

great importance to the American people. As this new Congress and President Obama begin to repair and reshape our economy, I think it is critically important for Americans to know and remember how we got into this mess we find ourselves in today.

President Obama and this Congress inherited a fiscal mess from the Bush administration, including a record deficit and soaring unemployment. Since taking control of the House in 2007, Democrats have committed to restoring fiscal responsibility, taking steps to cut waste, fraud and abuse. The President's budget slashes the deficit by nearly two-thirds in 4 years. The budget also calls for health care reform, job creation, clean energy and energy efficiency, and college affordability.

We will continue to work to repair the damage of the last 8 years of irresponsibility.

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 incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

ENHANCED OVERSIGHT OF STATE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2182) to amend the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to provide for enhanced State and local oversight of activities conducted pursuant to such Act, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2182

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 "Enhanced Oversight of State and Local Economic Recovery Act".

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDING FOR STATE AND LOCAL OVERSIGHT UNDER AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009.

(a) FEDERAL AGENCY REQUIREMENT.—Section 1552 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 297) is amended—

(1) by inserting "(a) FEDERAL AGENCY REQUIREMENT.—" before "Federal agencies receiving";

(2) by striking "may," and all that follows through "reasonably" and inserting "shall, subject to guidance from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget,,"; and

(3) by striking "data collection requirements" and inserting "data collection requirements, auditing, contract and grant planning and management, and investigations of waste, fraud, and abuse".

(b) STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, State and local governments receiving funds under this Act may set aside an amount up to 0.5 percent of such funds, in addition to any funds already allocated to administrative expenditures, to conduct planning and oversight to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse."

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for section 1552 of such Act is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 1552. FUNDING FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT."

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION FOR ACQUISITION BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THROUGH FEDERAL SUPPLY SCHEDULES.

Section 502 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(e) USE OF SUPPLY SCHEDULES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may provide for the use by State or local governments of Federal supply schedules of the General Services Administration for goods or services that are funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5).

"(2) VOLUNTARY USE.—In the case of the use by a State or local government of a Federal supply schedule pursuant to paragraph (1), participation by a firm that sells to the Federal Government through the supply schedule shall be voluntary with respect to a sale to the State or local government through such supply schedule.

"(3) DEFINITIONS.—The definitions in subsection (c)(3) shall apply for purposes of this subsection."

SEC. 4. DEFINITION OF JOBS CREATED AND JOBS RETAINED.

Section 1512(g) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 288) is amended by adding at the end "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue guidance to ensure accurate and consistent reporting of 'jobs created' and 'jobs retained' as those terms are used in subsection (c)(3)(D)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TOWNS. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2182, the Enhanced Oversight of State and Local Economic Recovery Act. H.R. 2182 will help ensure efficient and effective use of the taxpayers' money provided to State and local governments for stimulus projects. This legislation grew out of a hearing the Oversight Committee held on the Recovery Act. Many State and local officials responsible for overseeing spending of stimulus dollars

pointed out to us that in these troubled economic times, they are under tremendous pressure to conduct their normal oversight work, let alone cope with the increase that the Recovery Act requires.

Our hearings, Mr. Speaker, made clear, that State and local governments need additional resources to monitor the large infusion of funds the Recovery Act directs. H.R. 2182 will provide State and local governments with the flexibility to set aside a portion of their stimulus funds for auditing, contract and grant planning and management, and investigations of waste, fraud and abuse.

The bill also permits State and local governments to use the Federal supply schedules of the General Services Administration for stimulus projects. The GSA schedules are prenegotiated Federal contracts for a range of common goods and services.

This is a win-win situation because it will allow State and local governments to acquire certain items without engaging in time-consuming contracting procedures while guaranteeing the lowest rate price for them.

Lastly, H.R. 2182 requires the Office of Management and Budget to give detailed guidance to State and local governments to ensure consistency in their reporting of job creation data. Our State and local governments are on the front lines of the efforts to fight mismanagement of Recovery Act dollars. Their success is vital to making the stimulus work for the American people.

Let me pause here and thank Ranking Member ISSA, who has worked very closely with me in crafting this legislation, and I want to thank him for that. I would also like to thank Representative KUCINICH, who has worked with us, Representative PLATTS, and Representatives WELCH and CONNOLLY for working with me on this bill.

I should note that the legislation incorporates part of H.R. 1911, which was introduced by Representative CONNOLLY from Virginia. H.R. 2182 is a strong bill. I urge all Members to support this critical oversight and accountability measure.

And I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1230

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I join with the chairman in urging all Members to vote for this important correction piece of legislation. I say "correction" because, in fact, we in Congress make mistakes. It wasn't out of malice that we spent \$800 billion without asking the question of where would the money for oversight come from. These kinds of things happen in every organization where you're in such a rush to do one thing that it's not until later on in the light of the next day, or in the case of Chairman TOWNS and myself, it's when we held a field hearing in his district in Brooklyn

and people said, Thank you very much for the money, but here is A, B, C, D—what's really happening? I commend Chairman TOWNS for quickly reacting to this and to some other issues that were found to be less than optimal in the stimulus package.

In the case of this legislation, H.R. 2182, we seek to empower with existing funds State and local governments to not have to reach into other money in order to do oversight. This is not to say that we wouldn't prefer that the oversight be done at all times even without Federal money, but at a time in which the stimulus needs to be spent quickly and accurately, this legislation recognizes that money in short supply in States and in cities is likely not to go into the oversight necessary.

Particularly with the chairman's initiative to ensure that transparency be greater than in any previous Congress, I recognize—and he has recognized—that if we want greater transparency, we are going to have to ensure that we not only supply the funds to do the oversight but that we supply the new technology and means to do the oversight. This legislation is deliberately intended to allow for cities and States to make investments in hardware or software that allows for them to better dig down into their procurement process, their spending, to work smarter, not just harder.

Having no other speakers at this time, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to reiterate my strong support of H.R. 2182 as it provides State and local governments with the flexibility and resources they need to properly monitor the stimulus project. In our hearing, they asked for help, and of course, with Congressman ISSA and with members of the committee, we are now giving them that help. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this measure.

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. TOWNS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2182.

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.

ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1170) to amend chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, to establish a grant program to encourage the development of new assistive technologies for specially adapted housing, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1170

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

SECTION 1. SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§2108. Specially adapted housing assistive technology grant program

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall make grants to encourage the development of new assistive technologies for specially adapted housing.

“(b) APPLICATION.—A person seeking a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application for the grant in such form and manner as the Secretary shall specify.

“(c) GRANT FUNDS.—(1) The amount of each grant awarded under this section shall be an amount of not more than \$200,000 per year.

“(2) For each year in which the Secretary makes a grant under this section, the Secretary shall make the grant by not later than October 1 of that year.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—(1) The recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to develop assistive technologies for use in specially adapted housing.

“(2) If the recipient of a grant under this section is awarded a patent related to assistive technology developed with amounts under the grant, the Secretary shall retain not less than a 30 percent interest in such patent.

“(e) REPORT.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report containing information related to each grant awarded under this section during the preceding calendar year, including—

“(1) the name of the grant recipient;

“(2) the amount of the grant; and

“(3) the goal of the grant.

“(f) FUNDING.—From amounts appropriated to the Department for Medical Services for each fiscal year, \$2,000,000 shall be available for each such fiscal year for the purposes of the program under this section.

“(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to make a grant under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this section.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“2108. Specially adapted housing assistive technology grant program.”.

(c) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall implement the grant program under section 2108 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1170, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in about a week, on Monday, May 25, our country will mark the 38th year in which Congress has formally recognized the last Monday of May as Memorial Day in honor of our brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation, so I stand before you today with a series of bills to honor our fallen men and women and our current veterans and those on current active duty with deeds and not just with words that we speak on Memorial Day. So we want to honor the legacy of our fallen servicemembers. We look forward to ensuring that our veterans are cared for at the same level of dedication and service that they have provided while in service to our country.

The bills before you today have all come through our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, chaired by Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN from South Dakota and with her ranking member, Mr. BOOZMAN from Arkansas. They have proven to be a formidable team, a team which works well together, which brings our committee together and which brings us bills that are very important to our veterans today. So I thank both the Chair and her ranking member for all of the good work that they do with our committee.

I think I will yield to Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN to explain the bills because she has played such an important role in them. I will yield to her such time as she may consume.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the chairman for yielding.

As the chairwoman of the Veterans Affairs' Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1170, as amended. I would like to thank Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER on the full committee and the sponsor of the bill, and subcommittee ranking member, Mr. BOOZMAN, for their leadership and bipartisan support of this bill, which the full committee passed on May 6.

The bill offers important improvements to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Specially Adapted Housing Program by creating a 5-year pilot program to promote the research and development of adaptive technologies. With many veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with injuries such as traumatic brain injury, it is important that research and development help meet the demand for cost-effective solutions that could mitigate the needs for around-the-clock nursing care or institutionalization for seriously wounded veterans. These solutions can be as simple as ramps or other structural modifications or they can be more complex, such as voice recognition controls for a home's heating system.

Also, H.R. 1170, as amended, gives the Department of Veterans Affairs a 30 percent stake in any patent approved as a result of this grant program. This