

great importance to the American people. As this new Congress and President Obama begin to repair and reshape our economy, I think it is critically important for Americans to know and remember how we got into this mess we find ourselves in today.

President Obama and this Congress inherited a fiscal mess from the Bush administration, including a record deficit and soaring unemployment. Since taking control of the House in 2007, Democrats have committed to restoring fiscal responsibility, taking steps to cut waste, fraud and abuse. The President's budget slashes the deficit by nearly two-thirds in 4 years. The budget also calls for health care reform, job creation, clean energy and energy efficiency, and college affordability.

We will continue to work to repair the damage of the last 8 years of irresponsibility.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

ENHANCED OVERSIGHT OF STATE AND LOCAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2182) to amend the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to provide for enhanced State and local oversight of activities conducted pursuant to such Act, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2182

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Enhanced Oversight of State and Local Economic Recovery Act".

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDING FOR STATE AND LOCAL OVERSIGHT UNDER AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009.

(a) FEDERAL AGENCY REQUIREMENT.—Section 1552 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 297) is amended—

(1) by inserting "(a) FEDERAL AGENCY REQUIREMENT.—" before "Federal agencies receiving";

(2) by striking "may," and all that follows through "reasonably" and inserting "shall, subject to guidance from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget,,"; and

(3) by striking "data collection requirements" and inserting "data collection requirements, auditing, contract and grant planning and management, and investigations of waste, fraud, and abuse".

(b) STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, State and local governments receiving funds under this Act may set aside an amount up to 0.5 percent of such funds, in addition to any funds already allocated to administrative expenditures, to conduct planning and oversight to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse."

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for section 1552 of such Act is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 1552. FUNDING FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT."

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION FOR ACQUISITION BY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THROUGH FEDERAL SUPPLY SCHEDULES.

Section 502 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(e) USE OF SUPPLY SCHEDULES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may provide for the use by State or local governments of Federal supply schedules of the General Services Administration for goods or services that are funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5).

"(2) VOLUNTARY USE.—In the case of the use by a State or local government of a Federal supply schedule pursuant to paragraph (1), participation by a firm that sells to the Federal Government through the supply schedule shall be voluntary with respect to a sale to the State or local government through such supply schedule.

"(3) DEFINITIONS.—The definitions in subsection (c)(3) shall apply for purposes of this subsection."

SEC. 4. DEFINITION OF JOBS CREATED AND JOBS RETAINED.

Section 1512(g) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 288) is amended by adding at the end "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue guidance to ensure accurate and consistent reporting of 'jobs created' and 'jobs retained' as those terms are used in subsection (c)(3)(D)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2182, the Enhanced Oversight of State and Local Economic Recovery Act. H.R. 2182 will help ensure efficient and effective use of the taxpayers' money provided to State and local governments for stimulus projects. This legislation grew out of a hearing the Oversight Committee held on the Recovery Act. Many State and local officials responsible for overseeing spending of stimulus dollars

pointed out to us that in these troubled economic times, they are under tremendous pressure to conduct their normal oversight work, let alone cope with the increase that the Recovery Act requires.

Our hearings, Mr. Speaker, made clear, that State and local governments need additional resources to monitor the large infusion of funds the Recovery Act directs. H.R. 2182 will provide State and local governments with the flexibility to set aside a portion of their stimulus funds for auditing, contract and grant planning and management, and investigations of waste, fraud and abuse.

The bill also permits State and local governments to use the Federal supply schedules of the General Services Administration for stimulus projects. The GSA schedules are prenegotiated Federal contracts for a range of common goods and services.

This is a win-win situation because it will allow State and local governments to acquire certain items without engaging in time-consuming contracting procedures while guaranteeing the lowest rate price for them.

Lastly, H.R. 2182 requires the Office of Management and Budget to give detailed guidance to State and local governments to ensure consistency in their reporting of job creation data. Our State and local governments are on the front lines of the efforts to fight mismanagement of Recovery Act dollars. Their success is vital to making the stimulus work for the American people.

Let me pause here and thank Ranking Member ISSA, who has worked very closely with me in crafting this legislation, and I want to thank him for that. I would also like to thank Representative KUCINICH, who has worked with us, Representative PLATTS, and Representatives WELCH and CONNOLLY for working with me on this bill.

I should note that the legislation incorporates part of H.R. 1911, which was introduced by Representative CONNOLLY from Virginia. H.R. 2182 is a strong bill. I urge all Members to support this critical oversight and accountability measure.

And I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1230

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I join with the chairman in urging all Members to vote for this important correction piece of legislation. I say "correction" because, in fact, we in Congress make mistakes. It wasn't out of malice that we spent \$800 billion without asking the question of where would the money for oversight come from. These kinds of things happen in every organization where you're in such a rush to do one thing that it's not until later on in the light of the next day, or in the case of Chairman TOWNS and myself, it's when we held a field hearing in his district in Brooklyn