that we define what the legislation is that solves and saves and strengthens and secures these programs. We have got to get ourselves on that path to make it so that we can get to a point where we have, indeed, balanced the budget without raising taxes and get ourselves on a path to paying off the debt.

If we are able to do that, Mr. Speaker, then we will, in fact, be able to stand proudly before the American people and say: What we have done is provided that amount of opportunity and that amount of success for the vast number of the American people so that American Dreams can be realized.

Mr. Speaker, I wish all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to that new year, again, with great anticipation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 515. An act to protect children from exploitation, especially sex trafficking in tourism, by providing advance notice of intended travel by registered child-sex offenders outside the United States to the government of the country of destination, requesting foreign governments to notify the United States when a known child-sex offender is seeking to enter the United States, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 227. An act to strengthen the Federal education research system to make research and evaluations more timely and relevant to State and local needs in order to increase student achievement.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

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

DECEMBER 18, 2015.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), amended by the Division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (22 U.S.C. 6901), I am pleased to reappoint the following individuals to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Ms. Carolyn Bartholomew, Washington, DC.

Mr. Jeffrey L. Fiedler, Great Falls, VA.

Thank you for your attention to these appointments.

Sincerely,

NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1300

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MESSER) at 1 p.m.

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 18, 2015.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. 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 18, 2015 at 12:34 p.m.:

That the Senate concur in the House amendments to the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 2029.

That the Senate passed S. 2425.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1321.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PATIENT ACCESS AND MEDICARE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (S. 2425) to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to improve payments for complex rehabilitation technology and certain radiation therapy services, to ensure flexibility in applying the hardship exception for meaningful use for the 2015 EHR reporting period for 2017 payment adjustments, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2425

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 ''Patient Access and Medicare Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. NON-APPLICATION OF MEDICARE FEE SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESSORIES AND SEAT AND BACK CUSHIONS WHEN FURNISHED IN CONNECTION WITH COMPLEX REHABILITATIVE POWER WHEELCHAIRS.

(a) NON-APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall not, prior to January 1, 2017, use information on the payment determined under the competitive acquisition programs under section 1847 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3) to adjust the payment amount that would otherwise be recognized under section 1834(a)(1)(B)(ii) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(a)(1)(B)(ii)) for wheelchair accessories (including seating systems) and seat and back cushions when furnished in connection with Group 3 complex rehabilitative power wheelchairs.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may implement this subsection by program instruction or otherwise.

(b) GAO STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on wheelchair accessories (including seating systems) and seat and back cushions furnished in connection with Group 3 complex rehabilitative power wheelchairs. Such study shall include an analysis of the following with respect to such wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions in each of the groups described in clauses (i) through (iii) of subparagraph (B):

(i) The item descriptions and associated HCPCS codes for such wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions.

(ii) A breakdown of utilization and expenditures for such wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

(iii) A comparison of the payment amount under the competitive acquisition program under section 1847 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3) with the payment amount that would otherwise be recognized under section 1834 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m), including beneficiary cost sharing, for such wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions.

(iv) The aggregate distribution of such wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions furnished under such title XVIII within each of the groups described in subparagraph (B).

(v) Other areas determined appropriate by the Comptroller General.

(B) GROUPS DESCRIBED.—The following groups are described in this subparagraph:

(i) Wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions furnished predominantly with Group 3 complex rehabilitative power wheelchairs.

(ii) Wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions furnished predominantly with power wheelchairs that are not described in clause (i).

(iii) Other wheelchair accessories and seat and back cushions furnished with either power wheelchairs described in clause (i) or (ii).

(2) REPORT.—Not later than June 1, 2016, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1), together with recommendations for such legislation and administrative as the Comptroller General determines to be appropriate.

SEC. 3. TRANSITIONAL PAYMENT RULES FOR CERTAIN RADIATION THERAPY SERVICES UNDER THE MEDICARE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11) SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN RADIATION THERAPY SERVICES.—The code definitions, the work relative value units under subsection (c)(2)(C)(i), and the direct inputs for