$250 to help pay the costs of their prescription drug coverage while they are in the doughnut hole. Other seniors that reach the doughnut hole through the rest of this year will also receive $250 checks to help them afford the prescription drugs they need to live their lives safely and happily.

Over the next 10 years, this health care reform will eliminate the doughnut hole completely for our seniors. That's a step in the right direction, providing security and safety in the health care that our seniors need.

Amazingly, though, some on the other side of the aisle are continuing to call, not to change the health care reform bill but to repeal it entirely, to cut up the checks, take them away from our seniors and stop the help that they need to pay for their prescription drugs.

We will always be working to make our health care system better, but repealing this positive step forward makes no sense to me.

$250 CHECKS TO SENIORS

(Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, Republicans said they were overhauling Medicare, but all they succeeded in doing was creating a prescription drug doughnut hole that, in 2009 alone, forced 63,000 Maryland seniors to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket, forcing many to choose between buying the prescription drugs they need or purchasing food.

The Nation's seniors shouldn't be forced to make such a choice. That's why, under the new health care law, we are dedicated to closing the doughnut hole once and for all.

Today, June 10, $250 checks are being mailed out to 80,000 eligible seniors as a first step to reducing the financial burden faced by seniors. Then next year there will be a 50 percent discount on prescription drugs in the doughnut hole.

Mr. Speaker, the first of many benefits under the health law that my Republican colleagues opposed and now hope to repeal is on the way. Our seniors and the rest of the country can't afford to go back to a broken system controlled by insurance companies with coverage gaps, denied care, and skyrocketing costs.

$250 FOR SENIORS

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today is a very important day for seniors in south Florida.

Today, more than 3 weeks ahead of schedule, checks to help cover the costs of prescription medication will be mailed to seniors who have fallen into the dreaded Medicare part D doughnut hole.

I have talked to many seniors in West Palm Beach and other parts of my district who had to make the wrenching choice between food and medicine. This should not happen in the America that I know, and that's why I personally have fought so hard to make sure that health care reform included reducing the cost of medicine for our seniors.

Starting today, payments of $250 will be mailed to every senior who falls in the doughnut hole to help cover their costs. This is an important step, but it's just the beginning, because starting next year, seniors will see a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs and we will begin to close the doughnut hole for good.

Fighting for our seniors in south Florida is one of my top priorities, and today's checks will make a real difference for seniors who have worked hard and paid into the system. I look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen and protect Medicare.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

OIL SPILL LIABILITY TRUST FUND

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3473) to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to authorize advances from Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3473

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADVANCES FROM OIL SPILL LIABILITY TRUST FUND FOR DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL.

Section 6002(b) of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2752) is amended in the second sentence—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''Coast Guard''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''and (2) in the case of the discharge of oil that began in 2010 in connection with the explosion on, and sinking of, the mobile offshore drilling unit Deepwater Horizon, may, without further appropriation, obtain 1 or more advances from the Fund as needed, up to a maximum of $100,000,000 for each advance, with the total amount of all advances not to exceed the amounts available under section 9509(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and within 7 days of each advance, shall notify Congress of the amount advanced and the facts and circumstances necessitating the advance''.

SEC. 2. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go-Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled ''Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation'' for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S. 3473.

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

There was no objection.

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

First, I am grateful for the indulgence of our colleague on the committee, our ranking member and senior Republican, Mr. MICA, for responding so quickly to the action of the other body.

We are unaccustomed to such prompt unanimous action in the other body, but they did pass, by unanimous consent, the bill before us now, S. 3473, in response to requests of the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Napolitano, and Admiral Thad Allen, the National Incident Commander, following up on the May 12 request of the administration for legislative changes to, quote, ''speed assistance to people in need,'' close quote, in response to the BP-Deepwater Horizon tragedy.

The request further asks the Congress to, quote, ''act immediately on return from recess,'' close quote. And that is exactly what we are doing, but preceded by a hearing the committee held yesterday on the many aspects of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund and payment from responsible parties and the need for future legislation.

And the gentleman from Florida had several instructive and thoughtful suggestions that we in the committee will be acting upon per our previous agreement.

I want to lay out the specifics.

First of all, the request: Quoting again from the Homeland Security Department letter, ''Congress needs to act now to permit movement of moneys from the principal fund to the emergency fund. At the current pace of BP-Deepwater Horizon response operations, funding available in the emergency fund will be insufficient to sustain Federal response operations within 2 weeks.'' That's from June 4.