

□ 1545

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 3 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

MARCH 14, 2013.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER, Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 5(a)(4)(A) of Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I designate the following Members to be available to serve on Investigative Subcommittees of the Committee on Ethics during the 113th Congress:

- John C. Carney of Delaware, Gerald E. Connolly of Virginia, Janice Hahn of California, Brian Higgins of New York, Hakeem S. Jeffries of New York, William R. Keating of Massachusetts, Ed Perlmutter of Colorado, Terri A. Sewell of Alabama, Jackie Speier of California, Dina Titus of Nevada.
- Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 803, SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTING IN LIFE-LONG SKILLS ACT

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 113 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 113

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 803) to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Education and the Workforce now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-4. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee

on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

□ 1550

Ms. FOXX. For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During the consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. House Resolution 113 provides for a structured rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 803, the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act, also known simply as the SKILLS Act.

Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider the SKILLS Act, which reauthorizes the Workforce Investment Act, WIA, of 1998. While these programs have continued to receive funding through the appropriations process, the WIA authorization expired in 2003.

WIA seeks to coordinate local employment services through a unified workforce development service and a one-stop career center delivery system. Reforming the Nation's workforce development system is critical, and in these difficult economic times, when roughly 20 million Americans are struggling to find adequate work, we cannot afford to delay action any longer. Delay is costly for those seeking to find work. Today, many unemployed and underemployed Americans have turned to Federal workforce education programs to develop the skills they need to be competitive for jobs, but instead of an easy-to-navigate, responsive system, many have found a complex bureaucracy unresponsive to their needs and concerns.

In January 2011, the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, identified 47 separate and distinct workforce development programs across nine different Federal agencies that cost taxpayers approximately \$18 billion annually. The GAO report found that almost all of these programs were duplicative and overlapping, that only five of these programs had had any type of evaluation, and that those evaluations had not been very effective ones.

Through the Education and the Workforce Committee's oversight of the WIA system, even more programs have been identified, and the true number of Federal workforce development programs is greater than 50. We know this is a problem, and we all agree this needs to change. President Obama recognized the challenge of the current bureaucratic system in his 2012 State of the Union address. Let me quote the President directly:

I want to cut through the maze of confusing training programs so that, from now on, people have one program, one place to go, for all the information and help that they need.

These are among the many reasons I introduced the SKILLS Act earlier this year. This legislation streamlines 35 duplicative Federal workforce development programs, and it creates a single workforce investment fund to serve employers, workers, and job seekers.

The SKILLS Act establishes a dynamic, employer-driven workforce development system by ensuring that two-thirds of the State and local Workforce Investment Boards' members are employers, and it repeals 19 federally mandated board positions. This legislation expands decisionmaking at State and local levels so that these individuals can make the best decisions to meet the needs of their communities.

The bill also addresses the administrative bloat in Washington by requiring the Office of Management and Budget to identify and reduce the number of Federal staff working on employment workforce development programs that will be consolidated under this bill. The SKILLS Act holds these programs accountable for taxpayer dollars spent by requiring annual performance evaluations and by establishing common performance metrics.

The bill also allows States to determine eligible training providers, simplifying the bureaucratic process that has forced many community colleges and other providers out of the system, and it gives local boards the flexibility to work directly with community colleges to educate large groups of participants. Additionally, the SKILLS Act encourages these programs to focus on in-demand jobs and industries so that participants will be able to succeed in the workplace upon completion, and it ensures that funds are spent directly on services rather than on administration and bureaucrats. This bill improves transparency by requiring States and local areas to report annually on administrative costs.