Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hulshof
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
Kingston
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
Lampson
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McHugh
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Nadler
Napolitano
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Payne
Perlmutter
Peterson (PA)
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (NC)
Rahall
Ramstad
Reyes
Rodriguez
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
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Tierney
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Udall (NM)
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weller
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Wittman (VA)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—36

Bachus
Bishop (NY)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Conaway
Cooper
Cummings
Davis (IL)
Farr
Feeney
Fossella
Gordon
Granger
Hoyer
Kaptur
Kirk
Larsen (WA)
Linder
McMorris Rodgers
Murtha
Neal (MA)
Paul
Peterson (MN)
Rangel
Richardson
Rush
Sestak
Slaughter
Speier
Tancredo
Udall (CO)
Walsh (NY)
Waxman
Wilson (SC)
Wynn

□ 1523

So the motion to adjourn was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 3221, FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1175 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1175

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3221) moving the United States toward greater energy independence and security, developing innovative new technologies, reducing carbon emissions, creating green jobs, protecting consumers, increasing clean renewable energy production, and modernizing our energy infrastructure, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for the production of renewable energy and energy conservation, with the Senate amendments thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI, a motion offered by the chairman of the Committee on Financial Services or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment to the text with each of the three amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. The Senate amendments and the motion shall be considered as read. The motion shall be debatable for three hours, with two hours equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services and one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion except that the Chair shall divide the question among each of the three House amendments.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of the motion specified in the first section of this resolution, a motion that the House concur in the Senate amendment to the title shall be considered as adopted.

SEC. 3. During consideration of the motion to concur pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the motion to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Vermont is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I also ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 1175.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1175 provides for consideration of the Senate amendments to H.R. 3221, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008.

The rule makes in order a motion by the chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, Mr. FRANK, to concur in the Senate amendments with three House amendments. The rule provides 3 hours of debate on the motion, with 2 hours controlled by the Committee on Financial Services and 1 hour controlled by the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule also provides for a division of the question on the adoption of the three House amendments listed in the Rules Committee report.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all know why this rule and the underlying bill are so important. Millions of Americans are confronting the growing prospect of losing their home. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, have already lost their home in a foreclosure epidemic that is the legacy of the subprime mortgage crisis.

According to recent reports, the most severe real estate recession in decades is going to continue to weigh down the economy, the pace of foreclosures is going to continue to rise, and homes continue to lose their value at increasing rates. This foreclosure epidemic has spread to virtually every major city in the United States.

What the Committee on Financial Services has done here is brought us a bill that addresses this problem directly. It's not a bill that intends to lay blame. There is plenty of that to go around. It's a bill that's intended to solve a problem.

Here are some of the sobering facts about the problem:

The number of homes entering foreclosure in the first 3 months this year was double the same period as last year.

One in every 194 homes received a foreclosure filing in the first quarter of this year.

And home prices are down, on average, 12.7 percent, which is basically the first time that's happened since the Great Depression in the early 1930s.

As the foreclosure trends intensify, the problem can only get worse. As foreclosure signs go up in neighborhoods, the value of the property in that neighborhood declines, even if the creditworthiness and the ability to pay of the homeowner is as strong as ever.

□ 1530

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is about, as I mentioned, solving a problem. It creates opportunity for the lenders and the mortgage servicers to minimize their loss; it provides an opportunity for homeowners to stay in their homes, but it shares the pain as well as the opportunity. In order for lenders to take advantage of the opportunity presented in this bill, they are going to have to write down the value of the loan consistent with the current appraisal value. In order for homeowners to have an opportunity to participate in this program, they are going to have to give up the equity that they thought they had, including any moneys they had paid in downpayments.

House Resolution 1175 provides for the consideration of three House amendments to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3221, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008.

Amendment No. 1 includes H.R. 5830 regarding the FHA refinancing, H.R. 1852 regarding FHA modernization, H.R. 1427 regarding government-sponsored entity reform, those being Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and H.R. 1066 regarding community development investments, among other bills. Each piece of legislation in this amendment has already been passed by the House so we are really going over work that this entire body has considered before, or it has been rigorously debated and amended through the committee process in Financial Services and Ways and Means.

Amendment No. 2 includes H.R. 5720, the Housing Assistance Tax Act of 2008 under which middle-class families would be eligible for a loan of up to $7,500 toward the purchase of a new home, and homeowners filing jointly would receive an additional deduction from their property taxes of $700. States will also receive a temporary increase in low-income housing tax credits and $10 billion of additional tax exempt bond authority for low-interest loans to build low-income rental housing and to refinance certain subprime mortgages.

One of the underlying causes of the subprime crisis was that more and more Americans who wanted to rent couldn't and had to get themselves housing by getting into loans they couldn't afford.

Amendment No. 3 is a bipartisan amendment offered by Congressman MILLER and Congressman LATOURETTE regarding the preemption of State laws regulating foreclosure.

The centerpiece of this legislation is H.R. 5830, the FHA Stabilization and Homeownership Retention Act included in amendment No. 1. That bill would enact a voluntary program, voluntary, for homeowners and lenders, and I emphasize voluntary, nothing is being forced on anyone except the opportunity to work this out. The process would begin with a homeowner or servicer of an existing eligible loan with an FHA-approved lender, and the FHA-approved lender would then determine the size of the loan that meets the requirements of the program and that the borrower could reasonably repay. The plan targets a group of homeowners who would be able to stay in their homes if they had a reduction in principal and monthly servicing charges.

The Congressional Budget Office says that this legislation could save 500,000 mortgages from foreclosure. Other estimates put that number much higher, at over a million.

Just as important as keeping Americans in their homes, this legislation protects American taxpayers. The government's liability under this program is limited and only applies if a borrower defaults and the amount recovered in foreclosure is below the outstanding debt still owed. This is a program that will be paid for largely by the folks participating in it and benefiting from this option as an alternative to foreclosure, and that is through a series of financing and copayments that will be assessed at the time of closing as the life of the loan continues through fees for a period of about 5 years.

There are going to be about $300 billion made available under this bill for guarantees, but the CBO scored the legislation as having an outside risk to taxpayers of about $2.4 billion. And I would like to have my colleagues think about that for a moment in the context of the $29 billion that was made available to back the rescue of the investment banks when Bear Stearns collapsed.

The biggest cost to the taxpayer would be to let the economy unravel, to let neighborhoods decay, and to let thousands if not millions of homes go into foreclosure.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5830 and other critical parts of this legislation provides an avenue to stability, to restoring economic stability to our neighborhoods, to our working families in this country, and to our lenders. We all thank the excellent leadership of the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Ways and Means for working together, Republicans and Democrats, to bring this legislation to the floor for consideration.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Vermont for yielding me this time to discuss the proposed rule for consideration of this omnibus package of legislation being returned from the Senate.

On behalf of the Republican Conference, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this closed rule and to this entirely closed process which is being manipulated for the sole purpose of silencing 430 Members of Congress and denying the Republican minority a motion to recommit.

I want every single Member to understand what today's vote really does mean. It means a vote for this rule is going to give only Ways and Means Chairman CHARLES RANGEL, Financial Services Chairman BARNEY FRANK, and Speaker NANCY PELOSI the opportunity to determine the shape of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, that means that for anyone who is tuning in to watch today's debate on C–SPAN who is not sitting in Harlem, New York City; New Bedford, Massachusetts; or San Francisco, California, your vote is being silenced by the new majority's rule.

A vote for this rule is also a vote to once again break the Democrat leadership's numerous campaign promises to provide this House with regular order, including the bare minimum that can be done to protect minority rights through the inclusion of a Republican substitute.

I wish I could say that this disavowal of last year's campaign promises is precedent setting. Unfortunately, breaking these promises to the House and to the American people has become all too common in what has officially become the ''most closed Congress in history.''

What is precedent setting about this rule is that it directly contradicts the past statements of the chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, Chairman FRANK, who prior to today's rule had an unblemished record of at least asking for his party leadership and the Rules Committee to stick to their word.

In the past Rules Committee hearings, Chairman FRANK has advocated allowing this House to debate amendments:

(1) where there is a genuine issue of public policy;

(2) that allow for debate of a significant issue; and

(3) when amendments are germane and not duplicative.

Despite the fact that the broken promises Democrat majority made it clear that no amendments, not even significant, genuine, germane and unique ones would be considered by this House, 10 Republicans brought amendments to the Rules Committee that would have met each and every one of these prior requirements.

Unsurprisingly, all of these thoughtful amendments were summarily denied by the Rules Committee last night in what might well be renamed the ''Graveyard of Good Ideas Committee'' in the House of Representatives.

So despite the fact that there is no policy reason for completely shutting down the legislative process and even going so far as denying the minority a basic motion to recommit in moving this unvetted omnibus through the House, the Democrat majority has once again taken the path of least political resistance. And in doing so, they have again diminished this institution and the rights of the overwhelming Members who have a privilege to serve in this body.

Because the Republican Members of this House overwhelmingly oppose this lock-down rule that denies our party any substantive input into this process, including any amendments from a taxpayer bailout that may or may not solve the problems that it claims to, I have a number of Members who are interested in speaking up against this rule. I plan to save the majority of my time for them to provide their own thoughts on the shortcomings of this bill.

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

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this is the most important issue facing the American people today, and it is so important that the American people are watching this debate to see, as we are focusing our energies on this and to also, Mr. Speaker, take a look at the other side and the unfortunate distractions. We are not dealing with the war supplemental here. We are dealing with the issue that is on the minds of the American people. The American people are hanging on by their fingernails to their houses. Millions of families are losing their homes. An average of 7,500 people every day in this country are filing for foreclosure on their homes. As we debate this bill in this one hour alone, there will be 875 people who will file for foreclosure in each hour we are debating. That is important, Mr. Speaker.

There is nothing more important on the American people's minds than to do something that brings some reasonable end to this miserable nightmare we are in as a result of this mortgage-foreclosure issue.

Millions of families are seeing their home values drop. Trillions of dollars of household wealth and property values have been lost. Homeowners now owe more on their mortgages than their homes are worth, and the housing mortgage crisis has caused businesses to lay off workers. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have lost their jobs. This is what is at stake, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of liquidity, we are in the worst economic times since the Great Depression, and that is why it is important that we lay this backdrop so the American people can see what we are doing to respond to this issue that is before us today in H.R. 5830 which is a very thoughtful, which is a very responsive response to this very, very serious issue. H.R. 5830, the FHA Housing Stabilization Homeownership Retention Act is the answer to this problem. I commend Chairman BARNEY FRANK for having the foresight in our Committee on Financial Services to put it forward.

Essentially what it does is it gives just $300 billion in authority, not cost, Mr. Speaker. It is very important because I know the other side is going to come and talk about a $300 billion bailout. This is a bail-in that is going to cost the American taxpayers just $2.7 billion that has been outlaid and scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

Later in the debate we will explain exactly what these costs are. And what this bill will do, it will ensure a refinancing of loans for borrowers who are struggling to afford their current mortgages. Participation is voluntary. The mortgage holder would have to agree to a substantial reduction of the current loan's outstanding principal and provide new loans that that borrower can afford.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I yield the gentleman an additional 1½ minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. That is what is important here, Mr. Speaker. What we are seeing on our side as what is critical is keeping people in their homes. And in order to do that, we are simply offering that we extend the FHA ability to authorize and simply place a guarantee of loans up to $300 billion which in fact is a $300 billion reinvestment in our economy. And again as I mentioned, the cost is only $2.7 billion.

To help defray the government's cost and prevent unjust enrichments such as borrowers' flipping, the bill requires that the borrower shares with the government a substantial position of any profits from selling or refinancing homes.

Mr. Speaker, I come from the State of Georgia which is suffering dramatically because of home foreclosures. The State of Georgia ranks number eight in home foreclosures.

□ 1545

It is at the top of my agenda to make sure that we bring some relief, certainly to the people of my beloved State of Georgia, but certainly the 13th District, which even has a greater preponderance of foreclosures because of the subprime mortgage meltdown. This is extremely important.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, let me just say this point.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. I will continue that point in the debate.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for 17 months this new Democrat majority has led this country down their pathway of what they want, higher taxes, more spending, which has resulted in the gasoline crisis that we have today by cutting off supplies that would come to make America energy independent. And here we are now with a housing crisis. After all the years that we've had a growing economy, no wonder our country's in trouble. The new Democrat majority has taken over.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from San Dimas, California, the ranking member of the Rules Committee, Mr. DREIER.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding, and I want to begin by saying that I agree with many of the points that my dear friend from Atlanta, Mr. SCOTT, has made. He has put forth some very thoughtful arguments. And he is absolutely right. He comes from Georgia. I come from California. We're in the midst of a very serious housing crisis. In fact, the foreclosure issue is one that has impacted my State of California, and I know it has impacted Georgia and other segments of the economy.

But I have to say, as I listened to my friend's remarks, I was really struck with the fact that he failed, Mr. Speaker, he failed to look at the overall picture. It is true, there are Americans who are hurting. But to describe the economic challenges that we face today as the worst economic times since the Great Depression is, at least, a slight exaggeration.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DREIER. I would be happy to yield to my friend.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. It has been made clear, my good friend from California, by the Federal Reserve, by noted economists from my beloved school of Wharton, as well as Harvard, that in terms of liquidity, we are in the worst times of depression.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if I could reclaim my time, let me recognize the gentleman did describe this as that.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Liquidity.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the second point that he made, which I think is a very important one, is to say that this is the number one issue facing Americans.

Now in the debate on the last rule, our friend from Pasco, Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) pointed to a survey that was done, I think it was a CNN survey or some other survey, in which they talked about the priority issues.

Guess what issue number one is? Its the issue that our friend from Dallas was just talking about, gasoline prices. That happens to be, Mr. Speaker, the number one issue, and you have to go down the list to get to this as a priority issue.

All I'm arguing, and I'm not saying that this isn't, Mr. Speaker, a very, very important issue. It impacts the people whom I'm honored to represent here in a very negative way. But what needs to be recognized is, we have to look at where we are. We had anemic growth the last quarter, six-tenths of 1 percent. What that means is that while we may be possibly at the beginning of an economic recession, while we had anemic growth, it was not negative growth, which it takes, as my friend, Wharton-educated, has just pointed out, two quarters of negative economic growth for us to be in the midst of an economic recession. That is not to in any way diminish, Mr. Speaker, the pain that so many of our fellow Americans are feeling at this point.

Now let me just say about this issue. The President of the United States very much wants, as he said to Republican Members today, to have a bill that he can sign. And I've just spoken with my very good friend, the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee, who last night in the Rules Committee came forward with a very thoughtful alternative. That alternative focuses on strengthening a number of the very important existing programs that we have. They include, reform of the Federal Housing Administration, FHA reform legislation which we've worked on; the government-sponsored enterprises, GSE reform, very, very important; the FHA secure program; Hope Now. There are a wide range of programs that are out there.

And we've regularly encouraged our constituents who are facing the challenge of foreclosure to call that 800 number that has been put forward, because I know full well, from having spoken with many lenders, there is a desire not to take back these homes. My friend from Atlanta was absolutely right when he closed his statement by saying that the priority is to make sure that these Americans are able to stay in their homes. We want to make sure that they stay in their homes.

And guess what? To the surprise of many, these lenders don't want to take these homes backs. They don't want the responsibility of being saddled with them. And so the issue of forbearance is something that I know for a fact lenders want to engage in with these borrowers.

But as my friend from Dallas has pointed out very well, we have before us a structure which is very unfortunate. Yes, we know we went through the committee process. We know that we have seen a very fair process by the chairman of the Financial Services Committee. But, unfortunately, what we're doing here is taking up a Senate amendment.

So while tomorrow, if we consider this wartime supplemental, for the first time ever we are going to be completely ignoring the committee process, the subcommittee, committee process. And, of course, we'll look at the prospect of taking a shell bill here and denying the minority an opportunity for a motion to recommit. That's why so many members of the Appropriations Committee have been here demonstrating their outrage on this process. But on this bill what we're bypassing is floor consideration of the measure because we're simply taking a Senate amendment.

Now what does that do, Mr. Speaker? Just as the proposed plan to deal with the supplemental appropriations bill, it denies the members of the minority a right to offer that very important cherished motion to recommit.

And so I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very troubled with this process, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding the time. I'd like to thank the chairman, BARNEY FRANK, for this outstanding piece of legislation.

Let me quickly say that Hope Now is good, which is what my friend referenced. Hope Now is good. However, help now is better.

We didn't give Penn Central hope now. We gave Penn Central a $7 billion bailout. Lockheed Martin got a $250 million bailout. Franklin National Bank, $1.7 billion bailout. Chrysler, $1.5 billion bailout. Continental Illinois, $4.5 billion bailout. Farm Credit System, $4 billion bailout. First Republic, $1 billion bailout. Major airlines, $5 billion bailout. Steel companies, $7 billion bailout. And Bear Stearns, if we talk about the bare facts, $29 billion, plus a $13 billion loan through J.P. Morgan, which makes a total of $42 billion, if we talk about the bare facts.

This is a good piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. This piece of legislation is voluntary, as has been indicated. But more importantly, it is a guarantee, not a loan. It does allow FHA to guarantee loans, about $300 billion, and that's going to help a lot of families to stay in homes. But it will also help this economy.

This economy is right now in a credit crisis. And in this credit crisis we've got to realize that there is interconnectivity. There's an interconnectedness, that we are living in a world wherein we are related to each another in a certain way. In this crisis, Mr. Speaker, when one home in a community has a for sale sign up, it impacts other homes in the community. It impacts the tax base of the community. It impacts the lives of children who are going to school in the community. So this piece of legislation will help us to keep people in their homes, but it will help to maintain the community. We sleep in houses and live in neighborhoods. This legislation helps neighborhoods.

I would also add that flippers don't benefit because you have to be a resident of the property. The government maintains a lien on the property. And there's an amendment in this bill, the Watt-Velázquez-Green amendment, which will help those persons who are being evicted, who happen to be tenants. Many persons who have their rent paid, their rent is paid, but they're being evicted because the owner of the property was foreclosed on. This amendment will help them to stay in their homes.

I ask that my colleagues please support this amendment, and please remember that we bailed out a lot of companies in this country. This is a hand up for a lot of people who are suffering and who may lose their homes, others who have their rent paid but who are about to be evicted.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama, the ranking member of the committee, Mr. BACHUS.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Vermont, who is leading the debate of the opposition, I would like to appeal to the gentleman from Vermont.

Our constituents today are under a lot of stress because of the high cost of energy, gasoline prices, heating bills this winter. And Vermont, and I congratulate Vermont. Seventy-three percent of their electricity is powered by nuclear energy. Seventy-three percent. That compares to 19 percent in all other States. So I congratulate y'all.

Nuclear energy is a source of very cheap energy, very cheap electricity. It could really wean us off our dependency on foreign oil. I would appeal to the Vermont delegation, both Mr. SANDERS, Senator SANDERS, yourself, we need more nuclear power plants. And we would just urge our representatives from Vermont to stop voting ''no'' and allowing other States to have a source of low-cost energy. So just on a personal basis, I'd appeal to you.

Now we find ourselves in a very serious situation, a crisis—it's not too strong a word—in America. We have high food prices. We have high energy prices. And many of our citizens are under stress in paying their mortgages. Fifty-four million American families make a mortgage payment each month. An additional 34 million American families make a rent payment every month. I would say that a great percentage of those are under stress. There's 25 million Americans who own their own home or don't have a mortgage, and some of them are under stress.

Now we all agree that foreclosures are serious. They're bad for the community. But we fundamentally disagree in how we address the problem. I, for one, most of my colleagues, say let's not take from the 34 million American families who are renting, let's not take their tax dollars. Let's not take from the 51 million American families who are paying a mortgage payment. Many of them struggling under high gas prices, high food prices. Let's not take from those other 25 million American families who don't have a mortgage on their home, let's not take from them and reward lenders who unwisely extended credit, because that's what this bill is about. It's not about benefiting borrowers because the guarantee doesn't go to borrowers. It goes to lenders.

Three years ago we started an effort to rein in subprime lending abuses, and the lenders came before us and they lobbied and they killed our efforts to bring some structure and some control over the mortgage market. They said, thanks but no thanks. You stay out.

But, now, now that the chickens have come home to roost, they've come back in and said, bail us out. And they're turning to 110 million American families and saying, we need $300 billion. These are speculators. Many of them speculated. Many of them are investors on Wall Street who bought high-risk, high-yield, structured investment vehicles containing these mortgages. And now they're saying, we're in trouble. And they're saying, we want to offload these bad loans on to the government.

And we'll decide today whether we take from 110 million American families, take their hard-earned money, and we bail out these lenders and these speculators, many of which are guilty of criminal, fraudulent acts. They trapped people into these loans, and when the loans have become illiquid, they've asked for the taxpayers to come in and stand behind it.

This program is, and y'all have said to us, or you have said, it's a voluntary program. Absolutely, it's voluntary. The lender can choose which loans he offloads on the Federal Government. Which loans will he offload? He'll offload his bad loans. He'll offload the very worst of the loans.

□ 1600

And the American taxpayers, those I represent who are making those rent payments, who are making those mortgage payments, and don't assume that those 51 million American families who are making their mortgage payment, don't assume they're not under stress. When you say, We're going to share the pain, why would you ask a renter or an American family that's paying their bills to share the pain? They have enough pain.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam 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. Madam Speaker, I will be happy to engage my good friend from Alabama and both of us go to the Department of Justice, the SEC and begin to file legal action against the unscrupulous investors on Wall Street who took these mortgages knowing that they had a cheap deal. If he will join me, we will walk down to the Department of Justice right now to get the Attorney General to begin filing major litigation against these scandalous, unscrupulous individuals, if that's what he would like to do.

But right now on the floor of the House we have major legislation that is going to address the question of the suffering of Americans. And I'm going to take this brief opportunity to acknowledge the bill sponsored by my good friend and colleague, Congresswoman WATERS, on H.R. 5818. We've passed the rule, but I want to support the underlying premise that once we get through with the major reconstruction, that the bill that we are now discussing and the rule that we're now discussing, we will have $15 billion to go into these communities and be able to buy back these properties and to take them off of the streets and to make sure that low-income individuals that need affordable houses, families that are broken because of the foreclosure scandal will be able to get back into their community. This is good legislation.

Now, as we move forward on the FHA stabilization on the Senate amendments that we're now discussing, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act, let us put this in the right perspective. We lost 20,000 jobs in April. We have the bailouts of corporate America everywhere you can see. Airlines are merging, Bear Stearns got $42 billion or more to bail them out, and yet my good friends on the other side of the aisle are not interested in having us do things that the President wants us to do.

He wants us to have, if you will, the government sponsored enterprise reform. He wants us to fix Freddie Mac. He wants us to fix Fannie Mae. He wants to make sure that we provide for disabled veterans. He wants us to be able to invest in the important housing matters, and he wants to make sure that we put Americans back in their houses and put them right side up.

We're not in a recession; we're moving towards a 1929 depression. And I don't know why the other side cannot wake up. This is a good rule for a good bill.

As we make this march toward passing this legislation, I hope that we will also include that those who have lost good credit ratings because they suffered a foreclosure will be able to get back into the good credit rating by being eligible for these programs. Let us not punish those that fell victim to foreclosure because of unscrupulous practices that we're fighting against and their credit score went down to keep them from getting another house. Let's make sure we work that out. That is an idea and an amendment that I have, and I look forward to working with the committee so that as we move forward, we can get this done.

Again, if you can bail out Tom, Dick and Harry, you can at least bail out Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Smith and Mr. Garcia, because these are the hardworking Americans. I stand with them.

Let them stand with the big, rich guys all the time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1175, the Rule Providing for Consideration of H.R. 3221, the "American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008."

I am pleased to support this much needed Housing and Urban Development legislation, to help States purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes to stabilize as many properties as possible.

All Americans—homeowners, lenders, communities—indeed our entire economy is worse off when a foreclosure occurs and when significant quantities of homes are foreclosed in a short amount of time.

H.R. 3221 responds directly to the current crisis facing middle class Americans while providing the tools to prevent a repeat of these problems. Modernizing the FHA and reforming the Government Sponsored Entities, GSEs, will provide crucial liquidity to our mortgage markets now, and also strengthen regulation and oversight for the future.

This legislation will begin to repair not bailout the economy, restoring confidence in the markets, limiting the damage to families and neighborhoods, and rejuvenating the communities with new affordable housing.

TEXAS

There are five steps in the foreclosure process: Step 1: delinquency; Step 2: Notice to cure, where the lender notifies borrower of delinquency and gives him 20 days to amend the problem; Step 3: Default notice and posting—in Texas, foreclosure sales occur on the first Tuesday of the month; Step 4: Foreclosure sale—if borrower is unable to cure default, the property is sold; and Step 5: Active foreclosure.

While there are five steps there are only two stages: Preforeclosure and active foreclosure. In looking at those two stages we see where Texas stands. Last year, Texas ranks fourth behind California, Florida, and Illinois in preforeclosures. Active foreclosures are foreclosed properties sold at auction and now in the lenders' real estate owned accounts. Texas held the top seat in 2007 for active foreclosures. While being number one is something Texans usually strive for, in this case we'd prefer to be much farther down the list.

Texas reported 13,829 properties entering some stage of foreclosure in April, a 16 percent increase from the previous month and the most foreclosure filings reported by any State. The State documented the Nation's third highest State combined foreclosure rate—one foreclosure filing for every 582 households.

Dallas County documented the most new foreclosure filings of any county in the region and a foreclosure rate of one foreclosure filing for every 320 households, an 18 percent increase from the previous month.

TEXAS AND WHAT HUD IS DOING

In March, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, announced the Texas State Program and the cities of Houston and New Braunfels will receive a total of $234,868,077 to support community development and produce more affordable housing. HUD's annual funding will also provide downpayment assistance to first-time homebuyers; assist individuals and families who might otherwise be living on the streets; and offer real housing solutions for individuals with HIV/AIDS.

The funding announced includes: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds; HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) funding; American Dream Down payment assistance; Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG); and, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

AMENDMENT I

Title I—The FHA Housing Stabilization and Homeownership Retention Act—Creates a voluntary FHA program to provide mortgage refinancing assistance to allow families to stay in their homes, protect neighborhoods, and help stabilize the housing market.

Program—if the current lender agrees to take a substantial write down on the existing mortgage, the FHA lender will pay off the current lender and issue to the borrower a new FHA-insured mortgage at that lower amount.

Profit-sharing—to help defray the Government's costs and prevent unjust enrichment, e.g., borrower flipping, will require the borrower to share with the Government a substantial portion of any profits from selling or refinancing the house.

No speculators—only owner-occupied primary residences will qualify for the program, which also contains protections to exclude persons who have committed mortgage fraud.

Risk reduction—to further protect the Government: The FHA will charge higher fees to build up a loss reserve; the new FHA loan will substantially reduce the borrower's monthly payments, thus reducing default and foreclosure risk; and in addition to other underwriting requirements, riskier borrowers must make at least 6 months of payments at the new rate before closing on the new FHA mortgage.

Sunset—program expires in 2 years (with possible 6-month extensions not to exceed 2 years).

Additional provisions—creates an Office of Housing Counseling within HUD and authorizes additional FBI and DOJ funds to combat mortgage fraud.

TITLE II—FHA MODERNIZATION

Loan limits—makes permanent the temporary FHA loan limit increases in the economic stimulus bill, setting FHA limits at the lower of (a) 125 percent of the local area median home price, or (b) 175 percent of the nationwide GSE conforming limit.

Fee protections for lower income and lower credit borrowers—directs HUD to serve borrowers with slightly higher credit risk, raises fees to cover the additional risk, and provides for a refund if borrower makes 5 years of on-time payments.

Reverse mortgages—expands FHA reverse mortgage loan program by authorizing a nationwide loan limit equal to 132 percent of the current GSE conforming loan limit; capping and reducing loan origination fees; and adding consumer protections.

FHA personal property manufactured home loans—modernizes and rejuvenates the FHA manufactured loan program for personal property manufactured homes.

FHA condo and manufactured home loans—makes changes to rules to make these loans more flexible, while retaining basic underwriting protections.

Maximum FHA loan term—extends the maximum FHA term from 35 to 40 years.

Integrity of appraisals—strengthens protections against inflated appraisals, authorizing penalties on parties to FHA loans who improperly try to influence appraisal values.

Borrowers lacking sufficient credit history—creates a pilot program for credit-worthy borrowers that lack a credit history through the normal credit reporting process.

Downpayment simplification—Simplifies the basic FHA downpayment calculation, while generally preserving the current FHA loan to value, LTV, levels.

Foreclosed FHA multifamily properties—preserves the affordability of such properties, by requiring FHA to use accurate appraisals reflecting the cost of rehabilitating the units.

TITLE III—GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISE (GSE) REFORM

Includes the House-passed bill to reform prudential and mission oversight of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the 12 Federal Home Loan Banks (the "GSEs").

Strong independent regulator—brings GSEs under a single independent regulator with broad safety and soundness powers, including conservatorship and receivership authority.

Enhanced housing mission—enhances Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's housing mission through improvements in targeting of their affordable housing goals and duties in underserved markets.

New affordable housing fund—establishes a new affordable housing fund modeled on the Affordable Housing Programs of the Federal Home Loan Banks.

Increased loan limits—makes permanent the increases in conforming loan limits included in the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008. Limits in high cost areas would be set based on area, rather than national prices, with conforming loan limits for each area set at 125 percent of the local area median, capped at 175 percent of the national median.

TITLE IV—CASTLE/KANJORSKI FACILITATION OF LOAN MODIFICATIONS

H.R. 5579, The Emergency Loan Modification Act of 2008, adopted by the Financial Services Committee on April 23, 2008:

Provides clarity for servicers, consistent with existing servicing contracts, about their duties when making loan modifications for troubled mortgages.

Provides protection from investor lawsuits to servicers who make specified long-term loan modifications.

Does not limit other loss mitigation efforts by servicers, and does not prevent borrowers from pursuing claims against lenders, services, or others involved in the mortgage process.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS HOUSING PROVISIONS

Protecting disabled veterans in bankruptcy from discrimination—ensures that a governmental unit that has a mortgage loan program may not deny a disabled veteran the benefits of such program because the veteran is or was a bankruptcy debtor. The Bankruptcy Code currently prohibits various forms of discrimination against bankruptcy debtors by governmental units and others, including a denial of a student grant, loan, loan guarantee, or loan insurance to someone because he or she is or was a bankruptcy debtor.

Public welfare investments—the bill broadens the types of permissible public welfare investments for national and state member banks, restoring the pre-2006 standard for eligible types of affordable housing and community and economic development investments. It also grants thrifts similar authority to make public welfare investments of up to 15 percent of their capital and surplus.

AMENDMENT 3

Brad Miller-LaTourette Amendment—affirms the right of States to prevent abusive foreclosure practices and to establish rules concerning the foreclosure process by clarifying that this Act, the National Bank Act and the Home Owner's Loan Act do not preempt State laws regulating the foreclosure of residential real property or the treatment of foreclosed property.

CONCLUSION

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your leadership in this area, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1175 providing for consideration of H.R. 3221.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, my good friends on the other side need to bone up on their language, I believe. A recession is confirmed when there are two quarters where the economy is down. We have not even reached that point yet, and yet already we find out on the floor that the Democrat Party is willing to say we're in a complete crash equal to 1929. My gosh. Let's at least tell the American people the truth.

We can get over the problems that we have in this country, but let's not make things worse than what they already are. Let's not lie to the American people. Let's tell them the truth. Let's provide leadership. Let's show them the right way. Let's have an open bill. Let's get the things done that need to be done.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Were you referring to my remarks? I have great respect for the gentleman. I assume that he was not suggesting that I am a liar.

Mr. SESSIONS. I did not suggest that at all.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I would appreciate not having the words drawn down, but I am yielding to the gentleman to just correct the record.

Mr. SESSIONS. I will be point blank to the gentlewoman. The gentlewoman said, We are headed to a recession like 1929.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. But are you calling me a liar?

Mr. SESSIONS. And that is not a true statement.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Well, I am just asking you if you are calling me a liar. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. SESSIONS. It's not a true statement.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Is the gentleman calling me a liar on the floor of the House?

Mr. SESSIONS. We have not blown through any sort of recession.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Is the gentleman calling me a liar?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN). The gentleman will suspend. The gentlewoman will suspend.

The gentleman from Texas controls the time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, the American people are fair people. And they expect their representatives to remain cognizant of and reflect that fairness in all actions.

This House has moved from fairness, from deliberation and from proper recognition that would allow all Members the opportunity to actively represent their constituents to repeated tyranny of the Majority. Madam Speaker, there is a crisis of leadership by this majority.

Every person in America has the right to have his or her voice heard. No Member of Congress should be silenced on the floor guaranteeing that the voices of the people are heard.

Do you recognize those words, Madam Speaker? You should, for they are yours. And they're being violated.

The minority possesses their equal rights, which equal law must protect and to violate would be oppression. Recognize those words, Madam Speaker? You should. They were spoken by Thomas Jefferson and quoted by you and they are being violated. Why? It's either political expediency or a broken promise, one or the other, neither of which the American people support because they are a fair people.

Madam Speaker, I submitted four thoughtful, substantive amendments which deserve the consideration of all 435 Members of this house. But they were denied that opportunity by this restrictive and unfair process. Madam Speaker, the American people understand that the rules aren't rules if you follow them only when you want to. Democrats promise to use fair and open rules for everything, but they're breaking rules and they're breaking promises to the American people.

I urge the Speaker and the majority to be true to their word. Stop playing politics. Stop breaking promises. Allow the Members of this House to represent their constituents. What idea, what amendment is so scary that it couldn't be considered on this floor? I call on my colleagues not to destroy the very fiber of our representative democracy.

Vote ''no'' on this rule so that we may have an open and fair debate. The American people deserve no less.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this very important rule, and I rise in strong support of the rule and for the underlying bill, a housing stimulus package that will provide real relief for struggling homeowners and will bring certainty to the markets.

We are at a critical juncture in the subprime mortgage crisis. All of the data we have clearly demonstrate the severity of the problem. We have seen the perfect storm of stagnant wages, rising mortgage payments, and decreased home values, all of which have led to a record level of delinquencies and foreclosures. One recent study by the Pew Charitable Trust has found that one in two New York homeowners is projected to face foreclosure, primarily in the next 2 years, due to the subprime crisis.

This same study documents the ripple effect this crisis is having on our entire economy. Their analysis found that 52 percent of all homeowners will likely feel the ripple effect of foreclosures from the subprime loan crisis. Communities are negatively affected as foreclosures drive down home prices overall, diminishing homeowners' equity in entire neighborhoods. Costs also accrue to our local government in the form of lost tax revenue and direct expenses for securing, policing, and disposing of abandoned properties.

This is why this housing stimulus package is so terribly important. This is a well-crafted package which includes an expanded FHA Refinance Program totaling $300 billion. This voluntary program would permit FHA to provide up to $300 billion in new guarantees to help refinance at-risk borrowers into viable mortgages.

The only way we are going to solve this problem is through a multi-prong strategy. We have fully engaged the regulators, industry is working with homeowners; but we also need sound public policy that allows for many of these unaffordable subprime loans to be refinanced into viable mortgages homeowners can afford.

Another key part of this package includes the FHA and GSE modernization bills which we have already passed in this House but has yet to pass the Senate. The FHA bill will modernize the program opening it up to new homeowners and providing opportunities for long-term fixed mortgages. The modernized FHA will be the new financing option of many previous subprime borrowers, and it will be done in a way to ensure borrowers are receiving viable and affordable loans. The GSE bill will provide for a strong dependent regulator for Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae and the 12 Federal home loan banks.

Again, this is a well-crafted package. I ask permission to revise and extend to include all of the important parts of this package.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on this underlying bill.

I rise in support of a housing stimulus package that will provide real relief for struggling homeowners and will bring certainty to the markets.

We are at a critical juncture in the subprime mortgage crisis. All of the data we have clearly demonstrates the severity of the problem.

We have seen the perfect storm of stagnant wages, rising mortgage payments and decreased home values. All of which have led to a record level of delinquencies and foreclosures.

One recent study by the Pew Charitable Trust has found that one in 32 New York homeowners is projected to face foreclosure, primarily in the next two years, because of subprime loans.

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The FHA bill will modernize the program opening it up to new homeowners and providing opportunities for long-term, fixed mortgages. The modernized FHA will be the new financing option of many previous subprime borrowers and it will be done in a way to ensure borrowers are receiving viable and affordable loans.

The GSE bill will provide for a strong independent regulator for Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and the 12 Federal Homeloan Banks. It will also enhance Freddie and Fannie's mission to provide affordable housing. This bill will also make permanent the increased loan limits passed as part of the economic stimulus package. This increase is incredibly important in high-cost areas such as New York City in ensuring these products are available to our constituents.

Again, this is a well crafted package and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER), a member of the Committee on Financial Services.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, for nearly 35 years prior to coming to the United States Congress, I was involved in the housing business in one form or the other. I've built housing for sale, I've built housing for rent. And one of the things that you learn very quickly and housing and how to make sure that the American people have safe, affordable housing, whether it's to own that housing or to rent that housing is you have jobs and opportunity because when people, the American people have jobs and opportunity, they don't have trouble making their payments or making their rental payments.

And so I would think that the 110 million people that are paying their rent or making their house payments today are wondering why this Congress is not down on the floor today debating an energy policy that lowers the cost of gasoline, that lowers the cost of electricity so that American families can have more money, so that they can have more money to pay on their rent or pay on their mortgage payment.

But more importantly, they will wonder why we're not down on this floor talking about how we have a tax code in this country that promotes jobs and opportunity that allows small businesses to thrive and to create jobs. Small businesses are our number-one job creators. You know what? When people have jobs, they're able to make their mortgage payments. When people have jobs, they're able to make their rental payments.

So it's frustrating to me and others to see we have a process today, as other Members have pointed out, that lock us out of the process. We swore in two new Members of Congress in the last 24 hours. Unfortunately, neither one of those gentlemen will be able to participate in this debate because they've been locked out of thoughtful consideration of this bill.

Madam Speaker, we need to be down on this floor doing policy that will impact the American people. Fifty-one million Americans have a mortgage in this country, 94 percent of them are making their mortgage payments. The 110 million people that are scraping and making sure that they are a step up and make their payments, are wondering why we're down on the floor asking them to make the payments for those who can't.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT.)

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Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to correct an item. I made the statement about us having the worst times since the Depression. I want to bear those facts out. So I want you to know that I am telling the truth.

In this statement from the Joint Economic Committee, it says mortgages exceed equity in homes with falling housing prices. More than 10 percent of homeowners now owe more on their mortgages than their homes are worth. Homeowners' debt on their houses exceeds their equity in their homes for the first time since 1945. In terms of liquidity, money in the marketplace, it is the worst time since the Depression.

Now the important thing to understand as we move forward is to understand the seriousness of the condition. You bring up gas prices. We bring up food prices. We've got all of these problems, but today, the American people are expecting us to deal with the housing crisis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Let us deal with the housing crisis. We've got several problems to deal with. And simply because we're dealing with the housing prices, you come down here and want to throw up the gas prices as if to say we've got to deal with that, then the other. We're going to deal with each of those items.

But today, this day, we have housing bills that are on this floor, and we owe it to the respect of the American people to give it the integrity, to give this issue the respect and the seriousness that they demand of this House, and let us stop playing games.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. I thank the gentleman for yielding and, Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to the rule.

I was very disappointed that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle couldn't resist the temptation to shut out all the Republican amendments during the debate on the rule. Like Chairman FRANK did in the committee, calling up Republican amendments, they could have allowed at least one Republican amendment to be offered to this bill.

Speaker PELOSI has said that the Democrats are advancing a New Direction for America. However, I would argue that denying House Republicans from offering any amendments to this bill is the wrong direction.

Our voices have been silenced. It's a sad day when people who represent about half the population of the United States don't have the opportunity to bring solutions to the table during debate on this important issue. I hope that this wasn't a calculated maneuver for political gain.

Congress is yet to send a single bill to the President that might begin to address the turbulence in the housing market, and I know that this is important. Ranking Member BACHUS and I had planned to offer an amendment that contains cost-effective reforms that can start helping homeowners and the economy now.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, our substitute amendment would decrease the deficit by $25 million over 10 years. Instead of outbidding each other on how much taxpayer funding should be spent on bailouts, House and Senate leaders should have chosen to move the good, commonsense, bipartisan ideas that are right in front of them in our amendment, and many have been passed before.

The amendment represents the very best elements of housing reforms that Congress has been debating over the last several years and none of the bad ones. It includes FHA reform which alone could help an additional 250,000 homeowners refinance through the FHA Secure program.

Our amendment would strengthen the national oversight of the GSEs, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, as well as reform these entities.

These reforms would infuse much needed liquidity into the flailing housing market.

It would add funding for housing counseling; enhance appraisal standards; require mortgage originator registration; provide resources to crack down on mortgage fraud; enhance disclosure; and provide liability protection for lenders that help struggling homeowners to refinance and eventually repay their loans.

It also provides returning veterans with foreclosure protection and temporarily raises loan limits on mortgages backed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Notably absent from our amendment is a high price tag. That's because it doesn't reward speculators, fraudsters, or those who engaged in inappropriate or recklessly irresponsible behavior. Several components of our amendment, including FHA and GSE reform, already have passed in one or both Chambers.

I understand that some—but not all—of our good provisions will be included in the Frank amendment. We need to break the logjam on these commonsense reforms. Counselors can help prevent foreclosures by guiding homeowners into a loan that best meets their budget and needs. And FHA and GSE reform will add much-needed liquidity to the market while providing more consumers with an alternative to bad, subprime loans.

Most importantly for Chicago and other urban communities, our amendment addresses mortgage and appraisal fraud, which has skyrocketed in Chicago and devastated communities.

I wish my colleagues could have had the opportunity to vote on our Republican commonsense, cost-effective substitute amendment. This could have been the bipartisan alternative to the bill we will vote on today, which is littered with controversial provisions.

However, my colleagues from the other side of the aisle chose to shut out our clean alternative and shut out the voices of millions of Americans who want a cost-effective solution to jump-start the housing market and get our economy back on track.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote against the rule.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, at this time, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, if I could inquire of the time remaining for both sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 8 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Vermont has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Speaker.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Dallas, Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I've heard some very eloquent comments from my friends on the other side of the aisle about the pain the American people are feeling at this time. They speak with some credibility. They helped cause it.

After 18 months of being in control of the economic policies of our Nation, what do we have? We have gasoline approaching $4 a gallon, milk already over $4 a gallon, people struggling, struggling to put groceries on the table, and seemingly our friends on the other side of the aisle said that is unrelated to people trying to pay their mortgages and keep their home.

The biggest enemy that we have to the American Dream of homeownership is a shrinking paycheck. What has been done by the Democrat majority to shrink the paycheck?

Well, number one, they passed a budget that has the single largest tax increase in American history. Over a 3-year period, we will see an extra $3,000 tax burden put on a family of four while they're struggling to pay their mortgage payments.

We were told that somehow under their watch gasoline prices would come down. Instead, they have gone up. We see food prices absolutely unaffordable, and yet they see no connection to the home mortgage challenge that we have today.

Many of them have decried Wall Street bailouts, but what do they do? They bring a bailout bill to the floor, up to $300 billion of taxpayer exposure, and all a lender has to do is say, you know what, as long as he agrees to a 15 percent haircut, we will take his risk and put it on the taxpayers. When you're struggling to pay your own mortgage, you shouldn't have to bail out the speculators, those who engaged in mortgage fraud. You shouldn't have to bail out somebody else. There's a better way to do it, and it is not this humongous bailout bill.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, last night, I offered an amendment to the Rules Committee and it was turned down. It was not even allowed to be brought up today, and it will not be brought up on this bill.

And what is this amendment that the majority feared so much, that they won't even have it discussed on the floor of the House? It would have simply increased the property tax deduction for homeowners.

Now, look, all of us in Florida have received calls, letters, faxes from constituents asking for relief from their property taxes. Now we all know that ad valorem taxes are not a Federal issue. We don't control property taxes, but there's something that we can do right now to help the American people and that is increasing this deduction for property taxes. We can do that right now.

Is it that crazy? Well, no. On April 10 of 2008, 84 Senators from both sides of the aisle voted to do just this, to increase the deduction, to help people to be able to afford their mortgages. It would benefit everybody. It would benefit the economy, in particular all Americans who are struggling to pay their mortgages.

You see, Madam Speaker, there is no good reason to not allow this commonsense amendment to be discussed, to be debated on the floor of the House. There's no good reason to not allow other commonsense amendments to be discussed. Why are people so scared, so afraid of just debating ideas on the floor of the House?

Again, for that reason, Madam Speaker, I obviously will have to object to this rule.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I would like to inquire of my colleague if he has any additional speakers. I have one additional speaker, then our close.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I have at least one, and some who have requested but who have not yet arrived on the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule and, more to the point, in opposition to the housing omnibus package, $300 billion bailout, corporate welfare in this country.

It is extraordinary, after having endured the first three terms of my career in Congress and oftentimes being castigated for those aspects of the Republican agenda to try and promote business and try and encourage corporate investment in this country, how many times I and my colleagues were chastised for corporate welfare on the floor of this Congress, and yet we come here today with this extraordinary bailout for Wall Street, disguised as housing assistance for hurting Americans.

Now, let me say, I have great sympathy for those affected by the current housing crisis. I'd like to see our housing markets and our neighborhoods stabilized, but a $300 billion taxpayer bailout to lenders and speculators who made poor decisions is not the answer, and it's not fair to millions upon millions of Americans who have sat down month after month at the kitchen table and figured out how to make those mortgage payments, who have taken on a second job and sometimes a third job to make the mortgage payment. And it's not fair to nearly one-third of the American public that rents.

When my wife and I first got started out, I remember we rented our first place. We saved our pennies to be able to make that down payment, to get that FHA loan and to get our dream started. Now along comes Congress with this enormous handout, which, as the gentleman from Texas said, says to lenders, if you'll take a 15 percent haircut, a 15 percent hit, we'll move your liability on to the taxpayers, on to taxpayers who have rented, who have saved, who have scrimped.

They ought not to be required to pay this bailout for Americans. There are alternatives that we should support.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman and I thank him for his leadership.

We will address the question of our differences when we vote and when I review the transcript, but I think it's important to note that my words spoke directly to conditions that we're in, that is, a recession that might move toward a depression.

And I thank the gentleman from Georgia who mentioned from the Joint Economic Committee, Americans have much of their savings in their homes. Families in a majority of States will lose more than $2.6 trillion. That sounds like a recession and a depression to me.

A housing crisis affects the broader economy. We're going to be losing $166 billion in foreclosures. We have got to act.

And so we may have a difference, but there is no lying or untruth when we talk about a recession and a depression, and I know my good friend from Texas did not intend to misrepresent that those of us who have a difference of opinion, while we're on this floor to help save the homes of millions of Americans and to help provide engine to the economic activity, are wrong.

We're right and the documentation shows it, and it is not an untruth, and it certainly is not a lie.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I want to inquire of my colleague if he has any additional speakers or where he is in that process, as I am to close the next time I use my time.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I thank my friend from Texas. We have no additional speakers at this time, and I will be the last speaker.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to adjourn.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 138, nays 263, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 280]

YEAS—138

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachus
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boustany
Boyd (FL)
Broun (GA)
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Coble
Cole (OK)
Crenshaw
Cubin
Davis, David
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Emerson
English (PA)
Everett
Fallin
Flake
Forbes
Franks (AZ)
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Inglis (SC)
Issa
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Keller
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
LaHood
Lamborn
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCrery
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Miller (FL)
Miller, Gary
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Paul
Pearce
Pence
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Saxton
Scalise
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Sullivan
Tancredo
Thornberry
Tiberi
Upton
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Westmoreland
Whitfield (KY)
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman (VA)
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—263

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brown (SC)
Brown, Corrine
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Cazayoux
Chandler
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (KY)
Davis, Lincoln
DeFazio
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Feeney
Filner
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foster