Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the distinguished gentleman from Florida and the distinguished gentleman from Georgia. I want to thank them. I will soon be reprimanded on the floor. I am using my time. Let me thank the two distinguished gentlemen from Florida for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, let me applaud the proponents of this legislation, particularly in the testimony they gave before the Committee on the Judiciary, of which I am a member. I want to add my support to the rule and am gratified that it is an open rule.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues that I think one of the more important points that we can make as we move toward making this country a safer place to live, and recognizing that we have turned the page of history on September 11, is the ability to share viable and important information with our local responders, if you will, or the local leaders that will provide the home-based security.

With that in mind, I intend to offer an amendment, a friendly amendment, that I hope my colleagues will consider favorably, and that is to ensure procedures that will allow the information from government whistle-blowers to be able to be shared within the confines of the regulations that may be designed by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I hope in this context we will recognize that information may come from a variety of sources, and we would hope the President would then design for us the best way that that information should be shared. The idea is to make sure that our Nation is safe, to do it with cooperative and collaborative efforts, but also to protect the integrity of the information we need to secure those in the homeland.

This amendment, as I said, is offered in a friendly context to recognize the importance of information that comes from those who would be willing to provide us the truth. I think as we move forward we have all determined that the key element for safety involves finding out the facts and the truth.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of my colleague, the gentleman from the east coast of Florida (Mr. HASTINGS). Actually, we do note there is an east and west, we are one State together, and proud to know each other.

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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Texas). Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for approximately 10 minutes.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess for approximately 10 minutes.

□ 1056

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Texas) at 10 o'clock and 56 minutes a.m.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 458, the legislation just passed.

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

There was no objection.

HOMELAND SECURITY INFORMATION SHARING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 458 and rule XVIII, 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. 4598.

□ 1057

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. 4598) to provide for the sharing of homeland security information by Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies with State and local entities, with Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin 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 Florida (Mr. GOSS) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) each will control 20 minutes. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS).

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control the time that is allowed to us on behalf of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank the distinguished chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the great work that he and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), have done in leading our Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, not just post-September 11, but even before that.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) has been a very level-headed individual, who has carried us forward in some difficult times with respect to dealing with our intelligence community; and since September 11 he has particularly provided the strong leadership that this Congress needed and that this Nation has needed in order to be able to ensure the American people that Congress and our intelligence community is doing everything we possibly can to ensure that another act like September 11 never occurs again.

□ 1100

Since September 11 of last year, Congress has enhanced the capabilities of the Federal, State and local officials to prepare and respond to acts of terrorism. Information sharing is the key to cooperation and coordination in homeland security, and it has become abundantly more clear that better information sharing among government agencies and with State and local officials needs to be a higher priority.

The intelligence community of the Federal Government does a great job of gathering information on terrorist activity, but we do a very poor job of sharing that information both horizontally and vertically within our agencies and with State and local officials.

In the public hearings which our Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security held last September and October, we heard a recurring theme from witnesses ranging from New York City Mayor Rudolph Guiliani to Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating. They stressed the importance of an increased level of information sharing between Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies and local and State law enforcement agencies.

Governor Keating even told us a story about his State Adjutant General, a gentleman that he appointed, who informed the governor he could not share some information with him because, as governor, he did not have the right security clearance.

The case in Oklahoma is no exception. These same types of communication gaps exist in every State, including my home State of Georgia. The result is that sheriffs and local officials do not have the same information as the governor, who does not have the same information as the FBI, who does not have the same information as other local officials.

As we fight this war on terrorism, we must make certain that relevant intelligence and sensitive information relating to our national security be in