cry of certain leading politicians, and I agree with that. But how can we say put Social Security first, and then go out and introduce a whole bunch of new spending programs?

The way our budget is done, Social Security is really not a separate trust fund. Right now Social Security has an overpayment in it of about $100 billion. When we add that overpayment to the deficit, we come up with the sum of zero.

So let us be honest. Social Security, if taken off budget, still leaves us with a deficit.

□ 1030

It is very important for all of us, young and old, to realize that; that when we say the budget is balanced, all we are saying is Social Security is part of the general fund.

If we are going to put Social Security first, we sure do not do that and then turn right around, as the President has done, and introduce $100 billion in new spending programs. Because that money comes right out of Social Security.

I am sick and tired of Social Security being the political football and used to scare all the folks who are on it in the United States of America. We need to be honest about it. I believe we need to personalize Social Security, we need to have an open dialogue, and we need to acknowledge that, right now, the way the accounting is done it is being used to offset the deficit.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about campaign finance reform. As we witness the current spectacle of the Senate leadership preventing a clean vote on even modest campaign reform, I urge my Republican colleagues in the House to stand up and resist any attempts by the House leadership to follow in the footsteps of the Senate leadership.

Let us have a full and open debate in this House on campaign finance reform. Let us have a straight up-or-down vote on any one of the many measures that have been introduced here in the House. Let us not have a poison pill amendment. Let us have a clean vote so that our constituents can know where we stand on this very important issue.

Madam Speaker, I note that 187 of my colleagues have signed a discharge petition that would bring the issue of campaign finance reform to the House floor for a vote. I urge my Republican friends and colleagues who say that they, too, want reform to join us in this effort.

We may not agree on the actual context of any reforms, but the people in the House and all the Members therein are entitled to a debate that is open and honest and fair.

## PUT REAL DOLLARS INTO THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

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

Mr. NEUMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise to follow on the 1 minute done by my colleague from Georgia.

The Social Security System this year is collecting about $450 billion from taxpayers all across America, including my 15-year-old son who is paying about $300 into that system. So they are collecting about $450 billion this year.

They are paying about $360 billion back out to our senior citizens in benefits, and that leaves a $90 billion surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund, and this is a true surplus. But instead of putting that money into a savings account to preserve and protect Social Security, that money, instead, is being put into the government's big checkbook, or general fund, and is being spent on other programs.

In the President's budget he did not propose that we take the surplus, whatever is left over in that big government checkbook, and put it into Social Security. Instead, his budget proposes we take that surplus, whatever is left over, which is not the way Social Security should be treated, and he proposes we take that and pay off nonSocial Security debt. He does not propose we put that money back down into the Social Security Trust Fund where it actually belongs.

This is a big problem facing our country; and it is here in the near term, not in the long term. It is time to put Social Security first by putting real dollars into the Social Security Trust Fund.

## TIME TO PAY OFF BALANCE ON NATIONAL CREDIT CARD DEBT

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

Mr. MCINNIS. Madam Speaker, the national credit card now carries a balance of $5.5 trillion. Now, just in case those listening thought they heard me wrong, let me say that again. It is a trillion, $5.4 to $5.5 trillion, not billion, dollars in debt.

While the deficit this year may very well be zero, and that is of some question because of the Social Security issue and whether or not the Social Security funds create an artificial surplus, the last 60 years of government living beyond its means has brought us a debt that will not be zero for many, many more years when we consider the overall debt, not the annual deficit.

With a hundred billion dollar a year deficit year after year when the liberals controlled the United States Congress, the taxpayers now face a national debt that threatens our children's future. It is the time, the appropriate time, to start reducing that debt on the credit card that has been used by years and years of abuse in the United States Congress.

I would like to invite fiscal conservatives on both sides of the aisle, both Republicans and Democrats, to work together on a bipartisan method to control spending, to cut wasteful programs, and to make government smaller. It is time to start paying off the balance on our national credit card debt.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, on February 24, on rollcall 18, I am recorded as not voting. Unfortunately, my flight into National Airport was delayed.

This bill provides for increased mandatory minimum sentences for criminals possessing firearms. Had I been recorded on that vote, I would have voted ''aye.''

## FEDERAL AGENCY COMPLIANCE ACT

Mr. MCINNIS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 367 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 367

*Resolved*, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1544) to prevent Federal agencies from pursuing policies of unjustifiable nonacquiescence in, and relitigation of, precedents established in the Federal judicial circuits. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. Each section of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be fifteen minutes. 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 committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. 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 (Mrs. EMERSON). The gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MCINNIS. Madam Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the fine gentleman from the State of Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), 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.

House Resolution 367 is a very simple resolution. The proposed rule is an open rule providing for 1 hour of general debate divided equally between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate, it shall be in order to consider the Committee on the Judiciary's amendment in the nature of a substitute as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule. House Resolution 367 allows the Chair to accord priority recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Additionally, House Resolution 367 allows for the chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and reduce voting time to 5 minutes on a postponed question, if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, this open rule was reported out of the Committee on Rules by a unanimous voice vote. The underlying legislation, the Federal Agency Compliance Act, is a bill which makes a great deal of sense. This legislation generally prevents agencies from refusing to follow controlling precedents of the United States Courts of Appeals in the course of program administration and litigation of their programs.

In my opinion, citizens have the right to expect that Federal agencies will follow the law as interpreted by the courts of this country. Sadly, the Federal agencies often prefer to relitigate settled questions of law in multiple circuits at one time, creating needless expense for both the government and private parties.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule, it is an open rule, as well as the underlying legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, my dear friend from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS), for yielding me the customary half-hour, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this open rule; and I congratulate the chairman and the majority members of the committee for bringing this rule to the floor in its present condition. It will enable Members to offer amendments to what has the potential of being a very good bill with very small changes.

This bill was written to stop some of the abuses that began in the 1980s when people were denied benefits by the Social Security and the Veterans Administrations.

For example, Madam Speaker, people who were seriously disabled were either arbitrarily dropped from the disability rolls or denied their benefits entirely. Once the courts determined that the agencies should neither have dropped the people nor denied them coverage, the agencies still did not fix all their mistakes.

Madam Speaker, there is no reason on earth that people who risked their lives defending this country or who work hard and pay into the Social Security system should have to go to court to get the benefits to which they are entitled; and there is certainly no reason that once the mistakes are found out that they should not be fixed immediately.

Because of the potential for abuse, this bill is a great idea, but it needs a few changes. And, Madam Speaker, since it is being brought up under the open rule, Members of this House will be able to offer amendments to improve the bill on the House floor and make these very needed changes.

For one thing, Madam Speaker, the way the bill stands now, this bill puts huge restrictions on all Federal agencies in order to stop the abuses of just a very few Federal agencies.

Madam Speaker, this bill is something like killing a mosquito with a sledgehammer. In this case, I am not saying the mosquito should not be killed, but maybe we could find a way to do it without creating an even more severe problem in the process.

Federal agencies should certainly be required to comply with court decisions about eligibility for benefits, such as Social Security and veterans' disability, but the implementation will be far from easy. And if we are not careful, Madam Speaker, this bill, as it stands now, might hurt the enforcement of labor, environmental and civil rights laws. So I look forward to supporting an amendment protecting the enforcement of these mechanisms, and I urge my colleagues to support this open rule.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I think it is worth our time to spend a few minutes this morning looking into the question that motivated this legislation. It is important because the question here is whether or not Federal agencies should respect and abide by case law precedent established by the Federal Courts of Appeal.

The answer to that question, in my opinion, should be self-evident. But apparently it is not; and, of course, the self-evident answer is these Federal agencies should be bound by court precedents; and I think that is probably the opinion shared by most of the people that we represent in this country.

Chief Justice John Marshall stated in the case of Marbury versus Madison, and that case has become one of the cornerstones of our democracy, that it is emphatically the providence and the duty of the judicial department to say what the law is. The courts having said what the law is, it is the duty of every citizen, and that just as emphatically includes the executive branch, to follow the law.

It would seem strange that the question has arisen as to whether or not our Federal agencies, who by the way work for our people, who are bound by the courts, that there is some question as to whether they are bound to follow the law as determined by the courts. But for many years now agencies have asserted it is their right to determine whether or not they should acquiesce in court decisions. It is a right that has been granted or conceded to agencies by neither the courts nor Congress, and the result is an unwarranted exercise that has been the infliction of needless hardship on many of our most disadvantaged citizens, not to mention the destructive effect on the American legal system and the confidence that the ordinary people have in their government.

□ 1045

The ordinary people in this country face the consequences of a court action. They cannot defy a court action. Why on goodness earth should the Federal agencies be able to ignore Federal court decisions? The Judicial Conference of the United States, which is chaired by the Chief Justice, has identified agency nonacquiescence as a policy that undermines certainty and fair application of the law. It has recommended in strong terms that the Congress enact a law to control it.

Thus, the bill that we consider today, supported by the Judicial Conference, not to mention other groups, such as the American Bar Association, attempts to put some order back into the situation by prohibiting agencies from engaging in a general policy of nonacquiescence. We have attempted to provide agencies the latitude necessary in the administration of their various programs, but we have considered just as importantly the legitimate expectation of persons who appear before and whose lives are affected by Federal agencies. Disadvantaged supplicants face insurmountable hardships when a

Federal agency reserves that right to follow its own policy despite the fact that an appellate court has decided a question of law against it. The aged, the disabled, the impoverished not to mention most ordinary citizens who are affected by an agency's policy of nonacquiescence lack the resources to carry out a fight against an agency through the courts to receive what the Court of Appeals has already said is their right. In fact, few, if any, citizens, no matter what their status is in our society, have the time or the resources to battle the agency juggernaut. That is why it is so important to ensure that agencies follow applicable precedent absent a good reason to the contrary.

I think that this bill, with bipartisan cosponsorship that includes the distinguished ranking member, represents a fair and workable measure that will ensure that those who administer our laws also realize that they have a duty to follow them. The bill recognizes circumstances may sometimes warrant limited nonacquiescence by an agency and those situations are provided and addressed in this bill. H.R. 1544 takes a stronger position against intracircuit nonacquiescence than it does against intercircuit nonacquiescence because it recognizes that an agency's decision not to obey a Circuit Court of Appeals precedent within that circuit is an extraordinary attack on the principle of stare decisis, which must be controlled by the courts. Needless and repetitive litigation, seeking to create intercircuit conflicts with respect to the administration of a program or rule can also have destructive effects. But these are such that I think we can rely upon the Attorney General to prevent by placing upon her the duty to report annually to us on government compliance.

I know in the last few minutes I have been using a lot of legal terms, but to put it very simply in the language that a lot of us understand, that is that if the average ordinary person out there is ordered by a Federal court to do something, they have to follow that. They have to acquiesce to the Federal court's orders. We have a history of Federal agencies deciding they do not have to agree, or acquiesce, that is the word that has been used in the testimony we have had, they make a decision of nonacquiescence, that they do not have to follow the same kind of court orders that the ordinary citizen that we represent has to.

That is what this bill is trying to correct. That is what this bill, with assistance from other people like the American Bar Association and so on, is trying to curb, to force Federal agencies to live within the same bounds that the ordinary person has to. Some might argue that agencies which have in the past been so nonacquiescent, nonagreeable, should be trusted to change their spots. I do not think so. I do not think we can depend upon them to do it. I think that time after time though we have complained about it and no action has been taken. It is now time for us in the United States Congress to take action and pass this bill.

I have of interest here a letter from the American Bar Association. That is pretty controlling authority. That is the body of attorneys throughout the United States. They form an association that carries a lot of weight. They have experts in this area. I would like to read that letter. It is dated February 24, 1998. It is from the American Bar Association. It is addressed to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), the chairman.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We understand that on Thursday, February 26, 1998, the House of Representatives will consider H.R. 1544, the Federal Agency Compliance Act legislation that would, among other things, require the Social Security Administration to comply with Federal court precedents within the same circuit. I am writing on behalf of the American Bar Association to express our strong support, strong support from the American Bar Association, that is my own add in there, for legislation that would require the Social Security Administration to cease its policy of nonacquiescence and to follow Court of Appeals decisions within that circuit subject to seeking review in the United States Supreme Court. The provisions of H.R. 1544 addressing the SSA issue are consistent with the ABA goal of requiring the SSA, Social Security Administration, to cease its practice of nonacquiescence to the legal interpretations of the Court of Appeals within each circuit.

I will not go ahead and read the rest of this letter. I know that we would like to move on. We do have an open rule here. I would ask for Members' support on that open rule. But it is important that we remember the concept, and that is that the law that the ordinary person has to follow, as issued by the Federal courts, should very well be expected to be followed by the Federal agencies when the Federal court renders a decision involving those agencies.

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

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUNNING). Pursuant to House Resolution 367 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1544.

□ 1052

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1544) to prevent Federal agencies from pursuing policies of unjustifiable nonacquiescence in, and relitigation of, precedents established in the Federal judicial circuits, with Mrs. EMERSON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. This is the time that is now set for a full debate on the merits of the legislation that is before us which would for the first time make it a part of our law that administrative agencies who have established policies and who establish policy every day in the furtherance of their domains, that that policy when it clashes with precedent that has been set by the courts in a particular area should comply with what the courts have said. That is, that the agencies, just like every other citizen, should comply with the law.

How has this arisen and why is it such a problem? We would not be here on the floor today, Madam Chairman, if it were not for the fact that the Judicial Conference, which is made up of the Supreme Court Chief Justice and Federal judges across the Nation, they have discovered that it is a source of worry to them, more than worry, one in which they have pledged to take action and have, that some Federal agencies refuse to acquiesce to a circuit court decision which compels, or should compel, the agency to act one way or another in future cases based on the precedent that has been set. Yet we see time after time that the agency ignoring the precedent set, follows its own policy in the second, third, fourth and subsequent cases that come up, thus forcing litigation, forcing expenditures of time and money on the part of claimants, and, therefore, leads to uncertainty in the law.

Let me give my colleagues a quick example. I think this would set the stage for what we attempt to do here. This is based on an actual case but I am going to do it in hypothetical terms. If an individual claiming Social Security disability demonstrates through the medical reports that there is a lot of pain involved in the particular injury that this individual has but the pain, everyone agrees, is only subjective in that claimant's psyche, that it is totally subjective, the administrative agency, in this case the Social Security Administration, has found in the past that they will not grant benefits on the basis of a subjective claim of pain, and so they rejected a claimant's similar claim. The claimant now appeals. The circuit court then rules that the agency was wrong. Although pain may not be the final determinant as to whether that benefit should be conferred, it has to be considered whether it is subjective or not. The

pain level as asserted by the claimant is an element that has to be considered in the administrative level. Well, notwithstanding that, the next few cases that come by, the administrative agency sought to continue denying such claims based on pain even though the circuit court has acted on it and has set a precedent for at least that circuit. And so what do we have here? We have the vision of a nonacquiescence, as it is called. That is, that the Social Security Administration in the hypothetical that I gave chooses to pursue its own policies of how to deal with pain and ignore the precedent that has been set by the bona fide court decision.

This has worried the Judicial Conference. They suggested that the Congress deal with it. That is what we are trying to do. In the lowest common denominator that we can place this debate, Madam Chairman, is that everyone expects everyone to obey the law. If the law states, as it did in this case, this hypothetical that I gave, that pain has to be considered, then not just individuals have to comply with the law but the agencies which are charged with the responsibility of executing the law as the Congress and the courts have adjudicated, or have stated.

That is why we are here. We also enjoy the support of other bar association groups and other litigation groups and recipient groups; that is, of the benefits that are conferred by most of our agencies in the contemplation of this very serious problem. I must say that we have worked on this problem for perhaps 10 to 12 years now. We think that we have been spurred into action finally by reason of the fact that at last the judiciary itself, from the Supreme Court down, became alarmed at what was occurring. Although there are certain sanctions that the Supreme Court and the court system can apply to an agency that nonacquiesces, as we are wont to say, their recommendation that we craft it into law is why we have had hearings, we had good debate in both the subcommittee and in the full committee in Judiciary and by overwhelming vote, the matter carries to the floor here today.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Chairman, I rise in support of this bill. I want to commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), the chairman of the subcommittee, for the fair and adequate consideration this bill has gotten in the subcommittee and in the committee. I want to commend the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK), who did so much work for over a dozen years in originating the concept of this bill and in bringing it to where it is now. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and I are going to offer an amendment in a while which we will discuss at that time but let me say in general about the bill now, there has been a serious problem.

□ 1100

Madam Chairman, it is generally, but not completely, but almost completely, with respect to benefits programs where an agency adopts an interpretation of the law, a perhaps overly restrictive interpretation of the law, and based upon that denies someone a benefit that he is entitled to, denies Social Security benefits. We had a lot of problems in the mid-1980s during the Reagan Administration about Social Security problems. We are having apparently currently a lot of problems about Medicare problems.

Someone sues, someone gets a lawyer, goes to court and sues and says the agency is wrong and I am entitled to this benefit under these circumstances, and the court agrees. The agency appeals. The Court of Appeals agrees. So that person gets his benefit. But the next person, the agency does not change their policy. They deny the next person their benefit, and he or she has to go to court. And every individual has to litigate up to the Court of Appeals.

Now this is wrong. Most people will not be able to afford attorneys or to get free legal help and to go through the problems, nor should they have to waste the money and the time, and especially a right delayed is often a right denied.

Federal Agencies have long asserted the right to ignore the law of the circuit in order to advance issues of public policy, recognizing that the United States speaks for all Americans, and it is in that sense a litigant different from all others.

While that is a debatable point, what is not debatable is that the so-called right of nonacquiescence has been abused under administrations of both parties. That abuse has been especially egregious in the areas of Social Security benefits, Medicare benefits and IRS enforcement where agencies for private citizens repeatedly have required private citizens to repeatedly relitigate settled issues of law. No one should have to spend years in court to win a right already recognized under law.

The purpose of this bill is to establish precisely that point, that no one should have to spend years in court to win a right already recognized under law. That is why this bill, if we pass the amendments that we will talk about in a few minutes, should become law, and that is why I rise in tentative support of it pending the outcome of the amendment.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Madam Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) a member of the committee.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) for yielding this time to me, and I commend him for his hard work in this important issue and join him in supporting his legislation. Nonacquiescence by Federal agencies has been an ongoing problem for most of this century dating as far back as the 1920s. Many Federal agencies, in particular the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration, have repeatedly held themselves to be outside the rules on which our system of justice is based.

They claim to be bound only by Federal, district and appellate court decisions in a particular circuit as they affect the particular litigant in the specific case under consideration. Beyond that, these agencies act without check until either the Congress or the Supreme Court intervenes.

This arrogance flies in the face of the reliance on judicial precedent that our system of justice presupposes and undermines the integrity and efficiency of the appeals process, while guaranteeing the claimant due process. By continuing to pursue its policy of nonacquiescence, these agencies are limiting access to the justice system for the claimant, who must pursue lengthy appeals to obtain a decision on an issue of the law that could have been resolved at the agency level, the claimants whose cases are delayed because the agency's resources are spent on duplicative efforts and claimants who may be denied timely access to the Federal court system because the court is forced to reconsider issues of law that it has already decided.

The Federal Agency Compliance Act generally bars intracircuit nonacquiescence while at the same time addressing the need in special cases for agencies to relitigate a precedent. In addition, the bill circumscribes the practice of intercircuit nonacquiescence. H.R. 1544 applies to all agencies, thereby recognizing that the policy on nonacquiescence, whether inter or intra, has been applied by various agencies and could be asserted by any agency.

In addition, this legislation provides a balanced approach by including exceptions to give Federal agencies sufficient flexibility to adhere to valid established precedent so as not to interfere with continued development of the law. This important legislation preserves the judiciary's constitutional role of interpreting the law. This important legislation preserves the judiciary's constitutional role of interpreting the law while allowing Federal agencies to administer fairly their programs.

Madam Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 1544, and I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) for having yielded this time to me.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will rise informally in order that the House may receive a message.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE) assumed the chair.