

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to belabor this. I have great respect for the skills, the great skills, of the chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee. But it is just laughable to suggest that this is not your bill if you think you ought to dictate to the American public that you have to drive a car that gets 55 miles to the gallon, as if that were the only choice. A meaningful choice to raise CAFE standards the way other countries have done to their great advantage. That would have made more choices available to the American public and is something that is within our power, that we could do. It has nothing to do with forcing Americans to drive a car that gets 55 miles to the gallon. But the lack of a meaningful policy dealing with vehicle efficiency means that it is very difficult. There is a huge waiting list. It took me 6 months to get a hybrid SUV.

We are dropping the ball here. As to the notion that this is the best opportunity in terms of renewable energy, talk to the people in the industry who are ready, willing and able. Ask them if it is the best bill ever. That is not what I hear from people in this industry. I respectfully disagree.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Let me just say in conclusion that I have great respect for Chairman BARTON and Ranking Member DINGELL. They have worked very hard on this bill. I think it is a better bill than is before us than the one that we passed here in the House. As Chairman BARTON pointed out, Ranking Member DINGELL supports this bill. There was virtually a love fest in the Rules Committee last night, in part a tribute to the process during these last several weeks.

Having said that, some of us obviously have some philosophical differences, and some of us feel compelled to vote against this bill. I have no doubt that this bill will pass with strong bipartisan support, but as I said at the beginning of my remarks, I feel compelled to oppose the bill as well. I am concerned about some of what I consider are giveaways in this bill that I think were unnecessary. One would ease environmental restrictions on oil and gas companies drilling on public lands. The other would give billions of dollars in, I think, undeserved tax breaks to companies that, quite frankly, right now are gouging Americans. Oil companies right now, I think, are gouging Americans who are paying the highest gas prices in recent memory.

I think this bill could have been a better bill. Again, there are philosophical differences here. There will be a debate on the conference report. I have no objection to the rule. Again, let me close by expressing my respect and admiration for Chairman BARTON and Ranking Member DINGELL, not-

withstanding the fact that I oppose their final product.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, 4½ years ago, President George W. Bush stood in this Chamber during his first State of the Union Address and said, "We have a serious energy problem that demands a national energy policy. Our energy demands outstrip our supply. We can produce more energy at home while protecting our environment, and we must. We can produce more electricity to meet demand, and we must. We can promote alternative energy sources and conservation, and we must. America must become more energy independent, and we will."

Today, Mr. Speaker, this rule brings before the House a comprehensive, bipartisan energy plan that will help us produce more energy at home while protecting the environment; produce electricity to meet increasing demand; and promote alternative energy sources and conservation. This energy plan will help America meet its demands of today while planning for the energy needs of future generations, and it will allow us to become more energy independent.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on the rule, House Resolution 394, and the underlying bill.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT
ON H.R. 2985, LEGISLATIVE
BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT,
2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 396 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 396

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2985) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, 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. SIMPSON). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Cali-

fornia (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 396 is a traditional, standard rule for consideration of the conference report for the fiscal year 2006 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations.

The legislation before us appropriates \$3.084 billion for operations of the legislative branch. The bill is fiscally sound. It includes a modest increase from the bill of fiscal year 2005.

In accordance with long practice, Mr. Speaker, each body determined its own fiscal requirements. As such, the conference report includes \$1.1 billion the House of Representatives originally appropriated for its operations earlier this year. It also includes the \$759 million the Senate appropriated for its operations. The appropriations for both the House of Representatives and the Senate includes funds for Members' representational allowances, leadership and committee offices. These funds will help Members fulfill their duties to legislate and to oversee.

These funds also help Congress complete the vitally important task, as I have just mentioned, which is the oversight of the executive branch. The Constitution grants Congress broad powers that include the extraordinarily important power of oversight. This includes obviously getting to know what the executive is doing, how programs are being administered, by whom and at what cost, and whether officials are complying with the law, with the intent of the law.

For the Capitol Police, who each and every day protect us, our staffs, and our constituents visiting the Capitol, the bill appropriates over \$249 million. This level of funding will support the current staffing level of 1,592 officers, an additional 43 officers for the Library of Congress and 45 new officers for the Capitol Visitors Center. Also included is an inspector general for the Capitol Police to help the Capitol Police with administrative operations such as financial management and budgeting.

The bill also includes an important piece of legislation, the Continuity in Representation Act of 2005. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, flight 93 was headed toward us here. If it were not for the heroic acts of the passengers on flight 93, we could very well have faced a situation where Congress may not have been able to function. We cannot allow this to happen. We certainly have to do everything we can to not allow it to happen.

□ 1115

H.R. 841 would accelerate elections in case a terrorist attack leaves the House of Representatives with over 100 vacancies. It provides for the expedited special election of new Members to fill seats left vacant in "extraordinary circumstances."

The House passed this bill earlier this year by an overwhelming bipartisan margin of 329 to 68. In the 108th Congress, the House passed a similar bill by a vote of 306 to 97. Each time the Senate has failed to consider this vital piece of legislation; so the Speaker wisely asked that this very important legislation be included in this process.

We must not ignore the threat to our constitutional duty. It is time that we have legislation such as this that can handle such an inconceivably horrible possibility and does not leave our duty to legislate and oversee in limbo.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill, essential to our continued ability to legislate, to our power of oversight and the continuity of government.

I would like to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman LEWIS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), ranking member, for their leadership on this. And I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from California for her hard work and friendship.

I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

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

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me the customary time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

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

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, we are here to debate the rule for the Fiscal Year 2006 Legislative Branch Appropriations conference report, and although I support this report, I would just like to express my general concerns over the exorbitant cost overruns of the Capitol Visitors Center. Funding contained in this report is based on the GAO's assessment of needs, and I truly hope that this will be the last installment needed to get the center completed.

Through this measure, we will also fund the operations for our institution and the many supporting bodies that we rely upon daily, like the Library of Congress, the Government Accountability Office, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Capitol Police.

I would just like to take this opportunity to draw attention to those who help keep Congress running. There is a tremendous operation that helps my colleagues and me do the business of the American people, from the personnel at the Congressional Research Service that aids our offices in keeping up with the latest issues, to the Clerk's staff that records every word we speak, tracks each bill introduced, and, no matter the hour, is here to support us

as we debate the priorities of the Nation. It is also the curators who impart the history of this great Capitol Building to visitors every single day, and painters and archivists that maintain the historical integrity of the buildings. It is not without the maintenance crews, food service workers, and so many that I cannot even begin to name that keep the trains running smoothly on the Capitol complex. I thank them all for their service.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing one of the first appropriations conference reports move forward today.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the resolution.

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

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6, ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 394, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 6) to ensure jobs for our future with secure, affordable, and reliable energy.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 394, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of July 27, 2005 at page H 6691.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to say at the beginning we currently do not have on the House floor the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), one of the opponents of the bill, but when he arrives, I want to assure those who are in opposition to the bill that we will yield time so that they have an opportunity to participate in the debate.

With that I want to say that this is a great day. The House is poised to pass the most comprehensive energy policy that we have ever had before this body, at least in the time that I

have been in the House of Representatives, which encompasses the last 21 years.

In the last Congress, the House was able to adopt a conference report, but the other body was never able to invoke cloture and bring that bill to the floor.

This bill builds on last year's bill. It is full of superb legislation. It is a very balanced bill both for conservation and for production. There is a very strong title on energy efficiency. There is a strong title on renewable energy and clean energy. On a bipartisan basis, we have even adjusted daylight savings time to help save energy.

The bill before us today is going to promote a new generation of clean coal technology. It is going to promote the use of our Nation's greatest domestic resource, which is coal. It is going to do it in a clean, environmentally safe fashion. We are going to introduce a new generation for nuclear power in this country. There are many innovations that should make it possible the next 3 to 4 years to begin to construct a new nuclear power plant.

With the help of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and Senator CRAIG in the other body, we have a reform in our relicensing process for hydroelectric plants, which, as we all know, have zero emissions. We also have parts of the bill that are going to vigorously pursue the Hydrogen Fuel Initiative, which has the promise to help relieve some of the dependency on the internal combustion engine which we have developed in this country. We want to give American drivers the opportunity to drive safe, affordable, and reliable, clean hydrogen cars as soon as the year 2020. That is not as far off as it seems, Mr. Speaker.

In the short term, we have provisions in the bill to make it more efficient to use our boutique fuels. These are fuels that are a blend of fuels between gasoline and different types of ethanol. Under current rules there are as many as 19 different blends, many of them manufactured or refined in only one refinery. The bill before us reduces that number so that we have greater transportability of our boutique fuels between those regions of the country that need those fuel sources.

We have a brand new title on siting new liquified natural gas terminals. We are dependent on about 10 percent of imports for natural gas right now, yet we have not sited a new LNG facility in this Nation in over 30 years.

The bill before us will look at the permitting process. It will respect the States rights and local community rights, but it will create a process where they get a decision, and hopefully some of those sites will be permitted in the next 3 to 4 years, and we will be able to import liquefied natural gas for our Nation's economic future.

We also have a sector that came over from the other body on a comprehensive inventory in the oil and gas reserves in the Outer Continental