has lead in some part of the product, but we don't stop it from coming into this country. What happens to all that stuff? It accumulates in a warehouse somewhere, presumably. Presumably it is not diverted into the stream of commerce at some point along the line. But even just aggregating a lead contaminated product in a warehouse somewhere means at some point someone has got to do something with it. They can't just keep paying rent on a warehouse for a product that is not moving and not going anywhere and not making them any money. This product is going to have to be destroyed.

Well, you can't bury it in a landfill because then you contaminate the groundwater. You can't burn it because then it goes in the air; we all breathe it. We know that is not a good thing for a lead-contaminated product. We need to stop that stuff from even coming into our country.

So I will be offering an amendment that would immediately add recalled products to the list of reasons as to why a product should be refused admission. I know it sounds simplistic and that is something that should already be done, but apparently that is not the case.

Unfortunately, while the leadership of the committee agrees that the stop button approach has much merit, to avoid possible violations of trade laws, and for the life of me I don't know why we would be concerned about that; it seems like someone is violating the trade laws on the other end. But the committee thinks, in order to avoid violations of trade laws, that we need to hold an additional hearing on this very subject on this idea before enactment.

I am going to offer the amendment when we mark up the bill on Thursday. Because of this concern, it likely will not be accepted. And I would like to get the understanding from the committee that we have got to go forward with this idea and enact legislation that will give the Federal Government a true measure, a true way to stop dangerous products from other countries, from coming into our country and hurting our families and our children.

Now, while this amendment may not be successful this run, I have been able to gather support from the committee on another and equally important amendment. As I mentioned before, right now, current law in the United States of America, there are five ways that a product can be refused admission into the United States. As I began my study of this section of the law, my first question was: If the Federal Government already has a law in place to stop harmful imported products from entering the United States of America, then why, why, why are we seeing recall after recall after recall, a record-breaking number of recalled products being manufactured and imported into this country?

The second question was: What types of inefficiencies are there in the laws that need to be remedied?

Well, after looking at a list of the five ways we could refuse admission of an imported product, two of the five ways immediately caught my attention. The law reads that a product can be refused admission if the product ''is or has been determined to be an imminently hazardous consumer product in a proceeding.''

Now, what does that mean? Well, the law defines an imminently hazardous consumer product as a consumer product which presents imminent and unreasonable risk of death, serious illness, or severe personal injury.

I think it fits the bill. So the Federal Government already has a way to stop products from entering into America if they pose a risk of death, serious illness, or serious injury.

When I originally learned of this, I thought that this section of the law could and should keep Americans safe. But when I asked the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission how many times the law had actually been used, the answer was five times. Five times. Mr. Speaker, do you want to hazard a guess when the last time this law was used? Let me give you a hint: Ronald Reagan was President of the United States. The year 1998 was the last time the law was used.

Realizing that this section posed an incredibly high bar in order for it to be used, especially since a proceeding had to be held prior to enforcement, I turned to the next way that a product could be denied admission. The law also reads that ''a product can be refused admission,'' and again quoting here, ''if it has a product defect which constitutes a substantial product hazard.''

Again, what do they mean by that? The law defines a substantial product hazard as a product defect which, because of the pattern of the defect, the number of defective products distributed in commerce, and the severity of the risk or otherwise creates a substantial risk of injury to the public.

It seems to be a little bit lower bar, to me, so I thought surely, surely this section could be used to keep Americans safe. Well, I was wrong again. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission did not have the exact number of times that this section had been used to deny admission of imported products, but the information I got back was that it was ''rarely used.'' Rarely used. Rarely used. Rarely used to protect Americans from dangerous products.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Congress, if we see inefficiencies in the law, we have a duty to make changes, to make changes in the law to make it work, make it more efficient.

I don't pretend to have all of the answers to make this law more perfect, but I know that we must do something to increase the effectiveness of these provisions. Americans are relying on us. Americans are relying on their Members of Congress, on the United States Congress to do just that. Therefore, I will be offering an amendment to our bill when we mark it up on Thursday to H.R. 4040 that will require the United States Consumer Product

Safety Commission to study the effectiveness of these five ways to refuse admission of an imported product, especially the first two ways that I just went over: the Commission must report back to Congress on a specific strategy, including any new legislation needed to implement such a plan which will be used to increase the effectiveness of their ability to stop unsafe products from entering into the United States.

I have been informed that I have the support of the leadership of the committee on a bipartisan basis to allow this, what I consider a very vital amendment, very basic but vital amendment to go forward. We desperately need a way to stop defective products at our borders. The American public should know that these products will not come into this country. I want the American people to know that I for one am not going to stop working on this until we have the problem solved.

Let's move on from our friend the teddy bear. And just as a matter of public service, while we continue to work on legislation regarding consumer product safety, Mr. Speaker, I realize that I can't speak directly to people who might be watching on C–SPAN, whether they be Members of Congress or just ordinary Americans; but if I could speak to them in their living rooms, what I would want to say is I would encourage them to sign up for product recall alerts. It is easy, it is free, and it can save a life. If you have access, again, Mr. Speaker, if I were able to speak directly to people watching this on C–SPAN or Members watching in their office, I would say that if you have access to the Internet or if you have access to e-mail, all you need to do to receive these alerts is go to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's home page, which is www.cpsc.gov, and sign up for free recall and safety news. Again, the Web address, www.cpsc.gov, and you can sign up for the product alerts. I have done that. You get about an alert a day. It is a little disconcerting at first, but it is important information. And the Consumer Product Safety Commission also has a neighborhood safety network which is for organizations, for civic-minded individuals to help disseminate information about recalls, provide posters to members of society who may not be aware that the recall has happened and that the recall may affect products that they have in their home.

Mr. Speaker, we all know education can save lives. Unfortunately, though, certain groups of Americans, some of them elderly, some of them living in urban settings, some living in very rural settings, and I have got both in my district, some low-income families, minority groups, often don't hear about the safety messages from the government, and so we need additional ways of outreach.

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Please, I would ask, Mr. Speaker, we ask our fellow Members of Congress to help make communities safer by getting the word out about product recalls.

I am a member of the Neighborhood Safety Network and we disseminate information about recalls via my Web site, www.house.gov/burgess.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked a lot about consumer product safety recalls. Let's talk about food safety. You think it is the same thing, but it is an entirely different process. We have had so much discussion about this that I feel people probably are asking is Congress doing anything, has Congress paid any attention to the safety of the food we eat?

The answer is, yes, we have paid a lot of attention. We haven't got a lot of press about it, but I am again a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and we are pursuing an active investigation and then subsequent legislation to confront the problem. As a member of the Oversight Investigation Subcommittee, we have taken an active role in investigating the safety of our Nation's food supply.

In August, our subcommittee sent a bipartisan group of investigators to China to see firsthand some of the causes of the problem. In the committee's staff report, the investigators came to the following conclusion from their trip and investigation thus far. Quoting directly from the staff report:

Number one, it would appear that the Chinese food safety supply chain does not meet international safety standards. It is, in fact, responsible for very serious domestic Chinese food poisoning outbreaks. It is happening in their own backyard.

Number two, findings of the bipartisan field investigators, the Chinese government appears to be determined to avoid embarrassing food safety outbreaks in export markets due to the damaging and potentially lasting effect this would have upon their ''Made in China'' branding.

Well, that is pretty powerful. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I can digress for a moment, you almost wish if American importers and manufacturers had that same concern about what damage they may do to their individual brands by continuing to import, albeit inexpensive products, but products that aren't safe.

Americans want to feel safe. If it cost an extra $1 for a Barbie doll, I bet they are willing to fork that out.

Finding number three, the lack of meaningful regulation of farming and food processing in China and the advanced development of the document counterfeiting industry and the willingness of some entrepreneurs in both China and the United States to smuggle foodstuffs that do not meet quality standards necessitates a much more vigorous program of inspection and laboratory testing in China and the United States ports of entry than the Food and Drug Administration has been willing or able to provide to date.

Mr. Speaker, these are important conclusions and we simply cannot sit by and watch the problem worsen. We have to transform the Food and Drug Administration into an agency that can fully cope with the importation problems of the 21st century.

The Energy and Commerce Committee is doing our part. In addition to the staff trip to China, we have had five hearings to discuss the topic ''Can the Food and Drug Administration Commission Assure the Safety of the Nation's Food Supply?''

What have we learned so far? At a hearing on July 17, 2007, on this very topic, former FDA Associate Commissioner William Hubbard testified that in 1999 the FDA drafted a legislative proposal which would have given the Food and Drug Administration authority to require foreign countries to take more responsibility for the foods that they send to the United States. The agency's proposal would have allowed the Food and Drug Administration to embargo a given food from a given country if there were repeated instances of that food being found contaminated when it arrived in the United States.

Countries that send safe food would have no reason to be concerned because they would be unaffected. But countries that demonstrated a pattern of disregard of United States safety standards would have to increase their oversight of food exported from their country. They would have to do it. Unfortunately, Congress did not accept this recommendation in 1999, and the situation with imported foods has gone from bad to worse to truly awful.

Now, Congress had a chance to examine the problem and consider recommendations on how to solve the problem, and that was back in 1999. The world was a different place, and it was perhaps difficult to anticipate the acceleration of foreign products that are coming into our country that occurred over the last decade or decade and a few years more.

Was the safety of food products from foreign countries not a priority for Congress back in 1999? And the answer to that question is not as much as it should have been. Why we have allowed this problem to persist when they know how much harm these unsafe products have potential to cause, I can't answer. We may never know the answer to that question. But as I stand here tonight, I will absolutely, absolutely assure you this is a priority of mine and I intend to do something about it.

Now, October 11 of this year, the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations had the third of a five-part series of hearings on the Food and Drug Administration's ability to ensure the safety and security of our Nation's food supply. According to testimony given by Mr. David Nelson, the senior investigator for the Energy and Commerce Committee, currently the Food and Drug Administration does not go over and see if the food products that are produced in China are done under the

same standards as here in the United States of America. These are the products that are produced in China and sent over here for our consumption. These are the products that Americans will be consuming, and they are not being produced under American standards.

When we had that hearing, Ranking Member WHITFIELD on the subcommittee asked Mr. NELSON if you were speaking to a group and a member of the audience asked how safe it is to consume products produced in China, he answered, You would be taking your chances on any imported food.

Mr. Speaker, that is a chance we simply can't afford to take. America has to have the authority to prohibit these foods from coming into our country if they are not safe. We have to have the ability to determine if they are produced according to our standards. We have to be able to stop foods that we would, according to Mr. NELSON, be taking our chances on.

Now, Chairman DINGELL asked Mr. NELSON whether or not the Food and Drug Administration can protect the United States' citizens from unsafe imports with the resources the Food and Drug Administration currently has. Mr. NELSON's answer was, That would be an emphatic no. Just not just no, but an emphatic, underlined, bolded no.

When I got a chance to ask a question, I asked Mr. NELSON what did they do about food to eat while in China. He sort of laughed and sort of didn't laugh and said, Well, we ate what everyone else ate. And I asked how he was feeling, and he said, Just fine. But actually, some of the members of our committee staff did become ill when they were traveling in China.

Now, I was very interested in the protocol that they follow in China after discovering a contaminated supply of food, and the hearing we were having that day really concentrated on poultry and poultry products.

During my questioning of Mr. James Rice, the vice president and country manager of Tyson Foods in China, I asked what I thought was a fairly simple question. I said, When you find a problem, do you communicate that to, say, the United States authorities so they can be on the lookout for similar products in other facilities?

This was a little bit disturbing, Mr. Speaker. He said, No, we don't.

He explained to me, because Tyson was using local Chinese suppliers and the products are mostly for the Chinese market, they didn't feel that was necessary. So, in essence, there is no dialogue whatsoever. Mr. Rice told me if persistent problems from one supplier were identified, no one would alert others as to the presence of this problematic supplier. There is no system in place, no early warning system, no system of surveillance, not even any honor among thieves, it appears, to let people know about a bad supplier in their midst.

Mr. Speaker, that is a serious, serious problem. And it is so important, so important that I introduced legislation that relates to this 1999 proposal, H.R. 3967, the so-called Imported Food Safety Improvement Act of 2007, because I firmly believe the Food and Drug Administration needs the ability and the explicit authority to immediately stop dangerous foods and products from coming into this country.

And it is a pretty simple concept. Goods are coming into this country. If goods are coming into this country on a long conveyer belt and you find a bad apple on the belt, the Food and Drug Administration needs to be able to push a big red button that says ''stop'' and immediately stop that contaminated product from continuing on downstream into our stream of commerce.

My legislation would give the Food and Drug Administration that big red button to push. The idea is simple. If enacted, the Food and Drug Administration would have the authority to embargo a specific food from a specific country if there were repeated instances that that type of food or product had been contaminated. It seems so simple. We have got to be able to stop countries from sending harmful food products into the United States.

My bill, H.R. 3967, will allow us to finally take control of the food being sent to America. And this is important as well, Mr. Speaker. It sends a strong message to countries that in the past have played fast and loose with our regulations, that in the past have not seen a problem with continuing to send contaminated products into our country.

Well, we are going to tell them it is a new day and it is a different set of rules. You solve the problem on your end or we will end the problem over here. After summer of recall upon recall upon recall, it is time to take matters into our own hands, and I will no longer tolerate hearing a different news story every day of the week about a new and dangerous product coming into the United States of America from the People's Republic of China. China is sending these products to America and then they are being recalled. We can do a little better than that.

The Health Subcommittee of Energy and Commerce, of which I am also a member, had a legislative hearing on September 26 regarding Chairman DINGELL's bill, H.R. 3610, the Food and Drug Import Safety Act of 2007. Having reviewed this legislation, I think the chairman's intentions are good, and obviously I look forward to working with the chairman on this issue. I cannot support every single provision in the bill, but I do support the spirit of the proposed law.

I believe we need to look toward how other Federal agencies have dealt with this issue and whether it would be appropriate to give the Food and Drug Administration similar authority or authorities.

According to the Government Accountability Office, 15 Federal agencies collectively administer 30 laws related to food safety. Do you think we are suffering a little bit from too much division of labor?

The Food and Drug Administration, which is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and the Food Safety and Inspection Service, which is part of the United States Department of Agriculture, together comprise the majority of both the total funding and the total staffing for the government's food, safety and regulatory system.

However, food safety laws and regulations vary greatly from one agency to the other and not all foods are treated equally. For instance, the United States Department of Agriculture has jurisdiction over meat, poultry and eggs, and has established equivalency determination standards for those specified foods.

On October 11 at the third Oversight and Investigation hearing on the FDA's ability to assure the safety and security of our Nation's food supply, the Under Secretary for Food Safety at the United States Department of Agriculture, Dr. Richard Raymond, gave the following testimony and provided a definition for equivalency: ''Equivalency is the foundation of our system of imports. It recognizes that an exporting country can provide an appropriate level of food safety even if those measures are different from those applied here at home.

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''The Food Safety and Inspection Service has always required an assessment of foreign inspection systems before those nations can export into the United States of America. This prior review was mandated by our laws, which originally required that a foreign system be equal to our system before that foreign product can be admitted.''

He further went on to state: ''An exporting country has the burden of proving that its system is equivalent to our own if that country wishes to export to the United States.''

Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand in applying a system of equivalency to the Food and Drug Administration, which, in fairness, has an 80 percent jurisdiction over all food imported, as compared to 20 percent for the United States Department of Agriculture, I recognize that that system of equivalency for the Food and Drug Administration is going to be difficult. It's going to be onerous. Currently, only 33 countries are eligible to ship meat or poultry into the United States because of those very high standards established by that equivalency protocol. If the exact standard that the United States Department of Agriculture employs was used by the Food and Drug Administration, it would drastically change. Some people would even say it would cripple the food import system if there were not enough resources to support it.

Again, remember, the United States Department of Agriculture which has a system of equivalency, oversees 20 percent of the imports. The Food and Drug Administration, which does not have a system in place for inspecting sites in other countries, has jurisdiction over 80 percent of the food imports. You can begin to see some of the discrepancy there and the magnitude of the problem that faces us.

Mr. Speaker, the former Speaker of our House, Speaker Newt Gingrich, is famous for quoting in his second principle of transformation: ''Real change requires real change.'' This is just such a situation. This system needs to be drastically changed.

Consider this, Mr. Speaker: in 2005, nearly 15 percent of the overall United States food consumption was imported. Between 1996 and 2006, the amount of United States imports of agriculture and sea food products from all countries increased 42 percent. Furthermore, in the last decade the volume of Food and Drug Administration-regulated imports has tripled.

Chinese imports to the United States of America have increased more rapidly than the global average. And between the years 1996 to 2006, the volume of imports of Chinese agriculture and sea food products increased by 346 percent. China is now the third largest exporter of agricultural and sea food products to the United States of America, only surpassed by our neighbors to the north and south.

So perhaps our food import safety system should change. It needs to change drastically. The Food and Drug Administration was created at a time where we were still domestically growing and producing the majority of our own foods. And we've got some real issues here at home to deal with regarding our food regulatory system. But at least we have a regulatory system with which to deal with the problem. This is not the case for all countries from which we receive food.

It seems that it would be common sense that we would only import food from a country if they can prove that their system is just as good as ours. And yet only the United States Department of Agriculture can require this, which, once again, controls only 20 percent of the imported food. The Food and Drug Administration, which cannot control that issue of equivalency, is responsible for 80 percent of the food imports. It seems to be very arbitrary that the system that the United States Department of Agriculture can employ is so much tougher than the system employed by the Food and Drug Administration. Yet, at the end of the day, where does all that food end up? It's on your table, and it looks the same whether it's regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture or regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. Americans don't discriminate from which agency had the regulatory control over the food that was imported from other countries. And it's kind of curious that in Congress we make that distinction. Congress is responsible for these dual standards and Congress must have a candid discussion on whether or not we need to make these systems more comparable, if we need to establish the same system of safety for the Food and Drug Administration that we already have in place for the United States Department of Agriculture.

It is my goal to encourage this frank discussion at the committee level and here on the floor of the House, Members on both sides of the aisle. And we've both got to continue to have input on this important issue. As we all know, the system works best and we have the most effective legislative product if bills are allowed to go through the regular process. And I implore leadership to allow this important piece of legislation to go through that regular legislative process.

We've seen two instances this year on our Committee on Energy and Commerce with H.R. 4040, the bill that we're going to mark up on Thursday, being the second one. The first was when we reauthorized the prescription drug user fee and the medical device user fee for the Food and Drug Administration. That bill came through regular process. And I didn't like everything in the bill at the end of the process, but you know what? It was a good bill. And it passed the House and it passed the Senate and the President signed it into law at the end of September.

And for the first time we've got a robust, data-gathering capability within the Food and Drug Administration which the country has needed and has lacked for 40 years. We did this. This Congress did this, accomplished this by working together in a bipartisan fashion through regular order. We've got the same opportunity here on the Consumer Products Safety bill that's before the full committee on Thursday.

And the other side of the equation is, look what we've done with reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Plan. Here's a bill that every one of us, when we stood in this Congress and we raised our right hand and we swore the oath and were sworn into Congress, every single one of us, man and woman, knew that the State Children's Health Insurance Program had an expiration date of September 30 of 2007. And what did we do? We languished; we didn't have hearings. We didn't have a markup in subcommittee. We crammed some great big obnoxious bill through the full committee, came to the House floor without even being discharged by our committee. The bill was so bad that the Senate wouldn't even touch it. Now that's a bad bill.

And then we got this process from the Senate; and instead of taking the Senate bill back to our committee and working on it and trying to improve it, we treated it as if it was a conference report, but everyone in Congress knew it wasn't a conference report. But it was brought to the floor like a conference report so you couldn't amend it, you couldn't change it, you couldn't try to make it better and it was rammed down our throats; and it was passed and the President vetoed it; and we sustained the veto, and then we're going to go through the same gyration again here this week.

And that's not necessary. We have a way of doing things right. We have a way of producing for the American people, if we'll just do it and put the politics aside for a little while.

Well, let's not allow the issue of protecting our families from harmful and dangerous goods coming from other countries also become the debate of Republican versus Democrat. That is something that I am certain holds residence in the minds of all of us working together to find the most efficient and the most effective method of solving this crisis now, making it a priority for everyone and getting the problem solved now and then moving on to other things.

Now, I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that last month the President's working group on import safety presented their proposal to both the President and to Congress. While I wish that the working group had been able to present their proposal somewhat earlier than they did, I do believe that they have presented many sound policies and that we should incorporate this while formulating our legislation. I, myself, am still reviewing the group's findings.

It is pretty voluminous, but I was pleased to read that they would also like to see a legislative proposal that would give the Food and Drug Administration additional authority for preventive controls for high-risk foods. If you'd like to read their proposal, it is available on the Internet at www.importsafety.gov. Import safety is all one word, all lower case.

Now, I know many people watching this are asking themselves, you know, is there a down side to all of this that we should consider. The answer is, yes. We've always got to be cautious about jumping over the line and encroaching the, increasing the ever expanding grasp of the Federal Government.

There's no doubt that the Federal Government has an important duty to the safety and welfare of all Americans, but the last thing you want is for the Federal Government to control absolutely every aspect of every little item that you buy.

There is a balancing test and I, for one, am going to continue to be cognizant of that fact. But there is also a very clear and present public safety danger that has to be dealt with. We must be vigilant in our plight in restoring safety and trust back to the foods we eat and the products that we use. I believe that H.R. 3967, the Food Import Safety Improvement Act, will further this goal, as will amendments that I'm going to make in H.R. 4040 later this week.

Compromising the safety of foods that we put on our tables is not an option. Compromising the consumer products that we buy for our families is not an option. Compromising the security of Americans will not be an option. Compromising cannot be an option that we turn to because we lack the power. H.R. 3967 and my amendments to H.R. 4040 will restore some of that power to Americans.

Mr. Speaker, again I started off this talk with the notion that when people are out shopping this Christmas season and they pick up something and they look at the underside of it and it says ''made in China,'' maybe that translates into ''use at your own risk.'' I do encourage consumers to beware, be aware of where the products are made, be careful about the products that you bring into your home.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer sit back and allow these harmful products to reach our homes. All Americans, myself included, have a choice to take a stance individually and to not buy products if we don't think they're safe. And if you see ''made in China,'' remember, that's a warning label. But we can go a little further than that. Stricter rules are necessary. Funding, increased funding, increased personnel are necessary. And now it's up to Congress. It's up to Congress to create and enact those rules.

Mr. Speaker, you've been very indulgent, and I'm going to yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. MATHESON (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and December 12 on account of attending a family funeral service.

Mr. LUCAS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of inclement weather.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of personal reasons due to family matters.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of travel delays.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SUTTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. PELOSI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DINGELL, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. JONES of North Carolina) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, December 17 and 18.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and December 12, 13, 14, 17, and 18.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, December 17 and 18.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, for 5 minutes, December 12.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Ms. Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 710. An act to amend the National Organ Transplant Act to provide that criminal penalties do not apply to human organ paired donation, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3315. An act to provide that the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center shall be known as Emancipation Hall.

H.R. 3688. An act to implement the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement.

H.R. 4118. An act to exclude from gross income payments from the Hokie Spirit Memorial Fund to the victims of the tragic event at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 12, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4414. A letter from the Acting Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis Rural Development Utilities Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Servicing of Water Programs Loans and Grants (RIN: 0572-AB59) received October 25, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4415. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Dried Prunes Produced in California; Increased Assessment Rate [Docket No. AMS-FV-07-0103; FV07-993-1 FR] received November 27, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4416. A letter from the Chairman and CEO, Farm Credit Administration, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Disclosure to Shareholders; Annual Report to Shareholders (RIN: 3052-AC37) received December 6, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4417. A letter from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Selected Acquisition Reports (SARs) for the quarter ending September 30, 2007, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2432; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4418. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on the cost effectiveness of the Defense Commissary Agency and specified nonappropriated fund instrumentalities purchasing commercial insurance, as directed by Section 663 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4419. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Energy, transmitting a report concerning plutonium storage at the Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina, pursuant to Public Law 107-314, section 3183; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4420. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7997] received November 26, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4421. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received October 25, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4422. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations [Docket No. FEMA-B-7738] received October 25, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4423. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations [Docket No. FEMA-B-7745] received November 26, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4424. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Federal Credit Union Bylaws — received November 26, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4425. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — REVISIONS TO RULES 144 AND 145 [Release No. 33-8869; File No. S7-11-07] (RIN: 3235-AH13) received December 7, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4426. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — EXEMPTION OF COMPENSATORY EMPLOYEE STOCK OPTIONS FROM REGISTRATION UNDER SECTION 12(g) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934 [Release No. 34-56887; International Series Release No. 1305; File No. S7-14-07] (RIN: 3235-AJ91) received December 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4427. A letter from the Attorney, Office of Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Regulatory Law, Department of Energy,

transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products: Energy Conservation Standards for Residential Furnaces and Boilers [Docket Number: EE-RM/STD-01-350] (RIN: 1904-AA78) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4428. A letter from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's report on the project to monitor the location of radioactive sources of concern, the National Source Tracking System (NSTS); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4429. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a six-month report prepared by the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 13222 of August 17, 2001, and continued on August 14, 2002, August 7, 2003, and August 6, 2004 and August 15, 2007 to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4430. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Department of Defense, transmitting Pursuant to Section 27(f) of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 1(f) of Executive Order 11958, Transmittal No. 13-07 informing of an intent to sign the Research, Development, Test, and Evlauation of Overhead Non-Imaging Infrared Data Exploitation Tools and Techniques Memorandum of Understanding Among Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2767(f); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4431. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 08-28 concerning the Department of the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Saudi Arabia for defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4432. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 08-29 concerning the Department of the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Saudi Arabia for defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4433. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 08-23, concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Kuwait for defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4434. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 08-25 concerning the Department of the Navy's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to United Arab Emirates for defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4435. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 08-17, concerning the Department of the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to United Arab Emirates for defense articles and services; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4436. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Government of Canada (Transmittal No. DDTC 102-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4437. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles and services to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Transmittal No. DDTC 091-07); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4438. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the 2007 annual report on the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, pursuant to Public Law 106-309, section 304; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4439. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting an alternative plan for locality pay increase payable to civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule (GS) and certain other pay systems in January 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5305(a)(3); (H. Doc. No. 110-78); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and ordered to be printed.

4440. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-182, ''Appointment of the Chief Medical Examiner Temporary Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4441. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-184, ''Real Property Tax Benefits Revision Temporary Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4442. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-185, ''Closing Temporary Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4443. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-186, ''Washington Convention Center Authority Advisory Committee Continuity Temporary Amendment Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4444. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-190, ''Neighborhood Investment Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4445. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-189, ''Fire Hydrant Inspection, Repair, Maintenance, and Fire Preparedness Temporary Amendment Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4446. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-188, ''East of the River Hospital Revitalization Tax Exemption Temporary Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4447. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-187, ''Access to Youth Employment Programs Temporary Amendment Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4448. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-181, ''Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4449. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-180, ''District of Columbia Consumer Protection Fund Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4450. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-179, ''Doubled Fines in Construction or Work Zones Amendment Act of 2007,'' pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4451. A letter from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for FY 2007, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act and the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4452. A letter from the Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's first of three annual reports on the category rating system, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3319(d); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4453. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4454. A letter from the Audit Liason Group, Department of Justice, transmitting the Semiannual Management Report to Congress for April 1, 2007 through November 30, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act), section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4455. A letter from the Chairman, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's consolidated report addressing the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and the Inspector General Act Amendments of 1978, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act), section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4456. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting a semiannual report on Office of Inspector General auditing activity, together with a report providing management's perspective on the implementation status of audit recommendations for the period April 1, 2007 through September 30, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4457. A letter from the Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the Office's FY 2007 Performance and Accountability Report; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4458. A letter from the President and CEO, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's annual report in compliance with the Inspector General Act Amendments of 1988; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4459. A letter from the Interim Director, Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's Annual Management Report for Fiscal Year 2007, as required under OMB Circular No. A-11, Section

230-3, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4460. A letter from the Chairman, Postal Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's Semiannual Report for the period of Late June 2007 through September 30, 2007, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

4461. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's ''Major'' final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Five Endangered and Two Threatened Mussels in Four Northeast Gulf of Mexico Drainages (RIN: 1018-AU87) received November 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4462. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish, Crab, Salmon, and Scallop Fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area and Gulf of Alaska, Essential Fish Habitat Rule Correction [Docket No. 0612242862-7534-03; I.D. 013006I] (RIN: 0648-AU93) received November 26, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4463. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Monkfish Fishery; Framework Adjustment 4 [Docket No. 0612243159-7456-03; I.D. 020507A] (RIN: 0648-AU34) received October 9, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4464. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Extension of Effective Date of Gulf Red Snapper Management Measures [Docket No. 0612243157-7522-05; I.D. 112006B] (RIN: 0648-AT87) received October 9, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4465. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Procedures for Designating Classes of Employees as Members of the Special Exposure Cohort Under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000; Amendments (RIN: 0920-AA13) received December 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

4466. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of Defense, transmitting the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair, Michigan, Comprehensive Management Plan; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4467. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on the technical evaluation of the three different approaches specified in Pub. L. 110-28, Sec. 4303; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4468. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Security Zone; Hawaii Superferry Arrival/Departure, Nawiliwili Harbor, Kauai, Hawaii [Docket No. USCG-2007-29153] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received December 6, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4469. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Sacramento River, Rio Vista, CA [Docket No. CGD11-07-014] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4470. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Upper Mississippi River, Clinton, IA [CGD08-07-026] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4471. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulation, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Belle Chasse, Louisiana. [CGD08-07-024] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4472. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW), at Scotts Hill, NC [CGD05-07-095] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4473. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Lake Champlain, North Hero and Grand Isle, VT [CGD01-07-135] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4474. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operating Regulations; Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Morgan City to Port Allen Alternate Route, Lower Grand River, Bayou Sorrel, Louisiana [CGD08-07-035] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4475. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Kennebec River, Bath and Woolwich, ME [CGD01-07-152] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4476. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Rigolets Pass, Mile 6.2, between Orleans and St. Tammany Parishes, LA. [CGD08-07-031] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4477. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Taunton River, Fall River and Somerset, MA [CGD01-07-148] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4478. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Tchefuncta River, Madisonville, LA. [CGD08-07-037] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4479. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Bonfouca Bayou, Slidell, LA. [CGD08-07-034] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4480. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), mile 49.8 near Houma, Lafourche Parish, Louisiana. [CGD08-07-039] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4481. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Gowanus Canal, Brooklyn, NY [CGD01-07-130] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4482. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Milhomme Bayou, Stephensville, LA. [Docket No. CGD08-07-022] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4483. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Sabine River (Old Channel) behind Orange Harbor Island, Orange, TX [CGD08-07-040] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4484. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operating Regulations; Sabine Lake, near Sabine Pass, Port Arthur, Texas [CGD08-07-043] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4485. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, Mile 1134, Key Largo, FL [Docket No. CGD07-07-252] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4486. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Cheesequake Creek, Morgan, NJ [CGD01-07-158] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4487. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of

Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Ouachita River, Louisiana [CGD08-07-020] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4488. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Liberty Bayou, Slidell, LA. [CGD08-07-032] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4489. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Raccoon Creek, at Bridgeport, NJ [CGD05-07-109] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4490. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, FL [Docket No. CGD07-07-251] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4491. A letter from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Tar River, Washington, NC [CGD05-07-107] received December 10, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4492. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Kotzebue, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-28146; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-07] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4493. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Fire Penetration Resistance of Thermal/Acoustic Insulation Installed on Transport Category Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24277; Amendment No. 121-330] (RIN: 2120-AI75) received October 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4494. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 Series Airplanes; Model DC-9-81 (MD-81), -82 (MD-82), -83, (MD-83), and -87 (MD-87) Airplanes; and Model MD-88 Airplanes [Docket No. 2003-NM-198-AD; Amendment 39-15176; AD 2007-17-18] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4495. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD-90-30 Airplanes [Docket No. 2003-NM-194-AD; Amendment 39-15177; AD 2007-17-19] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4496. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28379; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-077-AD; Amendment 39-15182; AD 2007-18-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4497. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER) Model EMB-135BJ Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28158; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-018-AD; Amendment 39-15168; AD 2007-17-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4498. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model 717-200 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28282; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-068-AD; Amendment 39-15169; AD 2007-17-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4499. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2006-24270; Directorate Identifier 2005-NM-200-AD; Amendment 39-15170; AD 2007-17-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4500. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747-100, -200B, -200C, and -200F Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28257; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-034-AD; Amendment 39-15171; AD 2007-17-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4501. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Pacific Aerospace Limited Model 750XL Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28436 Directorate Identifier 2007-CE-055-AD; Amendment 39-15178; AD 2007-17-20] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4502. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A321 Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28358; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-019-AD; Amendment 39-15172; AD 2007-17-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4503. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. FAA-2007-28300; Directorate Identifier 2006-NM-292-AD; Amendment 39-15173; AD 2007-17-15] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4504. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Lady Lake, FL [Docket No. FAA-2007-28549; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-15] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4505. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Live Oak, FL [Docket No. FAA-2007-28102; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-8] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4506. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Winfield, FL [Docket No. FAA-2007-28554; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-13] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4507. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Gainesville, FL [Docket No. FAA-2007-28548; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-14] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4508. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Forest Hill, MD [Docket No. FAA-2006-24320; Airspace Docket No. 06-AEA-13] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4509. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Class D and E Airspace; Utica, NY Amendment of Class D and E Airspace; Rome, NY Establishment of Class E Airspace; Rome, NY [Docket No. FAA-2007-28559; Airspace Docket No. 07-AEA-03] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4510. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — High-Intensity Radiated Fields (HIRF) Protection for Aircraft Electrical and Electronic Systems [Docket No. FAA-2006-23657; Amendment Nos. 23-57, 25-122, 27-42, and 29-49] (RIN: 2120-AI06) received October 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4511. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Fort Yukon, AK [Docket No. FAA-2007-28145; Airspace Docket No. 07-AAL-06] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4512. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Removal of Class E Airspace; Columbus, GA [Docket No. FAA-2007-28669; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-18] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4513. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Everett, WA [Docket No. FAA-2007-27374; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANM-2] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4514. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Centreville, AL; Correction [Docket No. FAA-2007-28022; Airspace Docket No. 07-ASO-7] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4515. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Hoquiam, WA [Docket No. FAA-2006-25788; Airspace Docket No. 06-ANM-9] received December 5, 2007, pursuant

to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4516. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airspace Designations; Incorporation By Reference [Docket No. 29334; Amendment No. 71-39] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4517. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revision of Class E Airspace; Hailey, ID [Docket No. FAA-2007-27911; Airspace Docket No. 07-ANM-8] received December 5, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

4518. A letter from the Director of Regulations Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Reasonable Charges for Medical Care or Services (RIN: 2900-AM35) received December 3, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

4519. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Tier 1 — Domestic Production Deduction (DPD) [LMSB-Control Number: LMSB-04-0707-049] received December 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4520. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Industry Overview Series Trucking Industry [LMSB Control Number: LMSB-04-1107-075] received December 4, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

4521. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on potential furloughs within the Department of the Army, the Marine Corps, and the Combatant Commands, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 1597(e); (H. Doc. No. 110—79); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations, and ordered to be printed.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 1413. A bill to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to address vulnerabilities in aviation security by carrying out a pilot program to screen airport workers with access to secure and sterile areas of airports; with amendments (Rept. 110–482). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 123. A bill to authorize appropriations for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund; with an amendment (Rept. 110–483). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. RAHALL: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3739. A bill to amend the Arizona Water Settlements Act to modify the requirements for the statement of findings (Rept. 110–484). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. DINGELL: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 2601. A bill to extend the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to collect fees to administer and enforce the provisions relating to the ''Do-not-call'' registry of the Telemarketing Sales Rule; with an amendment (Rept. 110–485). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. DINGELL: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 3541. A bill to amend the ''Do-not-call'' Implementation Act to eliminate the automatic removal of telephone numbers registered on the Federal ''do-not-call'' registry; with an amendment (Rept. 110–486). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 859. Resolution providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2082) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–487). Referred to the House Calendar.

Ms. CASTOR: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 860. Resolution providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–488). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. CARDOZA: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 861. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4351) to amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide individuals temporary relief from the alternative minimum tax, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–489). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. ARCURI: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 862. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4299) to extend the Terrorism Insurance Program of the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes (Rept. 110–490). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. OBERSTAR (for himself, Mr. MICA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. PETRI, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. HAYES, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. CUMMINGS):

H.R. 4343. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to modify age standards for pilots engaged in commercial aviation operations; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. considered and passed.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. PRICE of Georgia):

H.R. 4344. A bill to amend section 435(o) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 regarding the definition of economic hardship; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4345. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Bayowet FT-248; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4346. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Thionyl chloride; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4347. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Baypure DS; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4348. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Bayowet C4; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4349. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Disflamoll TOF; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4350. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Disflamoll DPK; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RANGEL:

H.R. 4351. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide individuals temporary relief from the alternative minimum tax, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TOWNS:

H.R. 4352. A bill to provide $30,000,000 in funding to the Department of Education to provide assistance to public school districts for the prevention of drug resistant infections; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. CUBIN (for herself and Mr. REHBERG):

H.R. 4353. A bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to make certain technical corrections; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DENT:

H.R. 4354. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Ancamine 2432 Curing Agent; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. KUHL of New York):

H.R. 4355. A bill to impose a moratorium on certain Medicaid payment restrictions; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4356. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 4,4-Diaminostilbene-2,2-Disulphonic; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4357. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 1,4-Benzenedicarboxylic acid, polymer with N,N'-bis(2-aminoethyl)-1,2-ethanediamine, cyclized, methosulfate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4358. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Formaldehyde, reaction products with 1,4-benzenediol and m-phenylenediamine, sulfurized; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4359. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Reduced Vat Blue 43; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4360. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Sulfur Black 1; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H.R. 4361. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Cyanuric chloride; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAIRD:

H.R. 4362. A bill to clarify the temporary suspension of duty on 9, 10-Anthracenedione; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAIRD:

H.R. 4363. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 9, 10-Anthracenedione, 2 pentyl-; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAIRD:

H.R. 4364. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain magnesium peroxide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAKER:

H.R. 4365. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on DEMBB; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAKER:

H.R. 4366. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Mesotrione; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. SPRATT):

H.R. 4367. A bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Aiken, South Carolina, as the ''Matthew V. Dillon Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BARTON of Texas (for himself and Mr. BOUCHER):

H.R. 4368. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide special disposition rules for unused benefits in flexible spending arrangements of individuals called to active duty; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4369. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on diphenyl sulfide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4370. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 4,4-Dimethoxy-2-butanone; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4371. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 3-Amino-5-mercapto-1,2,4-triazole; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4372. A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on ADTP; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4373. A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on Cyhalofop; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4374. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2-Phenylphenol sodium salt; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4375. A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on 2-Cyanopyridine; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4376. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Styrene, ar-ethyl-, polymer with divinylbenzene and styrene beads with low ash; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4377. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Benfluralin; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4378. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on DMDS; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4379. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 1,3-Dimethyl-2-imidazolidinone; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4380. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on DCBTF; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4381. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on mixtures of fungicide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4382. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on MCPA ester; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4383. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on MCPA acid; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4384. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Halofenozide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4385. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on isoxaben; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4386. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Fenbuconazole; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4387. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Ethalfluralin; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4388. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Tebufenozide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4389. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Quintec; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4390. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Quinoline; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4391. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on Propiconazole; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4392. A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on Myclobutanil; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4393. A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on Methoxyfenozide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4394. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on mixed isomers of 1,3-dichloropropene; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4395. A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on Trifluralin; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4396. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 1,2-Benzisothiazol-3(2H)-one (9Cl); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4397. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on -Bromo- -nitrostyrene; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4398. A bill to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to clarify and extend the temporary duty reduction on cellulose nitrate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4399. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on mixtures of insecticide; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4400. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on diiodomethyl-p-tolylsulfone; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4401. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2-Propenoic acid, polymer; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4402. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on methyl hydroxyethyl cellulose; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4403. A bill to extend the temporary duty suspension on methyl hydroxyethyl cellulose products; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4404. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 1,2-Benzenedicarboxaldehyde; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4405. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2-Phenylphenol; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4406. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 3, 4-Dichlorobenzonitrile; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4407. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on DEPCT; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4408. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on 2,6-Dichloroaniline; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4409. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Dimethyl Malonate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURTON of Indiana:

H.R. 4410. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Tebuthiuron; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CAMP of Michigan:

H.R. 4411. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on shield asy-steering gear; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CAMP of Michigan:

H.R. 4412. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on hydraulic control units; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4413. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4414. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4415. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4416. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4417. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4418. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4419. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4420. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 2,4-Diamino-3-[4-(2-

sulfoxyethylsulfonyl)-phenylazo]-5-[4-(2 sulfoxyethyl sulfonyl)-2-sulfophenylazo]-benzenesulfonic acid potassium sodium salt; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4421. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on 1-(3H)-Isobenzofuranone, 3,3-bis(2-methyl-1-octyl-1H-indol-3-yl)-; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4422. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on 2-methyl-4,6-bis[(octylthio)methyl]phenol; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4423. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on 2-Methyl-1-[4-(methylthio)phenyl]-2-(4-morpholinyl)-1- propanone; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4424. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on 2,2 -(2,5-Thiophenediyl)bis(5-(1,1-dimethylethyl) benzoxazole); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4425. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4426. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4427. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4428. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4429. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on Reactive Black 5; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4430. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on a certain chemical; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4431. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on a certain chemical; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4432. A bill to extend the suspension of duty on a certain chemical; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4433. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on acrylic or modacrylic synthetic filament tow; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4434. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on acrylic or modacrylic synthetic filament tow; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4435. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on acrylic or modacrylic synthetic filament tow; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4436. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4437. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4438. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain synthetic staple fibers that are not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4439. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on acrylic or modacrylic synthetic filament tow; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 4440. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on synthetic staple fibers not carded, combed, or otherwise processed for spinning; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOLDEN:

H.R. 4441. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on MDA50; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOLDEN:

H.R. 4442. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Nourybond 276 Modifier; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HOLDEN:

H.R. 4443. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 11-Aminoundecanoic Acid; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky:

H.R. 4444. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Polycaprolactone Acrylate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky:

H.R. 4445. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Polycaprolactone Diol #1; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky:

H.R. 4446. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Polycaprolactone Triol; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky:

H.R. 4447. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Polycaprolactone Diol #2; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. OLVER:

H.R. 4448. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on capacitor grade homopolymer polypropylene resin in primary form; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAYNE (for himself and Mr. SOUDER):

H.R. 4449. A bill to aid and support pediatric involvement in reading and education; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Ms. SOLIS (for herself and Mrs. BONO):

H.R. 4450. A bill to improve and enhance research and programs on cancer survivorship, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. STEARNS:

H.R. 4451. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a competitive grant program for research on preventing, treating, and finding the cure for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. THORNBERRY:

H.R. 4452. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore State authority to waive the 35-mile rule for designating critical access hospitals under the Medicare Program; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TOWNS (for himself, Mr. WHITFIELD, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. PORTER, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. WYNN, and Mr. GORDON):

H.R. 4453. A bill to establish a grant to increase enforcement of laws to prohibit underage drinking through social sources, to improve reporting of Federal underage drinking data, to establish grants to increase parental involvement in school-based efforts to reduce underage drinking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. YARMUTH:

H.R. 4454. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3050 Hunsinger Lane in Louisville, Kentucky, as the ''Iraq and Afghanistan Fallen Military Heroes of Louisville Memorial Post Office Building'', in honor of the servicemen and women from Louisville, Kentucky, who died in service during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself and Mr. SAXTON):

H.R. 4455. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide international wildlife management and conservation programs through the Wildlife Without Borders Program in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BOREN (for himself, Mr. COLE of Oklahoma, Mr. SHULER, Mr. BACA, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. WAMP, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. HARE, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. HONDA, Mrs. CAPPS, and Ms. SOLIS):

H.J. Res. 68. A joint resolution to acknowledge a long history of official depredations and ill-conceived policies by the United States Government regarding Indian tribes and offer an apology to all Native Peoples on behalf of the United States; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. TERRY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. SHIMKUS, Ms. HOOLEY, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. POE, Mr. COOPER, Mr. WELCH of Vermont, Mr. HILL, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. FOXX, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. MICA, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. TIAHRT, Mr. SALI, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. BOEHNER, Mr. KELLER, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. TURNER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. PORTER, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BOUCHER, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. DREIER, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. COHEN, Mr. FORBES, Mr. WELLER, Mr. UPTON, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. PETRI, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, and Mr. PITTS):

H. Res. 856. A resolution expresses heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families of the shootings in Omaha, Nebraska, on Wednesday, December 5, 2007; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. SHEA-PORTER:

H. Res. 857. A resolution calling on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to take immediate actions to drop all charges against the Saudi rape victim known as the ''Qatif Girl''; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ANDREWS (for himself, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and Ms. SUTTON):

H. Res. 858. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of the National Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H. Res. 863. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Medicare physician payment system must be immediately reformed in a long-term manner in order to stabilize Medicare payment to doctors, return equity to the program, and ensure that Medicare patients have access to a doctor of their choice; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. CASTOR (for herself, Ms. DELAURO, and Mrs. LOWEY):

H. Res. 864. A resolution condemning Saudi Arabia for sentencing a gang-rape victim to 200 lashes and 6 months in prison and calling for King Abdullah to overturn the verdict; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. CLARKE (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. WATERS, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. HARE, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. SIRES, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. RUSH, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. ARCURI, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. LEE, Mr. TOWNS, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ACKERMAN, Ms. WATSON, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. CROWLEY, and Mr. KLEIN of Florida):

H. Res. 865. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the March 2007 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development makes an important contribution to the understanding of the high levels of crime and violence in the Caribbean, and that the United States should work with Caribbean countries to address crime and violence in the region; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. COBLE:

H. Res. 866. A resolution honoring the brave men and women of the United States Coast Guard whose tireless work, dedication, and commitment to protecting the United States have led to the Coast Guard seizing over 350,000 pounds of cocaine at sea during 2007, far surpassing all of our previous records; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas (for himself, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. POE, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas):

H. Res. 867. A resolution commending the Houston Dynamo soccer team for winning the 2007 Major League Soccer Cup; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. WOOLSEY:

H. Res. 868. A resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the declaration of Muir Woods National Monument by President Theodore Roosevelt; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

221. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 109 urging the United States Secretary of State to increase efforts to urge the People's Republic of China to halt its violation of the human rights of its citizens, specifically the persecution of and forced harvesting of organs from practitioners of Falun Gong; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

222. Also, a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, relative to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 5 urging the Congress of the United States to recognize the significance of the eastern states, including Ohio, in the preparation for, and return of, the Lewis and Clark Expedition by enacting legislation extending the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail east to its origin at Monticello; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. TERRY introduced a bill (H.R. 4456) for the relief of Luis A. Gonzalez and Virginia Aguilla Gonzalez; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 21: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 39: Mr. CHANDLER.
H.R. 158: Mr. BAKER.
H.R. 160: Mr. BAKER and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 241: Mr. SOUDER and Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 261: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 471: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 549: Mr. WALDEN of Oregon.
H.R. 583: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 621: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 676: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 677: Mr. SARBANES.
H.R. 770: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 854: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 940: Mr. MCCOTTER.
H.R. 971: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 997: Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland.
H.R. 1043: Mr. ARCURI.
H.R. 1055: Mr. WELCH of Vermont.
H.R. 1078: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 1108: Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. MCNERNEY, and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.
H.R. 1131: Mr. HOLT and Mr. HINCHEY.
H.R. 1198: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1279: Mrs. DAVIS of California and Mr. LANTOS.
H.R. 1283: Mr. DENT.
H.R. 1299: Mr. BAIRD.
H.R. 1394: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1461: Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 1497: Mr. ROTHMAN and Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 1527: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
H.R. 1537: Mr. REYNOLDS.
H.R. 1576: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. KAGEN, Mr. SPACE, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. UPTON.
H.R. 1609: Mr. DUNCAN and Mr. CARTER.
H.R. 1665: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. PORTER, and Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 1671: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1738: Mr. GONZALEZ, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. WEXLER.
H.R. 1742: Mrs. MYRICK.
H.R. 1776: Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 1809: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 1831: Mr. WEXLER.
H.R. 1866: Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 1881: Mr. HALL of New York.
H.R. 1981: Mr. SULLIVAN.
H.R. 1983: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.
H.R. 1992: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 2046: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 2049: Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 2070: Mr. ROSS, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. JEFFERSON.
H.R. 2074: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 2103: Mr. MCDERMOTT and Mr. MANZULLO.
H.R. 2158: Mr. KLINE of Minnesota and Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 2164: Mr. PASTOR.
H.R. 2169: Mr. ANDREWS.
H.R. 2266: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.
H.R. 2327: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 2436: Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 2464: Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. BOUCHER, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 2478: Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 2548: Mr. ALLEN and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 2578: Mr. NUNES.
H.R. 2585: Mrs. MUSGRAVE.
H.R. 2606: Mr. FILNER, Mr. MEEKS of New York, and Mr. RAHALL.
H.R. 2702: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.
H.R. 2762: Mr. BERRY, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. KING of New York, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. LEE, and Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 2802: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. KAGEN, and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.
H.R. 2807: Mrs. MUSGRAVE.
H.R. 2821: Mr. SALI.
H.R. 2866: Mr. MEEKS of New York.
H.R. 2885: Mr. CASTLE.
H.R. 2923: Mr. MURTHA.
H.R. 2954: Mr. LINDER.
H.R. 2990: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
H.R. 2994: Ms. DEGETTE and Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 3010: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. WALZ of Minnesota, and Mr. POE.
H.R. 3026: Mr. SESTAK and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3085: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 3109: Mr. CAMP of Michigan.
H.R. 3119: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico.
H.R. 3289: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Mr. STARK.
H.R. 3329: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, and Mr. GUTIERREZ.
H.R. 3339: Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 3368: Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. COSTELLO, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.
H.R. 3412: Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 3419: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. SESTAK.
H.R. 3425: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 3448: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 3457: Mr. WYNN.
H.R. 3533: Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. BEAN, and Mr. BOUCHER.
H.R. 3543: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3610: Mr. DELAHUNT.
H.R. 3616: Mr. BAIRD.
H.R. 3634: Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas.
H.R. 3636: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 3637: Mr. HODES.
H.R. 3654: Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. PORTER, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. WESTMORELAND.
H.R. 3660: Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. BOREN, Mr. WYNN, Mr. ALLEN, and Mrs. DRAKE.

H.R. 3663: Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. BAIRD, and Mr. BISHOP of New York.
H.R. 3679: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 3733: Mr. COHEN and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 3737: Mr. WELCH of Vermont.
H.R. 3750: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 3762: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 3783: Mr. UDALL of Colorado.
H.R. 3793: Mr. KING of New York, Mrs. MYRICK, and Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 3829: Mr. CLAY and Mr. FARR.
H.R. 3876: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.
H.R. 3892: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 3908: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 3934: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, and Mr. ORTIZ.
H.R. 3968: Mr. FILNER.
H.R. 3980: Mr. GUTIERREZ and Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 3981: Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 3995: Ms. WOOLSEY and Mr. ETHERIDGE.
H.R. 4011: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico and Mr. SALAZAR.
H.R. 4040: Mr. HONDA, Mr. BOUCHER, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. RICHARDSON, Mr. HARE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. COURTNEY, and Mr. SARBANES.
H.R. 4055: Mrs. TAUSCHER and Mr. MORAN of Virginia.
H.R. 4083: Mrs. CAPPS and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 4088: Mrs. CUBIN, Mrs. EMERSON, and Mr. WOLF.
H.R. 4091: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KAGEN, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 4105: Mr. LATHAM, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. MURTHA, and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 4107: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 4129: Ms. DELAURO and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 4133: Mr. PAUL, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. RENZI, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. WAMP.
H.R. 4152: Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 4157: Mr. LINDER, Mr. WAMP, and Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 4173: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.
H.R. 4185: Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. HONDA, Mr. LANTOS, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 4203; Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LINDER, and Mr. DEAL of Georgia.
H.R. 4204: Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 4220: Mr. EHLERS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. SOUDER.
H.R. 4226: Mr. SHAYS.
H.R. 4230: Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 4247: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H.R. 4248: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. RAHALL.
H.R. 4280: Mrs. TAUSCHER.
H.R. 4287: Mr. STARK and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 4296: Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. HERGER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. KIND, and Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 4312: Mr. JINDAL.
H.J. Res. 54: Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. HERGER, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. WOLF.
H. Con. Res. 2: Mr. FATTAH, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Mr. RANGEL.
H. Con. Res. 4: Mr. HALL of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 154: Ms. BERKLEY and Mr. LANTOS.
H. Con. Res. 198: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota and Mr. CLAY.
H. Con. Res. 223: Mr. ABERCROMBIE.
H. Con. Res. 239: Mr. HOEKSTRA and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H. Con. Res. 240: Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. SALI, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SNYDER, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. MCCOTTER.
H. Con. Res. 253: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H. Con. Res. 257: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. Fortuño, and Mr. POE.
H. Con. Res. 261: Mr. HAYES, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. COURTNEY.
H. Con. Res. 264: Mr. HINOJOSA and Ms. BORDALLO.
H. Con. Res. 265: Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. NADLER.
H. Con. Res. 267: Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. TIERNEY.
H. Res. 49: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN and Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas.
H. Res. 111: Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico.
H. Res. 457: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H. Res. 537: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida and Mr. CONAWAY.
H. Res. 578: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. BOREN, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. FORBES, and Mr. KUHL of New York.
H. Res. 620: Mr. RYAN of Ohio and Mr. HONDA.
H. Res. 671: Mr. SESTAK.
H. Res. 679: Mr. OLVER.
H. Res. 681: Mr. BOREN.
H. Res. 695: Mr. WU, Mr. MITCHELL, and Mr. GORDON.
H. Res. 700: Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. KELLER, Mr. BACHUS, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. BERRY, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MATHESON, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H. Res. 730: Mrs. MYRICK.
H. Res. 748: Mr. BUYER, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. HELLER, Mr. COBLE, and Mr. ALEXANDER.
H. Res. 757: Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H. Res. 795: Mr. STARK.
H. Res. 815: Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. GOODLATTE.
H. Res. 816: Mr. CROWLEY.
H. Res. 821: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H. Res. 835: Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania.
H. Res. 838: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WILSON of Ohio, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. WOLF, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. DONNELLY.
H. Res. 841: Mr. STARK.
H. Res. 847: Mr. FORBES and Mr. BURGESS.
H. Res. 853: Mr. HONDA.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. BARNEY FRANK

H.R. 4299, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI.

OFFERED BY MR. CHARLES RANGEL

H.R. 4351, the AMT Relief Act of 2007, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of Rule XXI.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 1201: Mr. PICKERING.
H.R. 4193: Mr. CUELLAR.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

197. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the Blacks in Government, relative to a resolution in support of a National Holiday Observance of Juneteenth; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

198. Also, a petition of the Califonia State Lands Commission, relative to a resolution supporting S. 1870 and H.R. 2421 affirming federal protection for waters of the United States, including wetlands, tributaries, headwaters and streams, through the Clean Water Act; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

199. Also, a petition of the California Veterans Board, relative to a resolution in support of mandatory funding for healthcare services for veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

200. Also, a petition of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, Illinois, relative to a resolution supporting the H-1B and L-1B Visa Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act of 2007; jointly to the Committees on Education and Labor and the Judiciary.

201. Also, a petition of the Iberville Parish Council, Louisiana, relative to Resolution No. 569-07 supporting H.R. 1229, the Non-Market Economy Trade Remedy Act of 2007; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means and Rules.