

(Mr. MARKEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 251, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

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#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR) at 1 o'clock and 22 minutes p.m.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2638, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 473 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 473

*Resolved*, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2638) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 2638 in the House pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous

question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 473 provides an open rule for the consideration of H.R. 2638, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for 2008. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for those arising under clauses 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The resolution also waives points of order against the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI regarding legislating in an appropriations bill and appropriating for unauthorized programs.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may provide priority in recognition based on whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The rule also provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

I am pleased to bring to the floor the first appropriations bill of the 110th Congress under a traditional open rule process. The security of our Nation concerns every American in every State, and it is a priority of every Member of this body. But while the effort to secure our homeland is a bipartisan one, there are clear differences between how the two parties approach it, and the bill demonstrates them.

We have before us legislation that provides more than \$36 billion in critical funding needed to address security vulnerabilities identified by the Homeland Security experts. It is a fulfillment of commitments made by Democrats in implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007, which passed the House with a bipartisan majority.

With this bill Democrats are increasing funding for homeland security by 7 percent, or \$2.5 billion, over the

amount appropriated for it last year. In fact, we are providing close to \$2 billion more than what the President asked for in his request to Congress. These increases aren't excessive. They are, instead, the result of the Democrats' commitment to adequately fund security programs which in past years have been talked about, but not sufficiently supported.

These funding increases stand in stark contrast to past Republican decisions to cut money for vital security efforts and to impose unfunded mandates on State governments. My fellow Democrats and I have rejected the Republican proposals for across-the-board cuts in these areas. We feel that they would indiscriminately and unnecessarily sacrifice billions in needed funding for rail, transit, and port security, as well as for first responder grants. And, indeed, the sad truth is that these grant programs have suffered funding cuts every year since 2004. Compare that to the fact that this bill provides over \$4.5 billion, nearly double the requested amount, for these critical areas.

More specifically, we have provided \$400 million for port security, doubling the requested amount. Similarly, \$400 million will go towards rail and transit security grants, more than the administration requested. And we will increase spending for firefighter grants by \$138 million. The administration had wanted to cut these funds significantly, but we are increasing them.

At a time of heightened concern about our border security, the legislation will help to secure our borders by paying the salaries of 3,000 new Border Patrol agents, and it also improves the benefits package for Customs and Border Patrol officers to ensure higher recruitment and retention rates. After years of a lack of accountability and questionable government contracts, this bill promotes both accountability and oversight through reforms of the contracting process, and this is amazingly important.

I mentioned our borders a moment ago and I want to return to that subject very briefly. As a representative from western New York, the security of our borders is an issue of great concern to me.

□ 1330

Both our northern and southern borders face unique and separate challenges, and the bill addresses each in turn.

The 3,000 new agents funded by the bill will mean over 17,800 brave men and women will patrol our borders by the end of 2008. And at the same time, we will increase northern border funding by 33 percent, and 500 new agents will be placed there. As important as this is, border security efforts must never blind us to the deep connection we share with our neighbor to the north. Ours is a 200-year-old relationship that has benefited both of our nations immensely. In fact, I often say