we will start taking on water, and all of a sudden we will find out this boat cannot handle it.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MILLER of California. I yield to the gentleman from Alaska.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I will say that I have been one that knows just about how much hay a team of mules can pull. I am not going to say that we are not going to add a little bit to what the mules are pulling now.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, that is the gentleman's prerogative.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. I want to suggest respectfully that whatever happens, the gentleman will be in on the conference. It is my intention to see that the Presidio bill becomes a reality, but I cannot say that we will not add a few more straws to this wagonload that I hope the gentleman might see the wisdom of accepting, and where we disagree, I am confident that with the Senate side, we may not reach that point where they will be added, but I cannot say what will and will not be added to this wagonload, and it is a wagonload.

Most of those parts of hay have already been voted on in this House. There are a couple on the Senate side that were not, but have great interest to House Members on this side, and we have been reviewing each one of those that have been added. There may be a couple of others that we would like to solve a problem with on this side which I am sure the gentleman will support. Some he may not be too happy with.

□ 1830

But we are going to talk about that.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I am sure that the threshold will not be whether I am happy or not but we will try to determine another one. As many Members of the Congress are aware of the gentleman's past employment record as a river boat captain, I am sure he will understand that there is some point at which we cannot take on additional baggage without running aground here.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of that. As an old river boat captain, I have never been on a sandbar yet. I know how to read the water. I know how fast the current is, and I know where I am going. Just help me out and we will get there together.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am feeling happier already.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOEHNER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska? The Chair hears none and, without objection, appoints the following conferees: Messrs. YOUNG of Alaska; HANSEN; ALLARD; and HAYWORTH; Mrs. CUBIN; and Messrs. MILLER of California; RICHARDSON; and VENTO.

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2137. An act to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to require the release of relevant information to protect the public from sexually violent offenders.

POSTPONING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3286, ADOPTION PROMOTION AND STABILITY ACT OF 1996, AFTER INITIAL DEBATE UNTIL THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATIVE DAY

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during consideration of H.R. 3286, pursuant to House Resolution 428, notwithstanding the order of the previous question, it may be in order immediately after initial debate on the bill as amended for the Chair to postpone further consideration of the bill until the following legislative day, on which consideration may resume at a time designated by the Speaker.

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

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2086

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as a cosponsor of H.R. 2086.

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

There was no objection.

COMMONSENSE PRODUCT LIABILITY REFORM ACT OF 1996—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 104–207)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the further consideration of the veto message of the President on the bill (H.R. 956) to establish legal standards and procedures for product liability litigation, and for other purposes.

The question is, Will the House, on reconsideration, pass the bill, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding?

The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CONYERS], the ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 956.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 15 minutes of my time to the gentleman from Viriginia [Mr. BLILEY], the chairman of the Committee on Commerce, and I ask unanimous consent that he may be permitted to yield blocks of time to other Members.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 minutes.

(Mr. HYDE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, one of the least meritorious reasons the President has listed for his veto was that this bill infringed on States' rights. The newly discovered respect for the 10th amendment is heartening but somewhat misplaced. In our mobile society, 80 percent of our manufactured goods are shipped across State lines, and the unpredictability of a patchwork of 50 different sets of laws and liabilities is a major factor prompting this commonsense bipartisan reform.

We do not help the consumer when factoring into insurance premiums the uncertainties of compliance with a myriad of different State laws and unpredictability of punitive damage awards. We only add to the cost of the product and render our industries less competitive with foreign companies.

Plaintiffs collect less than half of every dollar spent on the civil justice system. The rest goes to lawyers and court costs. One study found the cost of this litigation explosion last year alone was $152 billion, and this is money that could be spent on hiring new workers and investing in new equipment.

Tort reform does not deny valid claimants receiving adequate awards. It merely reduces the arbitrary excesses that harm consumers by discouraging many new products from being marketed, medical devices such as heart valve, pacemakers if they utilize silicon.

The Washington Post, no conservative house organ, says the primary beneficiaries of our current system are a group of wealthy and powerful professionals. Guess who they are speaking about? The arbitrary potential liability that can be imposed through unrestrained punitive damage forces unjustified settlements, increasing insurance costs, and the public, the consumer, loses in the end. Negligence should be actionable and deserving plaintiffs should recover adequate damages, but it is the arbitrary excesses that make our tort system top heavy