

WHERE IS THE ACCOUNTABILITY?

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I too ask my colleagues to sign onto a very important discharge petition that will help 4.6 million of our dislocated workers. I rise to say that, but I also rise to ask the question that Robert Kennedy asked, some people will ask why, and I ask, as he did, why not?

President Bush yesterday in essence said that we should stay the course, and I would argue that even as we make a commitment to ensure that we rebuild Iraq, it is imperative that there is accountability, accountability for the lost lives of our young brave men and women, accountability for the tragedies of 40 deaths in the last 48 hours, accountability for a nonexit plan, and no strategy to rebuild Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for the resignation of CIA Director George Tenet, accountability by Secretary Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and I would ask that they be held accountable. There are too many lives being lost, there is too much to be done for us to stand idly by. Some ask, why; I ask, why not?

TWO MORE SOLDIERS KILLED

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we listened to the President have a press conference. We discovered it is 1984, war is peace, that chaos is democracy, and that everything is fine. Yesterday two more soldiers were killed in Iraq. Nothing has changed in the Department of War. We have the same Secretary, we have the same Assistant Secretary, we have the same people in the White House saying that we are doing just fine. They have not changed anything. They just want more money out of us.

I suggest that we have a moment of silence for those who died yesterday.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the motion to go to conference on H.R. 2989, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON
H.R. 2989, TRANSPORTATION,
TREASURY AND INDEPENDENT
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2004

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2989) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Treasury, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OLVER

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. OLVER moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 2989, be instructed to insist on the Senate position with respect to Transit New Starts and Job Access and Reverse Commute funding, and be further instructed to insist on the House position with respect to National Archives and Records Administration's Electronic Records Archives and National Historical Publications and Records Commission grants.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) will be recognized for 30 minutes and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

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

Mr. Speaker, the House and Senate versions of the Transportation-Treasury bill have substantial differences on a wide range of issues that we will have to reconcile in our conference negotiations, and some of those reconciliations will not be easy. Many of these, such as the differences in funding level for Amtrak and election reform are widely publicized and well known.

The two versions of the Transportation-Treasury bill contain a number of issues that have not been as widely noted, but will have nevertheless a significant impact on people's lives.

The motion to instruct that is at the desk and has been read this morning highlights just a few of those issues that I believe and we believe on this side deserve the attention of the conferees.

First, the motion insists upon the Senate's funding level for Transit New Starts projects. The House bill provided \$1.21 billion, more than \$100 million below the Senate level of \$1.32 billion, and even the Senate bill is in turn more than \$200 million below the President's request.

Under the House funding level, the Members on both sides of the aisle were not able to secure funding for many of

the light rail projects in their districts. Several of the projects that did receive funding are well below the actual needs of the project in fiscal year 2004.

The New Starts program which covers heavy and light rail, commuter rail, and rapid bus systems has helped create or extend hundreds of transit fixed guideway systems across the country. These investments in turn provided greater mobility for many millions of urban and suburban Americans. They have helped to reduce congestion and improve air quality in areas that they serve, and they have fostered the development of safer and more livable communities.

Mr. Speaker, I remind Members that the President's budget request sought \$1.51 billion, which is \$300 million more than is provided in the House bill, and that this motion supports \$100 million of that difference. President Bush's request and the Senate's funding level acknowledge the need for additional major investment in transit light rail projects. We need to pass this motion to ensure that the conferees share this priority.

Second, Mr. Speaker, today's motion to instruct insists upon the Senate level of funding of \$125 million for the Job Access and Reverse Commute funding.

□ 1030

This program is designed to assist welfare reform efforts by providing better transportation services for low-income individuals, persons who often cannot afford automobiles in this society, including former welfare recipients who are traveling to jobs or training centers. The House-passed bill is \$40 million below the Senate funding level and \$64 million below the fiscal year 2003 enacted level, which was \$149 million for that program.

The Senate funding is already 15 percent below last year's enacted level, but the House bill provides something more than a 40 percent cut in last year's enacted funding level for that program. Reducing funding for those trying to get to work or for those trying to get training to reenter the workforce seems to be the wrong priority under the current circumstances.

Since 2001, the economy has lost over 3 million private sector jobs and 2.6 million jobs overall. The unemployment rate is hovering near 6 percent with little sign of improvement. For those who see improvement in the economy, there is a general acknowledgment that this has been thus far a "jobless recovery." Given this economy, I would suggest that we should not want to reduce the funding aimed squarely at getting people back to work.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the motion insists upon the House funding levels for the National Archives electronic records archives initiative and for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission grants. These two programs, administered by the National Archives and Records Administration, are both critical for properly