yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this martial-law rule. I oppose the process that it represents where the Committee on Rules meets in the midnight hour rather than opening its deliberations in the daytime.

The hearing for this measure was held yesterday afternoon at 3 p.m. We have had more than adequate time to prepare the rule. I am at a loss to explain why we are once again preparing to circumvent the rules of the body and ram this controversial measure, martial law, down the throats of our colleagues. What aversion does this leadership have to regular order?

The "martial-law measure" we are considering is an extremely heavy-handed process and, under the Rules of the House, a two-thirds vote is required to consider a rule on the same day that the Committee on Rules reports it. But martial-law procedures allow us to bring a rule to be considered on the same day it is reported with a majority vote, rather than two-thirds vote.

Frankly, this process is baffling to many of us. For the first time in years, we are using this heavy-handed procedure on an appropriations bill, making its initial pass through the House. If anyone could explain the real reason why we find ourselves in this position, I look forward to hearing it. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on martial law.

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

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question was taken; and the ayes as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment must submit 55 copies of any expected to be filed later today.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the grounds that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

Mr. BERRY and Ms. ESHOO changed their vote from "yea" to "nay." The vote was as above recorded.

Mr. MCNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent earlier today to attend the funeral of a member of my family and I missed rollcall votes 275, 276 and 277.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted yes on rollcall 275, yes on rollcall 276, and no on rollcall 277.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment must submit 55 copies of
amendment and one copy of a very brief explanation of the amendment to the Committee should be by noon on Monday, July 30. Members should draft their amendments to the bill as reported by the Committee on Appropriations. The text is available at the Committee on Appropriations. Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2620, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 210 is an open rule which provides for 1 hour of general debate divided between the chairman, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH), and the ranking member, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), on H.R. 2620, the fiscal year 2002 Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill.

The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. After general debate, any Member wishing to offer an amendment may do so as long as it complies with the regular rules of the House. The rule makes in order one amendment printed in the report accompanying the rule and waives all points of order against that amendment.

The rule waives points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI for legislation on an appropriations bill and prohibiting nonemergency designated amendments to be offered to an appropriations bill containing an emergency designation.

Finally, the rule permits the minority to offer a motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides another example of a carefully crafted bill from the Committee on Appropriations that strikes a balance between fiscal discipline and social responsibility. I would like to commend the chairman and the ranking member, and all the members of the Committee on Appropriations, for making the tough decisions required to produce a thoughtful bill that meets our most important priorities.

While we can never agree on everything, this is a good bill which we can all agree addresses some of our Nation’s most pressing needs. It takes care of our veterans, it addresses the Nation’s critical housing needs, it helps to preserve and protect our environment, it invests in scientific research, and continues our exploration into space. This legislation maintains our commitment to our Nation’s veterans, who selflessly place themselves in harm’s way so that we may enjoy the very freedoms which we so cherish. Our veterans deserve our thanks, but more importantly they deserve and have earned the benefits in this bill.

This year, the fiscal year 2002 Veterans-HUD appropriations bill provides an additional $1 billion over last year’s increase for Veterans Medical Health Care, bringing the total to $21.3 billion.

I am proud to inform my colleagues and, more importantly, our veterans that we have increased Veterans Medical Health Care by $4 billion over the course of the last 3 fiscal years. This bill increases Veterans Medical and Pprostitutes Research yet again, by $20 million, and provides an extra $128 million over last year’s funding levels for the Veterans Benefit Administration to expedite claims processing. Finally, H.R. 2620 will provide $100 million for Veterans Extended Care Facilities, an increase of $50 million over the President’s request.

Mr. Speaker, along with providing for the needs of our veterans, this legislation makes available important resources to help the most vulnerable in our society with a very basic need: placing a roof over their heads. Low-income families will benefit through this bill’s investment in the Housing Certificates Program, which provides funding for Section 8 renewals and tenant protection.

A $1.8 billion increase over last year’s funding level will allow for the renewal of all expiring Section 8 contracts and provide needed relocation assistance at the level requested by our President. A total of $15.7 billion is provided for this important program in fiscal year 2002. This includes $197 million to fund some 34,000 new Section 8 vouchers.

In my district, in Columbus, Ohio, we know all too well how crucial this housing assistance is for families who are trying to lift themselves up and improve their lives. Other needed housing programs that help our elderly, that help people with AIDS and that help the disabled are also receiving increases over last year’s funding levels in this report.

H.R. 2620 also looks toward the future by preserving and protecting our environment for the next generations to enjoy. The bill targets funding and places an emphasis on State grants to protect the water that we drink and the air that we breathe.

The State Revolving Fund for Safe Drinking Water is increased by more than $25 million from last year’s level, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund is funded at $1.2 billion, equal to last year’s level, and, finally, State Air Grants were increased $8 million over last year.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides important funding which maintains