

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to recommit was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. Res. 122, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, 2003

Mrs. MYRICK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-739) on the resolution (H. Res. 580) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 122) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2003, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 5011, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 578 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 578

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 5011) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2003, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, the rule waives all points of order against the conference report to accompany H.R. 5011, Military Construction Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2003, and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, I find this bill very timely and of the utmost importance since this morning the House voted to authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces against Iraq. We are asking a lot of our military today. Our military personnel on active duty know that they may very well be deployed overseas and perhaps on dangerous missions. So we want to provide

them a quality of life for themselves and for their families that will allow them to serve, knowing that their families will be taken care of in good housing and with good health care.

□ 1630

H.R. 5011 recognizes the dedication and commitment of our troops by providing for their most basic needs, improved military facilities, including housing and medical facilities.

Mr. Speaker, we must honor the most basic commitments we have made to the men and women of our Armed Forces. We must ensure reasonable quality of life to recruit and retain the best and the brightest to America's fighting forces. Most importantly, we must do all in our power to ensure a strong, able, dedicated American military so that this Nation may stay ever vigilant, ever prepared.

H.R. 5011 provides nearly \$1.2 billion for barracks and \$151 million for hospital and medical facilities for troops and their families. It also provides \$2.87 billion to operate and maintain existing housing units and \$1.34 billion for new housing units.

Military families also have a tremendous need for quality child care, as do other people in the country, especially single parents and families in which one or both parents may face lengthy deployments. To help meet this need, the bill provides \$18 million for child development centers.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today we passed the resolution to authorize the President to use military force against Iraq, if necessary, so now it is time for Congress to keep its promise to our Armed Forces. To that end, I urge my colleagues to support this rule and to support the conference report.

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

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

I want to thank my friend for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us a fair rule for the consideration of the Military Construction Appropriations Conference Report for Fiscal Year 2003. The rule provides for one hour of general debate, and waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. I urge my colleagues to vote for the rule.

I would like to express my appreciation for the work of the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman HOBSON) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) of the Subcommittee on Military Construction, along with Committee on Appropriations chairman, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), for continuing the tradition of strong bipartisan support in the drafting of the military construction appropriations bill.

While there were some difficulties in negotiating this usually noncontroversial bill, both Chambers were able to

resolve the differences and we now have a compromise conference report.

This is a very difficult year for the Committee on Appropriations; and I commend the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman HOBSON) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER), for bringing to this House a very fine bill, given the limited amount of funds allocated for military construction needs.

This conference report provides \$400 million more than the bill this body approved on June 27; and, although this funding level is better than the original bill, the total funding for these important military construction programs is still less than fiscal year 2002 levels. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, this bill is woefully inadequate; and the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces deserve much better.

However, this final product is an improvement over the original House bill; and I urge the adoption of this rule and the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could stand here and say that with the adoption of this bill our appropriation work is done. Far from it. The simple fact of the matter is that the leadership of this House has failed to do its job. Out of 13 appropriations bills, this House is going to skip town having completed work on exactly two, two for 13. That is a batting average of .154, which does not even cut it in Little League. It is terrible, it is outrageous, and the American people should know that this Congress did not meet its responsibilities.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes 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, first of all, let me say I rise to support this rule and previously rose by way of my vote to support the defense appropriations and the rule. I thank the Chair Mr. HOBSON and ranking member Mr. OLVER for their good work.

However, it is interesting that we would discuss this particular rule in the shadow of our recent vote dealing with the question of the decision of whether or not this Nation should go to war. I do believe that it is important for those of us who support our United States military to ensure better housing conditions and better pay and improve their quality of life issues, should make it very clear—we are concerned about a strong military.

Just recently, I was able to travel to Guantanamo Bay. I have seen the work that we do to enhance the living conditions of our troops, and I do want to thank the committee whose responsibility it is to do that.

Likewise, having recently returned from Afghanistan, I saw the frontline troops doing their job. That is why I