The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. BROWN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRATIC PROCESS DISHONORED IN TRADE DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, through the tenure that I have had here in this body, I have had the opportunity to discuss and to engage in a vigorous debate on trade. On many instances I saw fit to vote for some forms of international trade. But, at that time, Mr. Speaker, there was engagement, bipartisan engagement. Under the leadership of President Clinton, every issue that was expressed by a Democrat or a Republican or an Independent was given full airing throughout the process.

Today, I believe we dishonored the democratic process in this House. There was no open discussion. There was simply an attempt to get someone's way, and it was evidenced by a vote of 215 to 214.

This is because in the Committee on Rules they would not allow a full debate and allow a very full and adequate substitute, which many business persons supported, authored by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL); one that expanded trade, opened new markets for U.S. workers, farmers and businesses; that had effective worker protections; that protected realistically the environment; and then held to the constitutional premise that when it comes to protecting the American people as to whether or not we would lose thousands of jobs, there must be Congressional oversight, which the Constitution mandates.

That is what the Rangel substitute had, and, Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules denied us the opportunity to have a full debate on that substitute, a substitute that would protect the American people. Instead, what we did is bring forth the Thomas bill, that had no sense of commitment to some of these very important issues.

I believe in what Democratic President John F. Kennedy said, ''a rising tide lifts all boats,'' and that we in the United States Congress have a responsibility to work on behalf of the Nation.

My district, in fact, is a district that has in some instances advocated trade because of the business community. But I have many constituents, Mr. Speaker, and right now I am shocked that anybody in the business community is focusing on anything but the thousands of people who have lost their jobs over these last couple of weeks, maybe 10,000 in and around the 18th Congressional District. I believe Houston will come back. But I would think that this White House, with a president from Texas, would have more concern about passing an economic stimulus package that would in fact have extended relief for those individuals who tragically, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs.

This trade bill could have been a trade bill that would have included everyone, but, yet, no one was involved who had a different perspective. No one was involved who wanted to see more labor protections, wanted to see the protocols that include protection of human rights, the environment, making sure that there were labor standards.

We realize when you have international trade that some jobs will be lost, but more jobs are lost because the labor standards are diminished, and many corporations will rush to those places overseas in order to pay those unbelievably diminishing and demeaning hourly wages. So we do lose good American jobs.

But I do believe trade can be a boost to the economy. How can it be a boost to the economy? Only when we sit down and negotiate together.

We now face a declining economy, and we also are in jeopardy with our own environment. We still have issues dealing with clean water and clean air. Do we not hold to the premise that what is good for the goose is good for the gander? If we are fighting for clean air and clean water and the protection of our water, in light of what we are going through, would it not be appropriate for those countries to do the same where those corporations that carry our name rush to set up their institutions?

I am very saddened that the debate went to the level it did, that we are all fighting international terrorism. We are doing that. So many of us gave the authority to our President in unity because our soil was violated, our people lost their lives. I claim and will not in any way take a back seat to my patriotism.

But this bill had nothing to do with patriotism or fighting terrorism. In fact, I am more fearful of this bill than I am supportive of this bill as having anything to do with helping us fight terrorists around the world. I would much rather shore up this declining economy and provide the opportunities for constituents to have a bridge, so that they can find work.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we did not do what was right today on behalf of all of the American people. I say to my business community in an open letter, we have worked together, and I will not again take a back seat to my concern about the economy and boosting opportunities for trade. But we cannot do it by denying our own constituency, those who work hard, who labor, those who want a cleaner environment, and those who promote the Constitution, requiring Congressional oversight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, hoping we will be able to fix this very unseemly bill.

□ 1814

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHROCK). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

H.R. 3365 TO ALLOW BUSINESSES TO TEMPORARILY WITHDRAW FUNDS FROM THEIR IRAS WITHOUT PENALTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, For weeks Congress had debated various economic stimulus plans. Meanwhile, the economy has continued to dive deeper into a recession.

In the third quarter, the economy collapsed at an annual rate of 1.1 percent, its worst showing since 1991. The Commerce Department reported that corporate profits fell 8.3 percent during the third quarter and decreased 22.2 percent compared with last year.

The economic downturn has hurt working families throughout the country. The number of unemployed persons increased by 732,000 to 7.7 million in October. The unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percentage points to 5.4 percent, the highest level since December 1996.

We need meaningful legislation to stimulate the economy, help unemployed workers, and assist struggling families.

On November 28, 2001 I introduced a bill allowing individuals suffering from the recession to withdraw funds from their Individual Retirement Accounts without penalty until September 12, 2002.

My bill temporarily waives the 10 percent Individual Retirement Account withdraw penalty fee for people who: Have received unemployment compensation for 12 consecutive weeks, have at least 10 percent stake in a small business that has suffered significant economic injury since September 11th, or lost a family member in a terrorist attack.

Congress cannot wait for the economy to recover on its own. We cannot wait for a stimulus plan whose effects may not been seen for months. We must pass legislation that immediately helps workers who have lost their jobs.

My bill will assist those who desperately need our help.

I urge my colleagues to help individuals during this recession by cosponsoring this important legislation.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2883

Mr. GOSS, submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 2883), to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2002 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government,