

accountable manner. We want to know what is happening in the people's House, and it is your charge to keep with us to keep us informed.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman and I thank my good friend from Georgia for his answer to my rhetorical question, because the answer was the only thing that can be possible as a reason to do it is politics. That is it. That is the only thing that can be possible. There can be no good reason, from a process standpoint, for this House of Representatives not to record those votes. So I appreciate so much your enlightening me and helping me understand why that would have been done.

I do know that constituents at home are tired, are tired of decisions that are made up here in Washington based solely on politics. And, in fact, I would suggest to my friends on the other side of the aisle who now find themselves in the majority that decisions like that and being held accountable for those decisions make it so that lives in majorities can sometimes be very, very short.

So I appreciate your comments and appreciate your input and would be happy to yield if either of you had anything else to comment regarding the rules.

If not, I do want to comment a little bit about the process and about why discussion of the process is important. My good friends know and most Americans know we live in the longest surviving democracy ever in the history of man, ever in the history of man. And there is a reason for that. I think people can conjecture about why that is the case, but I think one of the reasons for that is that we as a Nation have respected the process by which we develop policy. And the reason it is important is because everybody that is an elected official, is a representative of the people, has an opportunity to have input into the process, and that process itself not only produces the best product because as you have more people involved who represent more diverse areas, I think you get a better product, but what it does do is it ensures that people trust the outcome.

They trust the outcome of not just elections, but they trust the outcome of the process of legislation. And when that process gets truncated or gets cut down or is closed, we use that term "closed rule" here, when the American people hear about a closed rule, what that means is that it does not allow your representative at home to be able to offer amendments, be able to have input into what the ultimate work product is, what the ultimate bill, what the ultimate law is.

So, Mr. Speaker, many individuals across this Nation who went to the polls and voted in November have elected people who because of changes in these rules today will not be able to have input into very, very important issues like 9/11 Commission recommendations and whether or not they

are adopted; like stem cell research and whether that goes forward paid for with Federal taxpayer money; minimum wage, an important issue, but it ought to be debated, ought to have opportunity for amendment; and then something that is near and dear to my heart as a physician in my former life along with Dr. GINGREY and my other colleagues is the issue of prescription drugs and the Medicare part D prescription drug program. An extremely complex issue. Extremely complex issue.

And today, what the majority party did was say that we will bring within the next week to the floor of this House a bill that has never been discussed in committee. It has never had a hearing. It has never had anybody in this body be able to offer an amendment officially and have folks vote on it and say "yes" or "no," they believe that that is the case, that has never been through that process that results in the best work product that is available for a bill and for ultimately a law. And from the rumors that we hear, and we only hear rumors because we don't have the legislative language, because we do not know what is going to be in that bill, but from the rumors that we hear, the result of that bill will be a decrease in the kinds of medications that are available to the American people.

That may go into effect, Mr. Speaker, if the majority party goes forward with the rule that they adopted today. That may go into effect without anybody in this House of Representatives ever having an opportunity to affect that outcome.

□ 2145

Some on the majority side would say, well, it has been talked about for a long time. It was voted on, the Medicare prescription drug program was voted on in 2003, got a lot of hearings then. There were a lot of people that talked about it and voiced their opinion on it at that time.

That is true, Mr. Speaker, but what hasn't happened is that every single freshman Member of this House was duly elected in their districts and has a right, a right, under our system of government to have input into a bill that comes out of the House of Representatives. Every single freshman will have no input into that bill or into the bill as it relates to minimum wage, as it relates to stem cell research or anything else that was included in the rules package today. Never.

That has never been done, as my colleagues said before, never been done in the history, in the history of this Nation, to have that kind of substantive legislation dealt with in a way that does not allow that kind of input.

Mr. Speaker, that kind of rule, that kind of process, which is difficult to get your arms around, but that kind of process, I would suggest to you, is an abuse of majority power. Our job, on the minority side, is to hold people accountable for their actions and for their decisions.

It is important that the American people understand and appreciate that these decisions that were made on the very first day, which, by and large, are procedural issues, that are difficult to get folks interested in, but they not only set the tone for this Congress, but they set the rules under which we make major decisions that will affect the American people as it relates to their income, as it relates to their security, and as it relates to their health. Nothing, nothing could be more important.

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a historic day. But it is also a day of concern. It is a day of concern, because what goes on here is extremely important. Within these walls we can effect change that will benefit citizens all across our Nation. We can also effect change that will harm citizens all across our Nation. If we work together, we will do much more of the former and very little of the latter.

Let me close by just saying, Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, the challenges that we face in this Nation are huge. They are immense. But they are not Republican challenges, and they are not Democrat challenges. They are American challenges.

If we work together as a body of elected representatives from all across this wonderful and glorious Nation, we will come up with the best product, the best legislation, the best laws that will result in the most amount of benefit to our citizens all across this Nation. So I challenge, I challenge my Democrat colleagues to fulfill the promises that they made on the election, during the election campaign, to fulfill the promises that they made, to fulfill the promises that they made when they talked to citizens in their districts all across this Nation about openness and about civility and about fiscal responsibility. That challenge, that challenge making certain that you fulfill those promises is what will ring true to the American people.

I appreciate once again, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to come to the floor tonight.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. INSLEE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PRICE of Georgia) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and January 5.

Mr. DENT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, January 9, 10, and 11.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, January 5.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 159. An act to redesignate the White Rocks National Recreation Area in the State of Vermont as the "Robert T. Stafford White Rocks National Recreation Area"; To the Committee on Natural Resources.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, January 5, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1. A letter from the Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank, transmitting a report on transactions involving U.S. exports to Mexico pursuant to Section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; to the Committee on Financial Services.

2. A letter from the Director, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Emergency Mine Evacuation (RIN: 1219-AB46) received December 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

3. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting reports in accordance with Section 36(a) of the Arms Export Control Act, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2776(a); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

4. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a six-month report prepared by the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 13222 of August 17, 2001, and continued on August 14, 2002, August 7, 2003, and August 6, 2004 to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State,

transmitting a report on the status of consular training with respect to travel or identity documents, pursuant to Section 7201(d) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2155(b)(2); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

6. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, certification regarding the proposed manufacturing license agreement for the manufacture of significant military equipment in the Government of the United Kingdom (Transmittal No. DDTC 063-06); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

7. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-243), the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution (Pub. L. 102-1), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, a report prepared by the Department of State for the October 12, 2006 — December 20, 2006 reporting period including matters relating to post-liberation Iraq under Section 7 of the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-338); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

8. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting pursuant to Section 620(q) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, waiving restrictions on assistance to the Democratic Republic of Congo resulting from the country's default on certain U.S. loans; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

9. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the semi-annual report of the Inspector General for the period April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

10. A letter from the White House Liaison, Department of Education, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

11. A letter from the Presidential Appointments Officer, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

12. A letter from the Presidential Appointments Officer, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

13. A letter from the Presidential Appointments Officer, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

14. A letter from the Presidential Appointments Officer, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Va-

cancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

15. A letter from the Presidential Appointments Officer, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

16. A letter from the Presidential Appointments Officer, Department of State, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

17. A letter from the Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting the semiannual report on the activities of the Inspector General and management's report for the period ending September 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

18. A letter from the Chairman and General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting the semiannual report on the activities of the Office of Inspector General of the National Labor Relations Board for the period April 1, 2006 through September 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 8G(h)(2); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

19. A letter from the Secretary, Postal Rate Commission, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

20. A letter from the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, transmitting list of reports pursuant to clause 2, Rule II of the Rules of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Rule II, clause 2(b), of the Rules of the House; (H. Doc. No. 110-4); to the Committee on House Administration and ordered to be printed.

21. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the 2005 Annual Report of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 3766(c) and 3789e; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

22. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, CMS, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's "Major" final rule — Final Rules for Nondiscrimination and Wellness Programs in Health Coverage in the Group Market (RIN: 0938-AI08) received December 13, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

23. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a copy of Presidential Determination No. 2007-5, pursuant to Section 574(d) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Program Appropriations Act of 2006, Pub. L. 109-102; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations.