AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 1588, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of the bill, H.R. 1588, the Clerk be authorized to correct section numbers, punctuation, cross-references, and the table of contents, and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the actions of the House in amending the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1588, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the resolution (S. Con. Res. 46) ''Concurrent resolution to correct the enrollment of H.R. 1298.''.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS OF 2003

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 248, I call up the bill (H.R. 2185) to extend the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of H.R. 2185 is as follows:

H.R. 2185

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Unemployment Compensation Amendments of 2003''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF THE TEMPORARY EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ACT OF 2002.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 208 of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–147; 116 Stat. 30), as amended by Public Law 108–1 (117 Stat. 3), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2), by striking ''before June 1'' and inserting ''on or before December 31'';

(2) in subsection (b)(1), by striking ''May 31, 2003'' and inserting ''December 31, 2003'';

(3) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''MAY 31, 2003'' and inserting ''DECEMBER 31, 2003''; and

(B) by striking ''May 31, 2003'' and inserting ''December 31, 2003''; and

(4) in subsection (b)(3), by striking ''August 30, 2003'' and inserting ''March 31, 2004''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–147; 116 Stat. 21).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 248, the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN).

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

Mr. Speaker, today we consider H.R. 2185 to extend unemployment benefits for millions of displaced workers. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor today. This bill will extend the current unemployment insurance program until December 2003 with a phase-out until March 2004.

My legislation will allow dislocated workers to receive 13 weeks of benefits in all States and an additional 13 weeks for workers who live in States with high unemployment rates such as Alaska, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington. The bill will help approximately 2.4 million displaced workers nationwide.

In my home State of Washington, the unemployment rate has again increased from 7.1 percent to 7.3 percent, making it the third highest unemployment rate in the Nation. Mass layoffs continue to have an adverse impact on our State's economy, especially in the aerospace industry. I represent more than 25,000 Boeing workers, many of whom have already lost their jobs.

As we work on a jobs and growth package to provide an immediate boost to our economy, we must also give displaced workers the peace of mind in knowing that they have a little time to find a job. So what does H.R. 2185 do? It achieves the following: it extends unemployment benefits until December 31, 2003, with a phase-out until March 31, 2004; it extends unemployment benefits for 13 weeks in all States for displaced workers; it extends unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks for a total of 26 weeks in high unemployment States.

This bill will cost $6.5 billion over 10 years, and it will help about 2.4 million workers nationwide. I think it is important that people realize that the Congress has done a lot to help unemployed workers. We feel this is the time to continue generosity and to help some of these folks who are trying to get jobs.

The existing unemployment extension expires at the end of this month with a phase-out until August. Congress has now extended unemployment benefits three different times: first in March 2002, 13 weeks for all States and 26 weeks for high unemployment States; secondly, in January 2003, 13 weeks for all States and 26 weeks for high unemployment States; and, lastly, in April 2003 an additional 26 weeks for airline and related industry workers.

We are extending the safety net for workers struggling to find a job while stimulating our economic growth by reducing taxes for individuals and encouraging business expansion. By extending unemployment benefits for an additional 13 weeks in all States, we can help the 2.4 million workers, and in my State, 60,000 workers, who need this kind of help.

Our unemployment system has worked well for many years, and it serves people during economic downturns. We are constantly reviewing the unemployment program to ensure that it helps those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. It is a temporary program, and now is the time to extend these benefits in a temporary way to help those folks who need to be helped.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to control the time of the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me assure the House that on the Democratic side of the aisle, we are pleased that we have legislation before us that extends the Federal unemployment compensation for an additional 7 months. We think that is the right way to move. However, we are extremely disappointed that the legislation does not include any additional help for those who have already exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits.

We are very disappointed that over a million people who currently are unemployed, who cannot find employment, will not be able to get any benefits under this legislation. Few States will be able to go beyond the 13 weeks of additional Federal unemployment insurance benefits because of the trigger mechanism. We believe that the legislation before us should include 26 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits for all those workers who exhaust their State unemployment insurance funds.

Let me point out that in prior recessions we have done exactly that. The gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN) points out what we have done, but it falls far short of what we did in the recession in the early 1990s. Despite the fact that this recession is much deeper than the prior recession, we have lost 2.7 million jobs, twice as many jobs as in the early 1990s, and 70 percent more people have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits in this recession than in the recession in the early 1990s. In the early 1990s, we extended benefits for 27 months. Yet in