Mr. HASTINGS of Florida changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to adjourn was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. McCARTHY OF MISSOURI. MR. SPEAKER, ON ROLLCALL NO. 187, I WAS UNAVOIDABLY DETAINED. HAD I BEEN PRESENT, I WOULD HAVE VOTED ''NO.''

AMENDMENT TO RULE ON S. 1150, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998 CONFERENCE REPORT

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, there is some concern over understanding the rule that we are about to take up. I just want to put the House on notice that at the end of my remarks, or during the debate on the rule, that I will be putting back into the bill an unfunded mandate that was removed. I personally oppose unfunded mandates and I will argue against it, but the House will have an opportunity to vote on it.

So at some point I would be offering a manager's amendment, that at the appropriate time I would offer an amendment to the rule ensuring that the offset for crop insurance and for food stamps for legal aliens is going to be in the bill. There would be a vote on whether or not to take that out.

DISPOSING OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1150, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 446 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 446

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (S. 1150) to ensure that federally funded agricultural research, extension, and education address high-priority concerns with national or multistate significance, to reform, extend, and eliminate certain agricultural research programs, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report (except those arising under clause 3 of rule XXVIII and predicated on provisions in subtitle A of title V) and against its consideration (except those arising under section 425 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974) are waived. If a point of order against the conference report for failure to comply with clause 3 of rule XXVIII is sustained, the conference report shall be considered as rejected and the pending question shall be, without intervention of any point of order, whether the House shall recede from its amendment and agree to an amendment to the Senate bill consisting of the text of the conference report, modified by striking subtitle A of title V. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to final adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for one hour.

□ 1000

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of the of debate only, I yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), pending which I yield myself such time as I might consume. All time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

This rule waives all points of order against the conference report, except for two. First, the rule will allow points of order for violations of the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act. The Congressional Budget Office has already determined that the conference report contains unfunded mandates to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars; in my own State of New York, in this letter from Governor George Pataki, several hundred million dollars alone which will have to be passed on to local property taxpayers in the State of New York.

Now, before consideration of the conference report, any Member may make a point of order that it contains an unfunded mandate, and at some point in a few minutes I will move to put back in the unfunded mandate that was inadvertently removed from the bill, even though I oppose it and I will raise a point of order to strike out the unfunded mandate that we have just put back in. However, that would require a 20 minute debate and a vote, so that everybody understands they will have that opportunity to vote on whether to proceed with an unfunded mandate. That will be the pay-for for crop insurance and food stamps for legal aliens and other categories.

The second point of order against the conference report permitted by this rule is for the violation of scope of conference rule. This rule prohibits the conferees from adding material in the conference which was not considered in either the House or the Senate, and here we are talking about an $800 million expenditure for food stamps for legal aliens, for refugees, for a group of Indians, for a group of people coming out of Laos and Cambodia, and a number of other people. In this case, the conference report contains several provisions which are beyond the scope of the conference.

Under the rule, the point of order is specifically allowed against the part of the conference report, again, which provides $800 million for food stamps for certain noncitizens, in subtitle A of Title V.

Mr. Speaker, the conference report is available on both sides of the aisle, and if my colleagues want to know what they are voting on as far as the food stamps are concerned, they need to look up subtitle A of Title V, and it is a very brief description of who is qualified in this bill.

If this point of order is sustained by the Chair, technically the conference report falls, and the rule then provides that the pending question will be whether to agree to an amendment consisting of everything that was in the conference report except the money for food stamps for certain noncitizens.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report contains numerous violations of House rules, and these are major issues that were put into this bill after it left both the House and the Senate. There are multiple points of order which would be available to the Members of the House if this agreement were to be brought up under the privileged status which conference reports theoretically enjoy in the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this conference report was filed on April 27 and it has languished on this calendar since. It was presented to the Committee on Rules yesterday, and the managers on the part of the House requested a rule waiving all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

Among the many points of order which could be made against this conference report are as follows:

Clause 3 of rule 28, prohibiting matters which extend beyond the scope of the conference.

Clause 4 of rule 28, prohibiting nongermane Senate material, an example of which is section 226(f), the redistribution of funds under the matching funds requirement for research and extension activities at 1890 institutions.

Clause 2 of rule 20, so we can see how complicated this is, which prohibits consideration of Senate amendments which would violate clause 2 of Rule XXI, which in turn prohibits appropriations on an authorizing measure, which includes many, many, many, many, many provisions. So we are breaking the rules of our House by going ahead today with this.

Now, some of these are: Section 252, which is the Fund for Rural America; Title IV, miscellaneous fees; various nutrition programs in the bill; and the National Organic Certification Fees, and it goes on and on and on. I am just trying to point out to my colleagues, all of these things were added to this bill after it left both houses, so none of us have any idea of what is in this bill, including me.

Section 303 of the Congressional Budget Act, which prohibits consideration of legislation creating new budgetary authority in a fiscal year before passage of the budget resolution. That is in here. This new budget authority is largely contained in the food stamps title.

The conference report also contains legislative provisions in the jurisdiction of other House committees, including the Committee on Resources and the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Appropriations

should be very concerned about what is happening here, because the Members that serve on standing committees always raise a ruckus when the Committee on Appropriations tries to legislate in their appropriation bill, taking away the jurisdiction in the standing committees. This is just the opposite. Here we have one authorizing committee taking away the jurisdiction of the appropriations committees.

Finally, the unfunded mandates that I described earlier. Mr. Speaker, from among this panoply of options, the Committee on Rules chose two particularly egregious violations of House rules and we crafted the rule accordingly, trying to follow the Rules of the House.

The rule therefore, and this is what we ought to listen to because it gets complicated, the rule, therefore allows Members to make an unfunded mandate point of order, which if I am allowed to put it back in by unanimous consent, I will make myself, because I unalterably oppose unfunded mandates on State and local governments under any circumstances. And then we would have a dedicated period of debate on my motion to raise the point of order against the unfunded mandate. We would have a period of debate, 20 minutes, and a vote on whether to consider the conference report with that unfunded mandate in it.

That is fair. Everybody gets a clean shot. If we want to go ahead with it, we vote ''yes''. If we want to kill the bill then, we vote ''no''. That is normal, regular rules of order.

The rule then allows any Member to make a point of order under the scope rule, clause 3 of rule 28, against subtitle A, title V of the conference report, which I have just outlined to my colleagues, which contains both the unfunded mandate and the provision expanding food stamps to legal aliens.

This rule gives the House the opportunity to take out of the conference report the food stamp provisions, which many of us object to, which never should have been in the conference report in the first place. Again, they were not in the House bill, they were not in the Senate bill. And the unfunded mandate saddles States and local governments, every one of our States, it saddles the States and local governments, local governments which raise their revenues to pay for these unfunded mandates out of property taxes. In other words, if we leave this mandate in, we are mandating an increase on property taxes on every one of our constituents throughout America that own a home.

The bill, when it passed the House, was designed primarily to help the Committee on Agriculture and it should have stayed that way, and if it did, we would be sailing through here with about a 15 minute debate on the rule and a 10 minute debate on the bill and it would have been settled. That is the way it was when it left the House and the Senate and that is the way it should be today.

When it came back from conference it was loaded up with these mandatory programs which rolled back the landmark welfare reform package this Congress passed in 1996, and that is exactly what we are doing here today. If we vote ''yes'' on this bill with the food stamps in there and these other provisions, saddling unfunded mandates on local governments and States, then we are just refuting everything that we did two years ago that was overwhelmingly accepted by the American people. Eighty-four percent of the American people think we did the right thing back then, and they are going to think we are doing the wrong thing here today.

This rule gives the House a way to preserve the parts of the bill dealing with agriculture, while still taking out some of the most egregious add-ons.

Now, that is what is before us today. Mr. Speaker, again, at the appropriate time, as soon as the parliamentarians have had time to review my unanimous consent request, I will offer an amendment to the rule to ensure that the offsets for crop insurance and food stamps for legal aliens are back in the bill.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of the offset for both of these programs, crop insurance and food stamps for legal aliens, it is the unfunded mandate that we are talking about. That provision is a reduction in administrative costs which passes Federal costs off to the States, and therefore a vote for the amendment is a vote to send crop insurance and agriculture research to the Senate without food stamps for legal aliens, and we are assured that that will pass the Senate today and be sent on to the President.

So I hope that is clear to my colleagues. If it is not, I would be glad to entertain any questions as we proceed in this friendly debate.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the Chairman of the Committee on Rules, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for yielding me the time.

As my colleague has described, this is a rule for consideration of the conference report on Senate 1150, which is the Agriculture Research Extension and Education Act of 1998. It waives all points of order except the rules pertaining to unfunded mandates and the scope of the conference. I am strongly opposed to the rule and I ask for its defeat.

Behind all of the parliamentary language in this rule, this measure eliminates food stamps for 250,000 children, elderly people, disabled people, and people who came to this country to flee political or religious persecution who are legal immigrants. Yes, legal immigrants who are in this country with the approval of our government.

This is a shameful and malicious rule. The conference report includes provisions that improve agriculture research, fund and reform the Federal crop insurance program, and extend rural development assistance. It also restores food stamps to about one-fourth of the refugees and legal immigrants who were made ineligible under the 1996 welfare bill.

The bill's provision on food stamps for legal immigrants do not undermine or conflict with welfare reform. The provisions are modeled on last year's Balanced Budget Act which restored eligibility for SSI and Medicaid to limited categories of needy legal immigrants.

□ 1015

We are talking about restoring food stamps to only the most vulnerable groups of legal immigrants. This includes children the elderly and the disabled. None of these groups are able-bodied, working-age people who would normally be expected to support themselves. Furthermore, eligibility is limited to those special categories of people who entered the country prior to the August 22nd, 1996, enactment of the welfare reform bill.

We are talking about only 250,000 of the neediest legal immigrants. This bill has enormous support in Congress and throughout the Nation. The Senate passed a conference report by an overwhelming vote of 92 to 8. It is supported by numerous agricultural, commodity, nutrition, immigrant, and religious operations.

Testifying before the Committee on Rules last evening, the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BOB SMITH), asked for a rule to protect the food stamp provision. He called the conference report a carefully crafted balance of interests. The ranking minority member of the Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CHARLIE STENHOLM), also asked for a rule supporting the food stamp provision. He called it a very good bill.

Members of the Committee on Rules of both parties spoke out in favor of extending food stamp eligibility to children, the disabled, and the elderly who are legal immigrants. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) offered an amendment to the rule which would have saved the food stamp provision. That motion failed on a narrow 5 to 6 vote.

Yes, there is enormous support for this bill, except for six members of the Committee on Rules, who do not want to see legal immigrants get food stamps if they are children, disabled, or elderly. The cost of this is fully offset, and it represents no net increase in spending. This bill does not affect any future immigrants to the U.S.

There is no excuse for this nastiness. The measure even takes away food stamps from some needy legal refugees who came to the U.S. to escape political or religious persecution. These are the neediest of needy immigrants. They have no sponsors. They have no

support here. Why on earth do we want to take away their food stamps?

The House must defeat this mean-spirited, hurtful rule. Before casting their votes, I hope Members understand that a vote for this rule, a vote to strip food stamps from children, the disabled, and the elderly who are legal immigrants, is a vote against citizens, groups that support disabled rights, religious groups, and advocates for the poor. It is a vote against farmers who will not be happy that this critical, time-sensitive legislation is delayed by the politics of malice.

If this rule passes, there is not a chance that the legislation will survive without the food stamp provision. The Senate, which overwhelmingly supported this bill, will not pass it. The administration, which strongly supports it, will veto it; and the American people, who are generous people, will not stand for it.

If this measure passes, we will have to change the inscription on the Statue of Liberty: Give me your tired, your poor, except for your disabled, too old, or too young. The Statue of Liberty must be weeping. I urge Members in the strongest possible terms, vote down this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOLOMON. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me say to my good friend, who I have great respect for, he says the Senate will not pass it. The Majority Leader, TRENT LOTT, has assured us that if this bill contains what it did originally in the House and Senate that he will pass that bill today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DICK ARMEY), the Majority Leader of the House.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that under different times and circumstances passions run hot. People get upset, feel the tension of this work. It is important work.

But I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I have heard a little rhetoric this morning that is a little hotter than is necessary and, frankly, quite inaccurate and unfair. ''Mean-spirited'' I think is a little harsh.

The agriculture community came to us, and they said they needed crop insurance. We agreed, and we want the agriculture community to get crop insurance through this Congress and through the White House, through the farmers of America. We are working hard on that.

They also want additional funding for agricultural research. We are perfectly excited about moving that forward for the agriculture community, so we passed through this House a bill that would provide for agricultural research and crop insurance. A similar bill was passed through the Senate, and then House and Senate went to conference. In that conference, several things were added to the bill that had not been in either the House bill or the Senate bill.

If we are going to talk about what is outside the regular order, what is outside the rules of the House, let us begin with adding things to a conference that is outside the scope of the conference. That, of course, was a startling event.

When they closed their conference and brought back a conference report with these things that were outside the scope of their conference, it is perfectly in order within the rules of the House for a Member to have a point of order against the conference report.

Why did the members of the Committee on Agriculture and the House and Senate, who had so convincingly made their case that crop insurance is important, get it done as quickly as possible, agriculture research is important, get it done as quickly as possible, why did they add so many things to that focused legislation that had come from both bodies that were outside the scope of their conference?

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ARMEY. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that crop insurance was not part of the legislation when it passed these individual Houses and was added simply on the same basis that the food stamp provision was. There is some inconsistency.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that.

Let me say, in the interests of inconsistency, when the agriculture community and the agriculture committees came to the leadership of both bodies and said, this is urgent, we want to do so, they did so with our blessings.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, they did not do so on the issue of food stamps. So let us just put it on the basis of where we stand.

Mr. ARMEY. The gentleman has had his time. I will make my point.

That being the case, I am sure the gentleman from California (Mr. FAZIO) might want to exercise his prerogative under the rules of the House with respect to his point of order.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ARMEY. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the point, just so Members will know, when we are talking about these food stamps, there is a timeliness date of November 1. When we are talking about crop insurance, it is the end of June. That is why the crop insurance was added, because there is a time deadline. That is why it must be added on now. We can still deal with the food stamp issue any time during June, July, and August.

Mr. ARMEY. The point I would like to make, Mr. Speaker, is that both the leadership in the House and Senate did everything we could to work with the members of the agriculture community and the members of the agriculture committees to move forward crop insurance. That was the focus.

The fact of the matter is this Congress has taken great pride in the accomplishments we have made to relieve the States of unfunded mandates, and we have taken great pride in the welfare reform we have done. Everybody has understood, and for some period of time now we have been unable to solve the riddle of how to bring this legislation related to crop insurance to the floor because it was burdened with provisions that would be objected to by the majority of the people in the majority conference.

Now we have found a rule that makes it possible. Let me make no mistake about it. If Members vote for this rule and they pass this conference report, they can get crop insurance through the House on its road to the farmers of America. We can get research through the House on its road to the agricultural research centers of America. We can have them paid for.

If Members want to go back to their districts and say, I stopped the process, I scuttled the plane at takeoff, I defeated the rule because it was more important for me to have things, provisions of this bill that are outside of the scope of its intent, that relate to the extension of the time under which people who are legal aliens can get food stamps in America, because that was more important to me than you and your crop insurance in Iowa and North and South Dakota and Kansas, go ahead and make that vote.

But what I will not do is have Members say that they had to make this vote to deny them their crop insurance because the leadership did not treat us fairly. It is Members' choice. It is their vote. They should make it and accept their responsibility and accept their accountability for it.

If Members want a scapegoat in the matter, they are not going to find one here. I will be very happy to go back to the people of Texas and explain why it is that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DICK ARMEY) was able to vote to get them their crop insurance and other Members of the Texas delegation were not able to make that vote.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM).

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, that was a fascinating statement that my colleague, the gentleman from Texas, just made.

The position that I am for today is supported by the State of Texas. The State of Texas has already done that which the gentleman opposes today, because they believe it to be right for those who have been affected by the food stamp provisions. They support our version of this rule.

It should not surprise anyone, though, because this is the same majority leader that was responsible for

passing the farm bill in the Speaker's office and promising that we were going to have unlimited access to world markets, and then will not even bring up IMF funding or fast track funding.

This is another backdoor attempt by the leadership of this House to gut agriculture in rural America, and let there be no mistake about it. We will not even have an opportunity to discuss the intricacies of the research and the crop insurance bill, because once this rule passes, with the mechanisms and the maneuvers that are going on in this rule, which the chairman of the Committee on Rules has already acknowledged a mistake was made last night and is going to attempt to correct it in just a moment, there are other mistakes in this rule today that can be corrected by going back up and letting the House work its will on a bill that the Senate has passed 92 to 8.

Yes, there are things in this bill that are outside the scope: crop insurance, food stamps. That is true. Why was it done? Because we have serious funding problems for rural America in the budget. The budget that I voted for has tight restraints.

We are looking for ways to help production agriculture, and we put together a coalition of consumer groups and production agriculture that said, here is some money that we can reprogram for purposes of feeding people, providing crop insurance, and providing funding for research.

This rule will destroy it. Let there be no mistake about it. If Members pass this rule, they are kidding themselves, if the Senate that voted 92 to 8, that it is going to go back and change its mind. Because the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the House have said they have a better idea. They have already been through that for months. It is not going to happen.

The blame for having crop insurance problems is going to rest on the leadership of the House. If Members wish to have another political issue, and we have so many I cannot count them now, it is interesting, I am wondering if the Majority Leader's rhetoric is going to be the same on the ISTEA bill when it comes up later today as it is today. It is interesting how we are picking and choosing. I am frustrated with the picking and choosings that constantly and consistently say to rural America, you do not count. You do not count.

So, I say to the majority leader, I welcome this debate with the gentleman back in Texas. He is dead wrong, and anyone that follows his leadership is going to find that out.

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

Mr. Speaker, here we go again. It is what really disheartens me as a Member of this body. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has just stood up and said, we have so many issues now that we can play politics with. That is sickening.

He also went on to say that if Members vote for this, they are knocking out agriculture research and crop insurance. I have the amendment. As a matter of fact, I think I will offer it right now.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. SOLOMON TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 446

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment placed at the desk which I have discussed with the minority, and I ask unanimous consent that it be accepted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment Offered by Mr. SOLOMON to House Resolution 446:

Page 2, line 17, strike ''subtitle A of title V'' and insert ''sections 503 through 509 and by striking section 510(b)''.

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

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

Mr. OBEY. Reserving the right to object, I would like to ask the gentleman a question. Let me explain why I am asking the question, to be perfectly fair.

What I am confused about is as follows: The gentleman indicated a minute ago that there were a number of things wrong with this conference report. I agree with him. I have made known my concern about the fact that this conference report contains new mandatory spending. I think that ought to be discretionary.

But I also recognize that there has been a compromise struck between the traditional agricultural interests and the nutrition program supporters and so each side has had to swallow some things they do not like. While the chairman indicated his concern about the entitlement that is created under this bill, he, in fact, has not allowed any point of order to be lodged against that, as I understand it. The rule that is brought to the House at this point only allows a point of order to be lodged against the food stamp provisions and the crop insurance.

I am sorry. I am wrong on that.

Let me ask the gentleman this: Is it the intent of the Republican leadership by what they are doing here today to take that $818 million, which is supposed to be used to reinstate food stamps for the neediest immigrants in this country, and instead move that over in order to pay for the ISTEA package that is coming up here later today? Is that the game that is going on?

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Absolutely not. It is the intention of the Committee on Rules and not the Republican leadership that we add back in the point of order that can be allowed against an unfunded mandate amounting to close to $2 billion that would pay for everything that is in this bill, including crop insurance, including food stamps and anything else.

If we are allowed to do that because of the inadvertent error that was made between the parliamentarians and the crafters last night, then it means that I, JERRY SOLOMON, would, at the appropriate time, be able to stand and raise a point of order against the unfunded mandate that you and I are concerned about.

If it is then voted down, let me explain, if that is then voted down, we would continue to consider the bill, at which time any Member, the gentleman from Wisconsin or the gentleman from Texas could then raise a point of order against the scope of the $800 million dealing with food stamps. That would probably be sustained by the Chair.

Then, under the rule, the House would automatically, the Chair would move to vote on whether to send this measure to the Senate minus the food stamps. That is what would occur.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation of objection, my question remains. Is it not true that if one of those scenarios occurs, that, in fact, that money will be on the table to be used later today for ISTEA? BESTEA?

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, this would have nothing to do with that. I do not know what else the gentleman is driving at. What we are doing has no implication on the ISTEA bill coming up. That is an entirely different matter, and the monies involved have nothing to do with that. My good friend, as an appropriator, ought to be very concerned with what is happening in that ISTEA conference in what it does to his appropriations.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I have been standing on the floor for 3 days objecting to that conference report.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the chairman of the Committee on Rules if what he is proposing would take away the vulnerability of legal immigrants from receiving food stamps? Does he propose to allow a procedure that allows any individual to raise a point of order that would in essence deny the food stamps going to legal immigrants?

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, under regular rules of the House, if a conference report were to be brought to this floor that would have a scope violation, which is the food stamp issue, then any Member would automatically be allowed to raise a point of order, strike that out, and then it would kill the conference report.

We did not want to do that, so we made a special provision so that if a

Member were to rise and raise a point of order and it were sustained by the Chair, then it would not kill, in effect, it would not kill the conference report. It would leave the bill then as an amendment standing and ready to go to the Senate without the food stamp provision in it. I have deliberately written it that way because I did not want to kill the conference report because then we could not deal with it in a timely manner for the crop insurance issue.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Would that also be true with the crop insurance then? The gentleman is just making this special provision for a point of order for food stamps?

Mr. SOLOMON. Yes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. He is not making that point of order for the crop insurance?

Mr. SOLOMON. No.

Mrs. CLAYTON. That is out of scope, too.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I just want the House to understand the difference between what we are doing with poor immigrants and what we are doing—by the way, I am for crop insurance.

Mr. SOLOMON. I know the gentlewoman is.

Mrs. CLAYTON. This bill is a well-crafted, balanced bill, and it is much needed in rural areas. But I cannot find the rationale for leaving out of scope the legal immigrants.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, may I give the rationale? It is a sincere one, because I represent an agricultural district, just as the gentlewoman does.

But there is a timeliness involved with the crop insurance. In other words, it expires at the end of June and, therefore, we have very few legislative days left to work between the House and the Senate.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time under my reservation of objection, I certainly want to say that in addition to my suspicion about ISTEA, I think what is going on here is that there is an effort being made to once again set up a needless political confrontation under which a poison pill is inserted in this agreement. That will necessitate the White House vetoing this bill, and then that side of the aisle can claim that it is the White House that has shut down the crop insurance program.

That is what I believe is going on. I think it is incredibly outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation of objection, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL).

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), and I just want to be clear, what has happened here.

What happened is, last night we passed this rule, about 11:30. This amendment that the chairman of the Committee on Rules has talked about said, I want to make it perfectly clear what his amendment will do that he will offer, it will take away the eligibility of food stamps for legal immigrants. It exposes whole sections, because what it does with sections 501 and 502, these are the provisions that pay for crop insurance programs; the sections that the rule allows to be taken out, the sections that the rule allows to be taken out of the bill are the provisions which will allow legal immigrants to receive food stamps.

This amendment takes away eligibility of food stamps, because what it does is it exposes the food stamp sections to the scope. And what will happen is somebody from the gentleman's side will raise a point of order. The point of order will be, will rule against the point of order. The section will be taken out. So effectively what he is doing is, he is not portraying exactly what his amendment is doing.

This will take legal immigrants out of the bill. I want everybody to understand that. I have the amendment right here. I can read it. This takes legal immigrants on food stamps completely out of the bill. Everybody should understand that.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all of my colleagues to pick up the conference report and look at title V. We are doing exactly what the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) and the aggies have asked us to do. We are adding back in section 501 and 502, which is a reduction in funding of employment and training programs, a reduction in payments for administrative costs. That is the pay-for. The gentleman asked me to put that back into the bill. That is exactly what this amendment here does.

For the gentleman from Ohio to say that this is striking out the food stamps is absolutely wrong. This amendment, and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and anybody else will tell the gentleman that we are putting back in the pay-for, as we were asked to do. That is all the amendment does.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I would just like to say what it does is that it exposes the sections on food stamps to——

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, on this amendment, I do not.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. In the rule, you do.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time under my reservation of objection, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I want to make one correction. I believe the chairman of the Committee on Rules misspoke but not intentionally. What the House Committee on Agriculture, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) and I, have asked you to do is to report a rule to allow the conference report, as reported unanimously from the House and Senate, that passed by 92 to 8, to be allowed to be voted on today. That is what we asked for, not what you stated we asked for.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation of objection, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

Mr. LEVIN. I just want to say something to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) in terms of effective date.

Right now there are hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants who are ineligible for food stamps. What is being proposed is that their eligibility begin November 1, but there is a time sequence, a time impact for these people. They now are ineligible and, in many cases, hungry.

This has nothing to do with welfare reform, Mr. Speaker. AFDC was reformed. We added SSI and food stamps as additional portions. We have restored now most of the money for legal immigrants in terms of SSI. This now suggests that we add $800 million of the $27 billion that was cut, and we are cutting food stamps by $2 billion and restoring $800 million. There is a net cut in food stamps.

Essentially, what the gentleman's amendment would do would be to shelter crop insurance from any objection, but leave food stamps for one person to object to and raise it in front of here for a majority vote, when the Senate has overwhelmingly said that food stamps should be put in. You are delaying crop insurance and everything else. You are delaying; you are the ones who are doing it.

When the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) gets up here and talks about crop insurance, et cetera, and talks about other things, that is a smoke screen, if I might say so.

I want to just make it entirely clear what the gentleman is doing here. The Senate has already voted.

I want to make one last point: Do not say that the food stamp issue is a surprise. We debated that issue when this bill came through here, and we were told by some on the gentleman's side that it would be raised in conference. Go back and look at the debate.

You are going to come forth here on a bill I am going to vote for on ISTEA, asking to put in numerous provisions that were not discussed in the Senate or the House on the floor. You are going to ask a waiver. But when it comes to hungry people, you do not want to respond. It is disgraceful.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, continuing my reservation of objection, I would simply say that what the Solomon amendment does is simply to restore the pay-for. It still leaves food stamps open to being vulnerable to a single point of order objection by a single Member, and it is gone. That is why I

say that this process is designed to create another needless political confrontation.

We ought to be here trying to deal with the problems of workers, the problems of farmers, the problems of food stamp recipients, the problems of agriculture research. Instead, another needless political argument is being fashioned, and I think it is incredibly unfortunate.

I yield to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

□ 1045

Mr. POMEROY. Speaking to the crop insurance and ag research portions of this bill, Mr. Speaker, the one way we pass this today and ensure its enactment is to pass the conference report, the one adopted by the Senate by 92 votes.

The Committee on Rules follows that up. The Chairman's amendment does not cure it. This body has to pass this bill today. And for the majority not to bring the conference report, as unanimously adopted by conference committee and passed in the Senate to this body, is a slap in the face to rural America and every Member representing rural America.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, does the gentleman intend to object?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object.

Mr. SOLOMON. No, Mr. Speaker, we have to go to regular order at some point.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman wants me to object, I will object.

Mr. SOLOMON. I am not asking the gentleman to. I am just saying we do have a time limitation. The gentleman knows that. We cannot continue under reservations beyond regular rules of order.

Mr. OBEY. The gentleman created this situation. I do not think he should object to people who are stuck with it.

Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I simply wanted to say that I find it quaint, indeed, that there are objections being made to the fact that this conference report creates a small amount of additional mandatory spending for agriculture when they intend to ram through this place $220 billion in new mandatory spending on the highway bill, and we will not be able to in any way prevent that from becoming mandatory spending. I think that is absurd.

Mr. Speaker, I object to the gentleman's unanimous-consent request.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). Objection is heard.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. SOLOMON

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. Solomon:

Page 2, line 17, strike ''subtitle A of title V'' and insert ''sections 503 through 509 and by striking section 510(b)''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment will be considered pending and will be voted upon.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, just before going out on Memorial Day recess, we failed to pass the disaster bill. My colleagues forced me to go back to the people of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and tell them that Congress politically was unable to respond to a situation that desperately needed responding to.

Here we are again doing exactly the same thing. We have a disaster in rural America. We have got farmers in a world of hurt in the area I represent and all over the country, and we are about to go out on Memorial Day recess without having passed this vital bill, this vital bill that makes a commitment for ag research, so desperately needed in the future, and a commitment to crop insurance, which is so desperately needed to help farmers stay in the business of farming.

Do we just want to come right out and end family farming? Why do we not just have a vote to end family farming? We could just as well for the way this body is dealing with this situation. Have we learned absolutely nothing from the disastrous debacle that so disgraced this body 1 year ago?

We need to pass this bill today. And the only way we do it is by passing the conference report. I urge rejection of the amendment.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the very distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time, and I rise in support of the rule, as amended, whether we either accept it by unanimous consent or vote to accept it.

I want to take the blame for being the skunk in this garden party, because it was me, yesterday, that said I would come to the floor and object to the unanimous consent to bring the conference report up immediately. I told that to the Republican leadership. I was prepared to do that.

So the Republican leadership yesterday afternoon was prepared to bring the conference report, bring it to the floor, or at least get unanimous consent to bring it to the floor last evening or this morning, and I was prepared to object to that.

Under the normal rules of the House, any Member can stand up and object to any item in a conference report that is outside the scope as reported by the House and the Senate. Under normal procedure. Not under a special procedure. And I was prepared to do that.

In attempting to address the legitimate concerns of agricultural research and crop insurance, we tried to craft an approach that we could waive the normal rules of the House, except on certain provisions: one dealing with food stamps, one dealing with unfunded mandates. And, in doing that, inadvertently, certain things were taken out that should not have been taken out. So the chairman of the Committee on Rules is attempting to amend the original rule.

All I and I think many Members on this side of the aisle want is an up-and-down vote on these expansions. If we win, we win. If we lose, we lose.

My good friend from Abilene, Texas, pointed out that the State of Texas has decided to extend some benefits to certain aliens that were eliminated in the Welfare Reform Act. Texas and every other State has the right to do that under existing law.

I would also point out that the welfare rolls are down 30 percent nationwide, and I am not aware that there are huge numbers of people that have suffered as a consequence of that. There may be individuals that have, and we can address those as needed.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) has a bill, he told me this morning, that would reestablish some of these benefits. It should be brought to the floor. It should be voted on on its own merits. But we should not cast stones on people that want to go through regular order, trying to insist that conference reports come back within the scope and be voted on within the scope.

So, again, to conclude, I am the skunk of the garden party that yesterday afternoon said I would object to the unanimous consent request to bring the ag research bill up as it came out of the conference, not the chairman of the Committee on Rules, not the majority leader, not the Speaker. So if there is a skunk in this debate, it is the gentleman from Texas (JOE BARTON), of the Sixth District.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BOSWELL).

(Mr. BOSWELL Asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I would just state quickly, I follow how things go here, and I find it very interesting at times. But I know this for a fact: That we have people trying to plant and get ready to go to field, and they are counting on this crop insurance thing to come through.

I agree with the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) that we have got to pass this bill today. We must do it. I am convinced, as I have listened to this discussion, that this rule will kill the report, and we cannot afford to do that. Time is of the essence.

Another thing that has come to my attention. Some of my colleagues, as well as I, served in the Vietnam conflict. And I remember very well the acquaintances I had in working with the Montagnards, the Hao Laotians and others. They fought at our side and they were valiant, and I think perhaps because of some of their willingness to put their lives on the line, I can be here today.

Some of them have come to this country, and they are legal aliens, and

I cannot imagine that we would not want to provide assistance to them. I hope that my colleagues will defeat this rule, and we can get on with the business.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW).

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Committee on Agriculture to indicate that this is a critical day and a critical vote for production agriculture and consumers across this country.

If we do not defeat this rule, if we do not proceed to an immediate vote on something that passed overwhelmingly in the Senate, unanimously by conference committee, we will lose an opportunity to provide food safety in our country through increased food safety research; to provide a crisis management team that will be able to go out when there is a food safety crisis and be able to protect our consumers across the country. We will lose the opportunity to provide critical agricultural research.

My State farmers have lost $56 million last year on wheat scab and vomitoxin. I know that in South Dakota and Minnesota and important other parts of the country, critical, critical dollars have been lost as a result of these kinds of diseases. Without this bill, we will see farmers continue to lose hundreds of millions of dollars.

A vote against the rule is a vote for agriculture.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, can you give us the time allocation on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has 9½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY).

(Mr. DOOLEY of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I think everyone has to fully understand what are the consequences of this rule. To vote for this rule is to be turning our backs on American farmers, to be turning our backs on our agricultural research institutions which are performing a service that is benefitting consumers and benefiting our economy.

There is no secret about the fact that we have almost every major agricultural organization in this country asking Members, Republicans and Democrats, to oppose this rule: the National Cotton Council, the National Association of Wheat Growers, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Cattlemen's Association, the National Pork Producers Council.

Every major agricultural organization is saying to vote ''no'' on this rule because they know that it will jeopardize crop insurance and it will jeopardize ag research.

The contentions of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) that Senator LOTT can ensure that they can pass this bill with his amendment in it is absolutely false. Senator GRAHAM offered an amendment that did something that was even less onerous in terms of its provisions on food stamps, and it failed 77 to 23.

This bill dies if this rule goes through.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, this rule is, indeed, unfortunate, because agricultural research provided for in the committee bill is much needed, for a variety of reasons.

I cannot conceive that we would think feeding legal immigrants is any less important than any other part. I come from the rural areas, and I know there is a deadline and crop insurance is much needed. But people needing food is basic, too. And I just cannot conceive that we would even want to be part of a bill that would place the vulnerability of some 800,000 legal immigrants at risk, and that we could not craft a balanced approach.

In fact, the Senate and the House crafted a very balanced approach. If we are about rural America, if we are about agriculture, if we are about research, we will vote against this rule. We can make this rule right and we can move on and have a fine, acceptable bill for production, for research and for crop insurance, as well as something for legal immigrants.

Defeat this rule.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I urge my colleagues to not ignore the importance of restoring food stamps to U.S. legal residents.

Many in our Republican leadership will work to restore these benefits. I know that their commitment is true, it is valid, and this will work out, and I thank them for this. But, right now, it is important to stress to our side how vital this issue is.

These are U.S. permanent residents who came to this country legally. They are law-abiding, taxpaying residents of the United States who have sacrificed their health and their lives in order to promote our ideals of democracy and liberty, the ideals of this great Nation, and who aspire to dream and live the American dream.

It is ironic that when the tax man comes, there is no distinction made between a U.S. citizen and a U.S. resident. Both are obligated to pay their taxes. It is ironic that when Uncle Sam calls for military troops to go to war, no distinction is made between a U.S. citizen and a U.S. legal resident. Both must report to Selective Service.

The Senate has wisely voted to restore food stamps to legal U.S. permanent residents who are elderly, who are disabled. Let us help those 250,000 legal residents.

□ 1100

And what of those families who have young children and need to put food on the table? I know that my colleague the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) has helped in the Committee on Rules to try to right this wrong.

I ask my colleagues, who is going to give 75-year-old legal residents, many of whom live in our districts, a job so that they can sustain themselves? They are willing to work, but their age and their health prevents them from doing so.

There is a lot that we could do, Mr. Speaker. This is a generous country. We have helped those in need. We must ensure that our own, our legal residents, U.S. permanent residents who came to this great Nation in search of the American dream, are not deserted by the Congress.

The Senate has already sent a loud message on this issue. We should give assistance to those legal residents who have paid their dues. They are needy. They need our food stamps. It is unfair to deny this aid to them.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON).

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because, as a Member of this body, we start off on each legislative day with a prayer; we pledge allegiance to the flag, declaring liberty and justice for all people. And to borrow a passage of scripture, I would simply say to all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle ''come and let us reason together.''

I believe that all of my colleagues in this body certainly have a good heart. Whether it has been bypassed or put in a pump or whatever, the heart still works. And I would trust that we would amass sufficient votes to oppose the rule, inasmuch as it injures 250,000 legal immigrants.

The legal immigrants, as we have heard several times today, are elderly people, disabled people. And those of my colleagues who are readers of the Bible, please know that there are at least 35 references to poor people. Hungry people are mentioned in the Bible as well. And it is distressing that these provisions are here. I would encourage my colleagues to defeat the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this rule. The bi-partisan effort achieved in the agricultural research conference report to restore food stamp benefits to 250 thousand legal immigrants is to be applauded. These legal immigrants are the elderly and disabled immigrants who were legally in the United States and were eligible to receive food stamps before the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, as well as the children under age 18 who were in the United States at this same time.

I would like to remind my colleagues that this restoration of food stamp benefits was fully offset by lowering the cap on the amount of money the Federal Government will reimburse the States for food stamp administrative costs.

It is distressing that these provisions were overwhelmingly supported by the other body and that a House-Senate conference committee approved these provisions unanimously and yet this rule singles out food stamps and promises to eradicate this bipartisan compromise.

If this rule is not defeated—the effect will be that 250 thousand deserving children, elderly and disabled in our Nation will be denied the food stamp benefits they desperately need.

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

Let me just say to the previous speaker that I certainly respect her views. I am one who was raised by a grandmother. And I have read the Bible three times and am very proud of it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my very good friend, the gentleman from Syracuse, New York (Mr. WALSH).

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

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and colleague from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for giving me the opportunity to use his time to speak against his rule. That is the kind of a gentleman he is. And I hesitate to disagree with him on most occasions, but on this one I strongly disagree.

This rule is wrong. This conference report was carefully crafted to allow for ag research to be brought forward, to include crop insurance which is sorely needed, especially at this time of year, planting season, and also to deal with the issue of food stamps for legal immigrants.

I strongly supported welfare reform. And I, like most of the rest of my colleagues, have gone around the country and bragged about what a success it has been. And it has been a success. But, my colleagues, as relates to legal aliens, people over 75 years of age, people under 18 years of age, and those who have become disabled since they came to this country, we need to show that we care. We need to show that this country has a big heart. We need to show that this country is wealthy enough to help take care of them, get them through a difficult time.

Welfare reform has worked, but there are certain aspects of it, including food stamps, that went too far. This was not a provision early on in welfare reform. The President has asked us to include $2.5 billion more for food stamps. This conference report includes about one-third of that request. It is not nearly what the President requested. It is a carefully crafted compromise, not unlike the ISTEA bill that we will be voting on later today.

So in conclusion, my colleagues, I would urge a defeat of the amendment, a defeat of the rule, and ask the Committee on Rules to go back, review this rule, and give us an opportunity to vote up or down on the conference report so that we can help to take care of people who need help and to get this agricultural research bill passed in a timely basis.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues just said, this rule breaks that delicate compromise that was reached that withdrew savings in food stamp programs, allowed us to provide more monies for agricultural research, more monies for crop insurance, and more monies to provide food for very hungry elderly, disabled, and children who are legal immigrants, legal immigrants.

If we send this out, and I hope we do not, I hope we defeat this rule, the Senate will still be able to put holds by any single member of the Senate on this bill; the Senate will be able to amend this bill further; and even if it should pass out of the Senate and come back here and still pass, the President has already said he would veto this bill if it did not include the three components of this compromise.

Why we would want to stall this bill I do not understand, except to say that what it does is, it kills entire components of the bill because there will not be money left over at the end of the day to do all we want to do on transportation funding, all we want to do for Social Security and still come back. Defeat the rule.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK) of Florida.

(Mrs. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have worked very hard since I have been here to try to be sure that legal immigrants receive justice and fairness in this Congress. Here we go again, turning around some of the good things we have already done.

In order to strike from the conference report, I am asking my colleagues to please kill this rule so that it will never come before this floor in this manner again. They want to now go back and cut out 250,000 legal immigrants in terms of getting aid.

In my county, Dade County, 40,000 legal immigrants lost their food stamps because of the mistakes we made before in the 1996 welfare law. The conference report with restore this. Why not do the right thing?

We have said many things, that they want to describe how they came to all of these conclusions. The procedure is not important. It is the end result that is important. Everything that my colleagues have done, everything that the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has talked about leads to one thing, the destruction of food stamps for legal immigrants. It is very simple.

So all we need to do is to kill this rule. It is a simple thing. It does not take too many explanations to see that they have changed what the conference intended. Let us kill this conference report.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) the minority leader.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) for the purpose of asking a question.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, it was stated earlier that if this rule passes in the form in which we are discussing it and the bill is sent over to the Senate, that this agricultural research bill, with the crop insurance and the other provisions, would pass very soon in the Senate.

Is that a fair statement? Is that the understanding of the gentleman, that that is what the Senate would do?

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, if the gentleman would yield, after speaking with Members in the other body just in the last few minutes, it is my understanding that there are Democratic Members prepared to take action, which they can take under the rules of the other body, to stop this bill without the food stamp legislation being in it from becoming law today or at any time in the future.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, let no one be deceived. If this rule passes as it was designed, this bill is going to be dead. It will not pass, and we are going to get into a ''he blamed,'' ''he did,'' and what have you, just like we did 2½ years ago and shut down the Government. This is not the way for us to proceed.

I thank the gentleman for clarifying that.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say that in my 20 years in this body, I have never heard of any President threatening to veto anything because it did not contain extraneous matter. That to me is shocking.

It is also shocking to me to find out that our good friend the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) would speak with Members in the other body, Democrat Members, that would kill crop insurance that has to be enacted in a timely manner by the end of June. I am shocked.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Might I inquire, Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on my side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) has 10 minutes remaining. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding me the time.

The conference committee report is a good report. It is a good deal. The compromises have been made. And frankly, as a member of the Committee on Agriculture, the reason we got to the compromises is because the food stamp program allowed for savings. That is where the money comes from.

I want to applaud the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST) for the work they have done. We have had a great bill. We all agree on it. There is no objection to it. Unanimous support in the Senate. And it comes over here and now we are going to try to screw it all up with a lousy rule.

We have got to defeat the rule and support the conference committee report unamended.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say, the gentleman said this is all paid for, this is great. And how are we paying for it? We brave Members of Congress, we brave Members of Congress are going to pay for it by making the State pay for it and making their local taxpayers pay for it in real property taxes. Are we not brave?

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, yes, I rise in strong opposition to this rule because I really do not think it is the job of the Committee on Rules to thwart the will of the committees of this House, both the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Appropriations. Because this rule, in fact, destroys the delicate balance that has been struck between key provisions in this bill.

For example, as Dean Kleckner, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, says, the bill is very carefully crafted, balancing the needs of four communities: our research committee, those farmers that need crop insurance, food stamps for over 250,000 legal, and I underline legal, immigrants, and of course rural development.

One of the other reasons to vote ''no'' on the rule is it actually is a budget buster because, in effect, the offsets that are included in the provisions that are struck leave us with $1.2 billion in additional deficit because of what has happened in the way the rule is crafted.

So I urge my colleagues to vote ''no''. This is bad policy. It is bad procedure. And it undermines key agricultural interests across this nation.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I say to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), I come from the consumer community and I want to stand with him and the farmers of Texas.

This is a bad, bad, bad, bad result. In my home State of Texas, 124,000 legal immigrants lost food stamps. Thirteen thousand of these who lost food stamps are children. The State itself is only able to recoup some 15,000.

This is an effort to bash and to juxtapose those of us who are consumers, who have supported our farmers on crop insurance and research and matching our efforts together with the starving children of America. That is right, legal immigrant parents who have citizen children. Are we here to deny them the opportunity?

This deal was already made. We know where our bread is buttered. It is buttered with cooperation and collaboration. The Senate knows by voting 92–8. Bust this rule, because this rule wants to bash farmers and bash consumers. We are going to stand up for those who have made a good rule, and the rule is to support the starving children. How about my colleagues?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this crucial issue. I strongly oppose the rule striking reauthorizing food stamps for legal immigrants in the United States.

The rule that has been recommended would set up a ridiculous procedure which gives Republican opponents two extraordinary procedural mechanisms to kill the bill. Under this absurd procedure, the House will not even be allowed to debate the bipartisan conference report, even though the conference report has already been filed and has already been approved by an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the Senate. I vote to reauthorize food stamps for those who need them.

We must restore food stamps to our 900,000 legal immigrants including farm workers. Food stamp recipients are refugees, the elderly, disabled Vietnam veterans and children who are facing food and nutritional deficiencies in larger and larger numbers.

This year, approximately 600,000 U.S. citizen children with immigrant parents will have less food on their tables because of these cuts. Since food stamp access has been cut, a widening hunger crisis has emerged that private charities and State and local governments have not been able to handle.

There simply have not been enough resources to feed all the hungry. Catholic Charities USA, Second Harvest and the U.S. Conference of Mayors have all reported major increases in request for emergency food assistance while food pantries are going empty and are turning people away.

In my home State of Texas, 124,000 legal immigrants lost food stamps. 13,090 of these who lost food stamps are children! The State itself is only able to cover approximately 15,000 people under a State program for elderly and disabled during this biennium.

The elimination of food stamp benefits for adults without children is calculated to create a mass of people who are desperate to take any job, no matter how poor the wages and conditions.

It will serve to intimidate all lower paid workers, a valuable and crucial section of the American work force.

President Clinton singled out these welfare provisions as particularly unfair, and has since asked for $2 billion to restore benefits to about 730,000 immigrants.

Striking this rule would deny almost a million people, old and young, and those contributing as a valuable force to our nation's economy. I vote not to strike the rule and to reauthorize food stamps.

□ 1115

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HEFNER).

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, let us get right to the crux of this thing. This has nothing to do with crop insurance. It has to do with politics, and it may be good politics, because you can make food stamps for aliens seem so vicious and so ugly. I would imagine the press releases are already out for those that are speaking against this, that the press releases will go out: So and so voted to kill crop insurance so you can get food stamps for aliens. It will not say ''legal aliens''; it will just say ''aliens,'' and it will make it sound so ugly and so vicious.

This is about politics. This is not about a conference report. The Committee on Rules is the Speaker's committee. It is now, it has always been, and they do what the Speaker asks them to do.

This is about politics. It has nothing, nothing, nothing to do with all the good things that are in this bill. It is strictly politics. The press releases are already written and ready to go out.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLEY).

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to clarify one point in the amendment that is being offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) where he is saying he is addressing the issue of the unfunded mandate.

But what is somewhat ironic and I think somewhat hypocritical is that, where he is contending that this is an unfunded mandate, his amendment is actually putting that money back in the bill. If we really are concerned about that issue, then we should not have the money in that bill at all.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DOOLEY of California. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I am doing it because it was inadvertently left out, and I am trying to be fair to all sides on both philosophies. The gentleman knows that.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, the issue is, the gentleman is willing to have an unfunded mandate for some provisions and not others?

Mr. SOLOMON. That is correct.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. So I think the case is really clear, that the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has made a determination that it is all right to have an unfunded mandate for some provisions but not for others.

It is clear why we have such a broad coalition which is opposing this bill. Every major U.S. agriculture organization is opposing it. Every group that is concerned about food and nutrition is opposing this rule. Every Member of this Congress should oppose this rule.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this rule. Funding provided through this authorization is used by State research centers to protect and to approve the use of crops.

This rule jeopardizes some of the most important research that is done in this country. In my congressional district, scientists at the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station have used U.S. Department of Agriculture grants to fund research on ticks that causes Lyme disease and yew trees that produce taxol in order to fight breast and ovarian cancer.

I am dismayed that some in this body will try to stop a carefully crafted compromise bill. As one of my colleagues said earlier, this is a political bill. It is going to stop funding that is available to legal immigrants in this country, food and nutrition programs.

It is shameful. I urge my colleagues to vote against this rule.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has 6½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Committee on Rules for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise in support of this rule. The rule allows for a point of order to be raised on the provisions of the conference report that would expand by $818 million government benefits for noncitizens. These provisions were wholly outside the scope of either the House or Senate bills that were committed to the conference.

The provision allowing the point of order is, first of all, about protecting the integrity of the process. The bill the House sent to conference did not contain the $818 million in food stamps for immigrants. The bill the Senate sent to the conference did not contain a provision for the $818 million in food stamps. But the conference report we are being asked to adopt today does contain such a provision, a provision inserted, without deliberation, by the Members of this body.

The issue is not about immigrants. If the issue were about immigrants, we would be talking about the sponsors of these immigrants and the fact that they signed an affidavit and that they promised to take care of these individuals if they were not financially able to take care of themselves.

To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, not one time concerning the millions of noncitizens receiving government benefits today have we asked the sponsor to be responsible for that commitment, and we should not ask a single taxpayer to foot the bill until we have looked to the sponsors first.

The issue, then, is not about immigrants. It is about priorities. The conference came up with $818 million, almost $1 billion, that could be reallocated to other programs. Apparently they decided that they had maximized funding of programs for the American farmer. Apparently they decided that food programs for women, children, and infants, the WIC program, did not need any additional funding this year. Apparently, they decided that food programs for impoverished elderly citizens were sufficiently funded to meet the needs for all the individuals at risk.

I say ''apparently'' because neither my constituents nor those of the vast majority of the Members of the House were granted the opportunity guaranteed under the rules of the House to be heard on these priorities.

Today, the issue is one of concern to my constituents, but tomorrow the issue may well be of concern to the constituents of other individuals when they see a conference report add additional programs. The rule before this body preserves the integrity of those rules and the process, the opportunity for all Americans to be heard on matters of public policy.

Mr. Speaker, under this rule, the farm provisions will be able to move forward, and we will also preserve the integrity of the system, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the very distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the ranking minority member on the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I want to use this time to fully explain the issue that we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, if this rule passes, the crop insurance program is going to be thrown into turmoil, because it cannot and will not pass in the form in which the House leadership has suggested that it should pass. It will not.

So let it be clear, if the rule should pass, the blame lies with the House of Representatives on what happens afterward.

And that is not just CHARLIE STENHOLM speaking. I have a list of 76 organizations that have come to the same conclusion, and I will read just a few: the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, the National Cotton Council, the American Sheep Industry, Southwest Peanut Growers, National Farmers Union, American Farm Bureau Association, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, American Bankers Association, Independent Bankers Association, Catholic Charities U.S.A., Council of Jewish Federation, Lutheran Social Services in America, and I can go on and on.

We are playing politics with the lifeblood of individual citizens of this country, farmers and ranchers, and also those who depend upon the production of those farmers and ranchers.

This is a philosophical battle that we have been going through now for several years. This is a perfect way to demonstrate who feels how. I respect those who feel so strongly that they would take this issue that has already been rejected 92 to 8 and force the issue again and try to place the blame on somebody else. I respect them trying that, but I sure do not understand why they would choose that political motive to go.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule. It is unprecedented. The parliamentarians of the House cannot think or find another method of this type on a conference report that has ever been tried. That ought to tell us something.

The fact that the chairman of the Committee on Rules, he and I go back a long way, and I have a lot of respect for him, but the fact that he would come on the floor and speak against something and then offer the amendment should tell the Members of this body something.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I think it shows that the chairman of the Committee on Rules is the fairest Committee on Rules chairman you have ever had around here.

Mr. STENHOLM. Sometimes that is right.

Mr. SOLOMON. He has the biggest heart.

Mr. STENHOLM. Sometimes that is right, and sometimes that is wrong, but I appreciate the sense of humor in which the gentleman yields. But the colleagues should be looking at this right now and understand that we are playing games, and this is serious. This is serious.

The reason, and I wanted to close with this, this bill, and it is a good bill, is paid for; to the extent changes are being made in this, these costs are fully offset by reductions in food stamp spending and in crop insurance programs.

In fact, this bill, if it passes, will create a surplus of $101 million over the life of the bill. So I ask my colleagues, please reject this rule, and let us send the Committee on Rules back to do that work.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. This is probably the worst rule, certainly the most cruel and harsh rule that I can remember being part of since I have been on the Committee on Rules. It is anti-poor, it is anti-hunger, it is anti-legal immigrant, it is anti to the most vulnerable of our society. Almost any group in this country that I respect, that most Members in this room respect, are against what the Committee on Rules is trying to do today.

I urge a very strong ''no'' vote on this rule and hope that it is defeated in a very bipartisan way. Please vote no on this rule.

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

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman wants to know why I am going to offer an amendment to put back an unfunded mandate that I just adamantly oppose, and the reason is fairness. It was inadvertently taken out in the Committee on Rules because of an understanding with the parliamentarians, and we are going to put it back in.

Mr. Speaker, I yield briefly to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, for a short colloquy.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I would like to enter into a colloquy with the chairman regarding procedure.

It is my understanding that the issue before the body is an amendment to the rule which would reinstate the offsets for both crop insurance and for research.

Mr. SOLOMON. The gentleman is absolutely correct. It would reinstate the pay-fors for both crop insurance, for agriculture research and for food stamps, 100 percent.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. One further point, Mr. Speaker: There will be two votes, one on the amendment of the rule and one on the rule which is being debated and has been debated here all morning long. So we have two issues here before us?

Mr. SOLOMON. That is correct.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. SOLOMON. The gentleman is right.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say this, this unfunded mandate is going to add $3.6 billion over the next several years that is going to have to be paid for by our States and by our local governments. We all know that local governments pay for this expense out of real estate taxes.

In the Hudson Valley that I represent, we have people that live on incomes of $4,000 and $5,000 a year, people on fixed incomes. Their taxes on their property to try to maintain and live in that home that they have lived in all their lives is sometimes $2,000. You are going to add another $500 to the cost of those people living on that? That just is not right. That is why I oppose the unfunded mandate.

Let me tell my colleagues the other reasons. On the food stamps itself, I do not like to stand up here and say we do not want to give food stamps to needy people. But I am going to tell my colleagues something, two points. I was born on August 14th, 1930, right in the middle of the Depression. My dad walked out on me and my mom, and we never saw him again. That was in 1930. It was hard to stay alive. But do you know who helped us? Our relatives. Do you know who those relatives were? They came over from Scotland. But we brought over the young ones first so they can come over here and begin to make a living so that they could be responsible for the older Scottish relatives of ours. They came over, and then we took care of them.

□ 1130

When you are talking about these legal aliens in this country, somebody signed for them when they came over here. Somebody is responsible for them. But we say no, willy-nilly, they do not have to take care of them; the taxpayer will take care of them. That means that those of us who worked all our lives and were responsible, that have taken care of our own relatives, we have to pay for those that did not. That is what this argument is all about. You ought to think about that when you are voting on this entire issue today.

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule for consideration of the conference report on S. 1150, which permits a point of order to be raised against a critical provision of the bill. As filed, the conference report will allow the restoration of food stamp benefits to about 250,000 legal immigrants who lost their eligibility as a result of the 1996 welfare reform bill. Sadly, although the cost of this provision is more than offset, some of my colleagues are attempting to strike it from the bill, jeopardizing the health and well-being of thousands of needy families.

This is an excellent, carefully crafted bill, and it is unfortunate that its quick passage is being threatened by those who do not believe that food stamps should be restored to some of the most vulnerable children, elderly and disabled persons in our society. The conference report is supported by a strong coalition of groups representing farmers, ranchers, crop insurers, researchers, immigrants and religious and community activists. It provides new funding, sets forth important reforms to our crop insurance and agriculture research programs, and helps provide the tools to ensure that the United States will remain at the forefront of agricultural productivity and competitiveness into the 21st century. I know how important this bill is to the agriculture community in my congressional district and throughout rural America, and I am dismayed that certain members of this body would stand in its way in order to indulge in an unnecessary and mean-spirited, partisan confrontation.

I urge my colleagues to preserve the delicate balance represented by this conference report. If passed as written, it will meet the urgent needs of the crop insurance industry, America's agricultural research institutions, rural communities seeking development assistance, and the most vulnerable legal immigrants. A vote for this rule will send a clear message to rural Americans and to needy immigrants that their needs are of secondary importance to partisan politics. That would be a tragedy, and it can be avoided by casting a no vote.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the Rule on S. 1150 which would jeopardize food stamp restoration, crop insurance and agriculture research and rural development.

In April 1998, the Agriculture Conference Committee agreed to allocate $816 million (over 5 years) of the funding for the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1997. Under the agreement, food stamp benefits would be restored to the elderly and disabled immigrants who were legally in the United States and eligible to receive food stamps before the welfare law was signed in August 1996. It would also restore benefits to children under the age of 18 who were in the country at the time and to certain Hmong refugees. The funding is expected to affect the benefits of about 250,000 legal immigrants in 1999.

Last night, the Rules Committee reported this rule to eliminate the food stamp provisions of the conference report. By eliminating the bill's funding and its restoration of food stamps to legal immigrants would create numerous problems. Striking the food stamp provision would jeopardize the entire bill and kill all the provisions in the bill including agriculture research, crop insurance and rural development. Also, eliminating this provision would strip the bill's programs of their funding and would leave $1.2 billion in spending in the conference report.

I strongly support the restoration of benefits to legal immigrants. The budget agreement and this proposal would restore fairness back into the treatment of legal immigrants and makes the Federal Government responsible for its commitment to support communities that have become the home for a significant number of noncitizens. Many of these residents are taxpayers who deserve to be protected by the same safety net as others enjoy.

I oppose this rule which would not only jeopardize food stamps for legal immigrants, but crop insurance and funding agriculture research as well.

The savings in this measure nearly $2 billion is derived from state administrative costs for the management of the food stamp program, the implication that this measure is not the right vehicle for restoration of food stamps for legal immigrants is ironic in that other measures are added without any relationship to the food stamp program however desirable they may be. Certainly food stamp restoration is appropriate and needed—vote against this unfair rule.

Mr. BISHOP, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule.

The carefully crafted compromise reached between research, crop insurance and nutrition groups would have used food stamp administrative savings to fund the dire needs of each of these groups, all of which I represent.

The shame is that if this rule passes, and the House proceeds to destroy the balance that has been reached, the Senate will not accept these changes, as evidenced by its passing of the Conference by 92–8.

As pointed out by my good friends from California, Mr. DOOLEY, and from Texas, Mr. STENHOLM, all the major commodity groups like the National Cotton Council, the National Wheat Growers Association, and the American Farm Bureau Federation recognize the importance of the delicate balance that was reached, and oppose the chicanery which occurred last night in the Rules Committee.

To do through a rule what could not be done in the conference report, is just plain wrong.

Moreover, Food Stamp administrative funding that was used in S. 1150 was a windfall to the states—it was funding they were never counting on getting.

Although the Unfunded Mandates Act technically applies to this provision, it was never

intended to allow the states to have free access to the federal Treasury, and those who served in state legislatures, as I did in Georgia, know what a true unfunded mandate is. This is not an unfunded mandate.

Even with the cost allocation provisions in S. 1150, CBO projects that states will receive more federal funding for Food Stamp administrative costs than they would have received prior to Welfare Reform.

The Agriculture Committee has worked in a bipartisan fashion to redirect its priorities—using Food Stamp money to pay for pressing needs in agriculture like research and crop insurance.

If the bill is killed, vital funds will be lost for agricultural research on pressing livestock and food safety issues. This rule kills the bill, and I therefore urge the House to defeat the rule.

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my opposition to the Rule to S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reauthorization Conference Report. Due to family reasons, I was unavoidably detained and therefore unable to cast my vote against this Rule.

I supported the base text of S. 1150 which represents a delicate bipartisan compromise by restoring food stamps funding to legal immigrants, and promoting agricultural research, crop insurance, and rural development. The rule would strike out the food stamp provisions, effectively killing crop insurance and agricultural research as well as food stamps.

Legal immigrants cut off of food stamps are among the poorest and most vulnerable. Over 900,000 legal immigrants, including 150,000 children, have lost food stamp benefits. Another 600,000 citizen children live in households where immigrant adults have lost benefits, thereby reducing the amount of food available to the entire household.

The restorations with regard to food stamps in S. 1150 target the most vulnerable immigrants: elderly and disabled persons; children; refugees who often come to this country with nothing but the clothes on their backs; and Hmong veterans, who fought courageously alongside U.S. military forces in Vietnam.

Private charities are overwhelmed trying to meet increased need for food across the country. The U.S. Conference of Mayors' recent survey found that 75 percent of cities report increased requests from legal immigrants for food assistance. Food banks cite increases of 40 to 70 percent in requests for emergency food assistance. Catholic Charities, the nation's largest private human service organization, reports significant increases in requests for emergency food assistance, severe food shortages in their food banks and pantries, and an inability to meet all food need.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Agriculture Research Bill and against the rule. We need to maintain food stamp provisions in the bill.

I rise in support of the Agriculture research bill because it restores benefits for some of the nation's most vulnerable populations—low-income legal immigrants—many of whom are elderly, children or disabled.

Legal permanent residents are hard working people who earn their money in the U.S., they pay taxes in the U.S. and contribute to the U.S. economy by buying products in the U.S. Like U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents are stakeholders in America who care about the status of our country and should be afforded equal rights in this country.

Given the important contributions that immigrants make to our nation, it is only fair to accord them help when they fall into need. Legal immigrants have to contribute greatly to this country, pay taxes and even register for the draft.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON).

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution, as amended.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I understand this is a vote on the rule, as amended, is that correct?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oregon is correct.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 120, nays 289, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 188]

YEAS—120

Archer
Armey
Ballenger
Barr
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bilirakis
Bliley
Blunt
Boehner
Bono
Brady (TX)
Burr
Buyer
Camp
Canady
Cannon
Chabot
Coble
Coburn
Collins
Cox
Crane
Cubin
Cunningham
Deal
DeLay
Doolittle
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Ensign
Fawell
Fowler
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Gekas
Gibbons
Goode
Goodlatte
Goodling
Goss
Graham
Greenwood
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hefley
Herger
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hostettler
Houghton
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis
Istook
Jenkins
Jones
Kingston
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Largent
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Manzullo
McCollum
McCrery
McInnis
McIntosh
McKeon
Metcalf
Mica
Miller (FL)
Myrick
Neumann
Norwood
Packard
Paul
Paxon
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Pombo
Portman
Radanovich
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Roukema
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaefer, Dan
Schaffer, Bob
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shaw
Shuster
Smith (TX)
Snowbarger
Solomon
Spence
Stearns
Sununu
Tauzin
Thomas
Tiahrt
Traficant
Wamp
White
Whitfield
Young (FL)

NAYS—289

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Allen
Andrews
Bachus
Baesler
Baker
Baldacci
Barcia
Barrett (NE)
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Bentsen
Bereuter
Berman
Berry
Bilbray
Bishop
Blagojevich
Blumenauer
Boehlert
Bonilla
Bonior
Borski
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Bryant
Bunning
Burton
Callahan
Calvert
Campbell
Capps
Cardin
Carson
Castle
Chambliss
Chenoweth
Christensen
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Combest
Condit
Cook
Cooksey
Costello
Coyne
Cramer
Crapo
Cummings
Danner
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (VA)
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Edwards
Ehlers
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Everett
Ewing
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Filner
Forbes
Ford
Fossella
Fox
Frank (MA)
Franks (NJ)
Frost
Ganske
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gordon
Granger
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hamilton
Hansen
Hastings (FL)
Hayworth
Hefner
Hill
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Holden
Hooley
Horn
Hoyer
Hutchinson
Hyde
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
John
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (WI)
Johnson, E. B.
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kasich
Kelly
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kim
Kind (WI)
Kleczka
Klink
Kucinich
LaFalce
LaHood
Lampson
Lantos
Latham
LaTourette
Lazio
Leach
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Livingston
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Lowey
Lucas
Luther
Maloney (CT)
Maloney (NY)
Manton
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McDade
McDermott
McGovern
McHale
McHugh
McIntyre
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Menendez
Millender-McDonald
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Morella
Murtha
Nadler
Neal
Nethercutt
Ney
Northup
Nussle
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Oxley
Pallone
Pappas
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Pease
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Porter
Poshard
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Redmond
Regula
Riley
Rivers
Rodriguez
Roemer
Rogan
Ros-Lehtinen
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryun
Sabo
Sanchez
Sanders
Sandlin
Sawyer
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Shays
Sherman
Shimkus
Sisisky
Skeen
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith, Adam
Smith, Linda
Snyder
Souder
Spratt
Stabenow
Stenholm
Stokes
Strickland
Stump
Stupak
Talent
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor (MS)
Thompson
Thornberry
Thune
Thurman
Tierney
Turner
Upton
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Walsh
Waters
Watkins
Watt (NC)
Watts (OK)
Waxman
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
Wexler
Weygand

Wise	Woolsey	Yates
Wolf	Wynn	Young (AK)

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Smith (OR)

NOT VOTING—23

Bateman	Harman	Riggs
Conyers	Johnson, Sam	Skaggs
DeFazio	King (NY)	Stark
Deutsch	Meeks (NY)	Taylor (NC)
Foley	Miller (CA)	Torres
Furse	Parker	Towns
Gonzalez	Quinn	Wicker
Green	Reyes	

□ 1154

Messrs. HYDE, BUNNING, STUMP, BACHUS, WELDON of Florida, RYUN and BEREUTER, and Mrs. LINDA SMITH of Washington changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. METCALF, PITTS, ENSIGN and MCCOLLUM, and Mrs. BONO and Mrs. FOWLER changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution was not agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1200

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to speak out of order for 2 minutes.)

FAREWELL AND APPRECIATION TO MARY E. ''MEG'' GOETZ, LONG-TIME VALUED EMPLOYEE OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I want our colleagues to know that this is a very special moment for the House of Representatives. I rise to recognize the dedicated service, a long time of service, I might add, of our Reading Clerk, Mary E. Goetz, known to all of us as Meg.

Meg formerly was a constituent of mine in Glen Rock, New Jersey, but I really got to know her here on the floor of the House for her wonderful, dedicated work. Meg, as she is known, is retiring from the House after a few years of service. We will talk about that later, because I think she really looks much too young to have served here for that long.

But I would like to say that there are two Meg Goetzes that this House knows. The first is the Meg Goetz who is the serious, responsible, dedicated professional who keeps the work of the House going on time and in order. Indeed, in that capacity, she has become literally a folk hero to millions and millions of C-Span viewers. I hear that frequently about Meg.

The second Meg Goetz is the Meg that we know off camera, that her friends and her colleagues and the other professionals and staff know off camera. That Meg Goetz is bright and affable and, yes, dedicated, but has a wonderful sense of humor. I do not know that we will be able to enjoy that today, but there are others here who can repeat some of those stories about Meg's sense of humor.

I would like to tell you that I was really stunned yesterday when I learned, because it was only yesterday that I learned of her decision to retire from this position. I think, like me and probably all of the Members, we thought she was far too young to consider any such retirement. I have to say, as incredible as it may seem, because I know it is incredible to me, Meg Goetz has served 20 years in this Chamber.

I guess she has decided that there must be a life outside of this Chamber. I cannot imagine how she could have decided that. After all, 20 years of daily contact with us, Members of the House, Members of Congress, and all those all night sessions, I cannot imagine why she is looking for another life. But I do think, Meg, you deserve a break. But that is not what is happening here. You know you will be missed, and C-Span viewers will be missing their hero, their folk hero. Members of this House will desperately miss, along with her co-workers, her dedication, professionalism, and her wit.

I have to say that I know she is going on to other very worthwhile endeavors, and we are proud of her for all she has done and all she will do. Meg, I have to put in the name of Glen Rock, New Jersey, our common constituency. Glen Rock is proud of you. As we say in New Jersey, we are all perfect together. Meg, you are perfect together, and we hope to see you back here soon. Thank you so much for all you have done.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentlewoman consumed about 10 seconds on her presentation, and I will try to be equally brief.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud and pleased to rise to join my colleague, the gentlewoman from New Jersey, and am rightfully proud of the heritage of Meg Goetz. The viewers on C-Span see the debate, sometimes acrimonious and confrontational, sometimes lacking in civility. Most times they do not see the staff who make it possible to have debates and to keep this institution going.

Too few of us perhaps take the time to realize the contributions that are made by, for the public, probably nameless, and certainly for Meg not faceless, but for some faceless employees, who, day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month, year-to-year, through their dedication and commitment make it possible for us to function effectively as the people's House.

Some have been here for many years more than most Members. Meg Goetz is one of those people. She has been here now for over two decades, and as the gentlewoman from New Jersey has said, she has brought to her job a great ability, but as well, a great demeanor. Her character and commitment to this democratic institution have added to its stature, and never, ever detracted from it. Few of us that serve in this body can say that we always did the same.

I want to rise, not on behalf of the Democrats or on behalf of the Democratic leadership, but on behalf, Meg, of all who have served in this body during your tenure. As I am sure my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), will observe, and I do not want to steal her thunder, but I think it is so appropriate to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that Meg Goetz is the first woman who has served as a Reading Clerk of this House, appointed by Tip O'Neill.

In doing so, she had, I am sure, a special cognizance of her responsibility to her gender in that capacity. Every woman in America can be proud of their representative, their first representative as our Reading Clerk.

Meg, I know that I speak for all who have served in this body during your tenure, who have enjoyed not only the competency with which you performed your task of informing the House from time to time what the business before the House was, of informing us of the amendments, of the messages from the Senate or from the President; yes, you have performed your duties in a very professional way, but in a very personal way for each of us you have been our friend, our adviser and counselor from time to time when you knew much more about what was going on than we did. And we would ask, Meg, what are we doing? And you always knew.

It is, Meg, sad that you are leaving, but as the gentlewoman from New Jersey has observed, you leave very young with much ahead of you, and I know that you will carry with you the experiences in this House to whatever endeavors you now pursue, and that you will be enriched by those experiences, as you have enriched this institution, this people's House, this center of democracy, not just for America but for the world. It is, Meg, because of people like yourself that this body has functioned so well. Notwithstanding its weaknesses, its foibles, its personal failures from time to time, it is people like yourself who have given it strength, given it judgment, given it balance.

So I am pleased, Meg, to rise with all those with whom you have served to thank you, to thank you for your dedication, and for your service, and for your friendship, and to wish you the very best in everything that you do in the years to come. Godspeed.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a special tribute to someone who has been part of this institution longer than myself and many of my colleagues.

Although she is not a Member of Congress, her face and name is known to everyone in this chamber, (and to those thousands of adoring fans on C-SPAN).

Mary E. ''Meg'' Goetz, the House Reading Clerk, is leaving us after 20 years of service to the House of Representatives.