

that, it could be used as a tool to bring stability where we are fighting and have a military strategy. This could be a part of our diplomatic approach, is to use our development of agriculture and our U.S. AID.

We pulled AID into our State Department. For what reason? To use it as a tool that we can have as our international policy. So our food programs that we have through the Public Law 480 certainly is a tool I think is underutilized and I want to expand it.

There are many food programs I could mention. The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) mentioned the Global Food Program, which I am very much aware of, and the Global School Lunch Program. We are very pleased that is moving along and my colleague's leadership there has been evident, and we are very pleased Congress is moving in that direction.

I commend this amendment, but more than that, I commend our understanding that we can use food as one of the tools in our arsenal for peace and stability as well as we respond to the hunger and the needs not only in Africa and India but also in the very troubled area that we are involved in, Afghanistan and that whole region.

This is a significant beginning and I hope it leads to it.

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

I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) for that very generous statement and strong support and also for her continuing leadership on so many fronts. I know that some of the initiatives that the gentlewoman has taken on for Africa, for example, using these programs will be the first time that farmer to farmer programs and modernization programs will be used for development in rural Africa in areas that so desperately need attention, and I hope that the people of North Carolina understand the genius that they have sent here in allowing the gentlewoman to serve in our Congress, and I thank the gentlewoman so very much for being here with us today.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say, as we look at the range of what America can do in order to promote a more peaceful world, what other programs have such scope as these? We are talking here about emergency assistance for Afghan refugees and food inside Afghanistan.

These programs are being used currently in places like Lebanon where for the first time in the history of our country we have taken food commodities such as wheat and soy oil, sold them inside Lebanon, and now we are helping to redevelop villages, very poor, poor villages that did not even have water rights at the Lebanese-Israeli border in order to try to build a more peaceful world.

What other programs do we know that have this kind of range? If we

think about the farmer to farmer programs that the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) was talking about in Africa or those that operate in the Caribbean, here we have programs that operate globally, using the bounty of this land being a win-win, helping our farmers and our rural communities bolster their income and yet, in my opinion, being the most important development bank that this country has in place with vast experience in every corner of the world.

So as we vote on this motion to instruct today and ultimately move our agriculture appropriation bill, we certainly would ask for the membership's full support of our international food programs, particularly at this time in our Nation's history being front and center and well understood as providing us a path to a more peaceful future.

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

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no additional speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

The motion was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

Messrs. BONILLA, WALSH, KINGSTON, NETHERCUTT, LATHAM, Mrs. EMERSON, Messrs. GOODE, LAHOOD, YOUNG of Florida, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. DELAURO, and Messrs. HINCHEY, FARR of California, BOYD, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2925. An act to amend the Reclamation Recreation Management Act of 1992 in order to provide for the security of dams, facilities, and resources under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1550

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE) at 3 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2647, LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 273 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 273

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2647) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 273 is a standard rule waiving all points of order against the conference report, and provides for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2647, the fiscal year 2002 legislative branch appropriations bill.

The conference report provides yet another example of a carefully crafted bill from the Committee on Appropriations that balances fiscal discipline with the true needs of our first branch of government, the legislative branch. This legislation represents a responsible increase in overall spending of 4.6 percent.

I would like to also commend the gentleman from North Carolina (Chairman TAYLOR), the ranking member, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), and other members of the Committee on Appropriations for their hard work on what is truly a noncontroversial conference report, and for maintaining the position established by the House in almost every instance.

Mr. Speaker, the legislative branch appropriations conference report ensures that the diverse funding needs of this institution are met, from legislative work to security to tourism.

Specifically, this bill funds congressional operations for the House of Representatives, including our staffs and employees. It addresses the needs of the United States Capitol Police, and

continues to support their efforts to modernize as they perform essential security functions for the protections of not just Members of Congress and our staffs, but for the millions of visitors who come to our seat of government every year.

This bill includes important funding to hire additional new officers, and provides needed funds to bring their salaries in line with other Federal law enforcement agencies.

I would like to take a minute to express my personal gratitude to the men and women of the United States Capitol Police for their tireless efforts during this time of war.

Day after day, regardless of the hour, truly in rain and shine, these men and women faithfully carry out the duties which ensure the safety and security for all of us who live, work and visit our Nation's Capital. Their dedication, professionalism, and seemingly endless hours of service to ensure our security have not gone without notice and are most appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report also provides for the needs of the Architect of the Capitol, including the various operations and maintenance activities under his jurisdiction for the Capitol, House office buildings and the surrounding grounds, and including an additional \$70 million for needed House and Senate office space at the new Capitol Visitor's Center.

In addition, it funds the needs of the invaluable but often behind-the-scenes work performed by the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Printing Office, and the General Accounting Office.

The conference agreement also provides funding for the Library of Congress and for the Congressional Research Service, including the employees who collectively help us and our staff make sense of the many complex issues we face every day.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report maintains the House-passed measures aimed to help meet the needs of an ever-changing and dynamic workplace. It helps this institution keep pace as an employer, including a monthly transit benefit, and makes modest infrastructure changes to make cycling to work more appealing; that is, as in riding a bike cycling. These transit benefits will help reduce demand on the already-limited parking, and help reduce traffic congestion.

In addition, the conference report calls for a study of options for a self-sustaining staff fitness center.

Finally, the conference report recognizes our need to become more environmentally friendly and efficient in reusing and recycling our waste by directing a review of the current recycling program, identifying ways to improve the program, establishing criteria for measuring compliance, and setting reasonable milestones for in-

creasing the amount of recycled material.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good conference report and deserves our support. I urge all of my colleagues to support this straightforward rule, as well as the underlying noncontroversial legislation.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this rule allows for the consideration of the conference report on the legislative branch appropriations bill for fiscal year 2002, and it waives all points of order.

The bill appropriates money for the operations of the House and Senate and the maintenance of the Capitol complex. It also funds legislative branch agencies that support Congress, including the Library of Congress, the Congressional Budget Office, and the General Accounting Office.

In the aftermath of September 11, the American people I think have found increased confidence in the Federal Government and Congress in particular, and I believe that the confidence is well-founded.

The men and women who serve as Members of Congress, and I do not speak of myself, but I speak of my colleagues, are an extraordinary group of dedicated individuals. They are served by a corps of talented and hard-working staff, and I am very proud to serve with them.

Representative democracy is never easy, and it is even more difficult in times of crisis, but I am proud to support this bill, which allows our vital work to continue. I urge the adoption of the rule and of the bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as we have said here several times, this is a noncontroversial conference report that has been agreed to by the House and that has been agreed to by our conferees.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 11 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the former chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and the ranking minority member on the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding time to me, and I would like to say that I think each and every person who serves in this body is a very fortunate human being.

First of all, we have been blessed by having the express confidence of the people we represent. They have entrusted us to deal with matters that deal not only with our own districts but with the Nation as a whole.

□ 1600

And I know each and every one of us feel a profound sense of gratitude for being able to provide that service. We have also had a lot of pressures put upon each and every person who works in this place, not just Members but staff, and those who support this institution and provide for its security.

I think that no one is the recipient of more gratitude than the Capitol Police who are funded in this bill. They have been working overtime since the unfortunate events of September 11 in order to try to provide security, not just for the physical buildings that make up Capitol Hill, but also for each and every human being who works on this Capitol Hill.

We have also been served, I think, tremendously well by the Attending Physician, who has taken on duties that I am sure he never imagined he would have to deal with when he first signed on as the job of the Attending Physician for the Capitol. We have seen a lot of turmoil on the Hill; and, in my judgment, the bill that this rule brings to the floor will prove insufficient in terms of meeting all the expenses attendant in dealing with the new world that we now live in.

I noticed this morning, I saw in one of the Capitol Hill newspapers a story about some of the extraordinary expenses that congressional employees have personally borne to try to make up for the fact that some of our Members at this point are not able to operate out of their own offices. You have had extraordinary arrangements that a number of Members and staff have had to make in order to get back to Washington after they were, in effect, trapped outside of Washington when all of the airlines were brought down, correctly, by Secretary Mineta in order to prevent further tragedies on September 11. And so we all know that there is a tremendous amount to be done to secure this Capitol and its surrounding environs.

I congratulate the members of the subcommittee who have worked on this bill. I have no basic problems with this bill. But I think it is appropriate during consideration of this bill to recognize that no matter what security measures that are being taken are probably going to have to be, in fact, enhanced. And I have very little doubt that we will be facing a supplemental appropriations for this branch of government and for many other agencies of government as well. But I would like also to caution every Member because I think it is necessary to understand that, in addition to securing buildings like the ones that we work in, we also have an overriding obligation to increase the safety and security of each and every American that we represent.

There are many other public servants also at work today in this country, and some of them have been brought under

attack. The postal workers of this country are the ones who first come to mind. I think it is necessary for this Congress to understand that there are so many security vulnerabilities in this very changed world after September 11 that we must think through in fundamental ways the way we approach every single security-related issue in the government.

I think the private sector of our economy is going to have to think through the same things. And that means in my view we are going to have to face up to the fact that in addition to everything that we do in this bill today to deal with the problems of Capitol Hill, we are going to have to deal with a good many other problems around the country, and I would like to walk through what I think some others are that deserve equal attention.

This morning we had Governor Ridge in the Democratic Caucus, and he comported himself very well. I think those who have served with him in the past in this institution understand that he is a first-rate individual who will be doing his very best to provide additional homeland security for the entire country. But when he was in our Caucus this morning, I urged him to recognize that just as we are facing in this bill the obligation to move forward with the number of projects to enhance the security of the people's House, so too must we provide him with additional authority in order to do the same thing for everyone in this Nation.

Among the things I suggested to him was that, in my view, he needs to get control of the budget process because there are a whole range of security actions that need to be taken across the country that, in my view, are not being taken at the same time. And I do not think any of us want to be in the position where we are taking what we consider to be adequate security measures here on Capitol Hill, if we were not at the same time taking adequate measures to secure the life and safety of each and every American.

Some of the items that need to be considered are as follows: We have laboratories all across the country that are generating dangerous biological and chemical agents. There is no central registry of such agents or the quantity that they are being produced in or the quantity in which they are held. CDC has requested \$10 million simply to begin enforcing existing laws requiring the reporting of the transfer of such agents. So far that has not been funded in the administration request.

We have been told by Secretary Thompson, my good friend, the former governor of Wisconsin, that he is going to be asking for 300 million doses of additional vaccines in order to strengthen our ability to respond to other challenges in the public health field. I applaud that, but it seems to me that we need to move far beyond that.

We need to dramatically beef up the ability of the public health surveillance mechanisms in this country so that we can, in fact, tell if we are in an epidemic when an epidemic begins, not after we are 2 weeks into it.

While the Public Health Service has requested well over half a billion dollars in additional funding, they have so far only had \$65 million of that approved.

We have had a \$500 million request from Amtrak for security of the Rail Passenger Service. So far, on the part of OMB, only 1 percent of that funding has been approved.

The Customs Service has asked for about \$700 million for increasing border inspections, particularly on the Canadian border. To my knowledge, at this point, none of that has been approved by OMB.

The FBI, they have asked for an additional \$1.5 billion. They have huge overtime costs. They have huge additional responsibilities. They are devoting a huge percentage of their investigative forces to the problems of terrorism. Their requests so far have been cut by two-thirds.

So I would simply say that these and many other items I think indicate the fact that we have much work to do in the area of securing the homeland. No matter what we do, there will be vulnerabilities. We understand that, but this bill that will be before us either today or tomorrow takes some minimal steps to add to the security of Capitol Hill. We have many much larger steps that must be taken across the country to attend to the security of the entire Nation, and I hope that this body will be receptive to such efforts in the remaining weeks of this congressional session.

I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) for the time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Members on both sides of the aisle for having put together this legislation, and I will not object and will, in fact, support this rule and the legislation. I think it is at this particular time in our Nation's history important that we spend our resources protecting the symbol of our democracy, our Capitol and all of the Senate and House office buildings associated with it.

In fact, in light of recent revelations, we find that perhaps this capital, if not our entire country, could be the targeted attacks of weapons of mass destruction at the hands of terrorists, and it is that issue which I think is appropriate to discuss during both this debate as well as the debate in a few moments on the Energy and Water appropriations bill.

In particular, I would like to bring to the attention, Mr. Speaker, of Members of this House an article from today's Reuters News Service from its Washington Bureau, and I quote from that article:

The September 11 attacks have increased concerns that extremists would use weapons of mass destruction, including possibly nuclear weapons, against the United States, Undersecretary of State John Bolton said on Wednesday. Answering questions at a breakfast with defense writers, Bolton predicted that if extremists possessed weapons of mass destruction, a term that encompasses nuclear, biological and chemical arms, they will use them.

The article then quotes Secretary Bolton, I am concerned about weapons of mass destruction everywhere, and my concern about weapons of mass destruction everywhere has gone up since, end of quote, the U.S.-led anti-terrorism war began, he said.

The article then says, Bolton, the State Department's top official dealing with arms control and international security affairs, said he was worried, and this is his quote, there will be the use of a weapon of mass destruction. The term encompasses nuclear, chemical and biological arms.

Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, I think this article and Mr. Bolton's comments point out the obvious. Those who would use airplanes as a tool, as a weapon against the United States and our citizens and all we care about and our values, and certainly they would not stop, in fact, would be encouraged to use weapons of mass destruction, be they biological, chemical or nuclear.

While I think it is important in this Legislative Branch bill we do try prudent efforts and steps to protect this Capitol, the symbol of our democracy, I think in further debate today, we are going to find that some of us are deeply disappointed that while we are protecting the Capitol, as we should in this bill, we are not doing what we must do and have responsibility to do in other legislation to protect American citizens from the threat of nuclear terrorism.

While there will be more discussion on that in a few moments, let me quote Mr. Bolton when he says, basically, that one consequence of the U.S. attacks was a heightened awareness of the interrelationship between non-proliferation and terrorists and that as a result efforts to halt the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological arms will receive more attention in coming months.

Mr. Bolton's comments are correct in regard to biological and chemical weapons. We are already taking action. Yet in other legislation we will debate on this floor today we are actually reducing funding for perhaps the single most effective program designed to keep nuclear weapons and materials out of the hands of terrorists.

This is a good bill, designed to continue forward our democracy and the symbols of our democracy and the operating offices of our democracy, but we must not stop here with this bill. We have an obligation and a moral responsibility to protect the American people from what I think is a serious threat; that is, the threat of nuclear materials getting into the hands of terrorists who would gladly kill millions of American citizens.

□ 1615

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Ohio of the Committee on Rules for yielding me this time, as well as the gentleman from Texas, for bringing up this rule.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good conference agreement. I want to express my appreciation to the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. TAYLOR), the members of the Subcommittee on Legislative, who worked closely to craft a good bill and a good final conference agreement. It largely reflects the same legislative branch appropriations bill that got 380 votes in the House earlier this year.

Our objectives have always been to provide the legislative branch with the resources and the guidance that it requires to carry out its mission, even in these most trying of circumstances. The legislative body is the Federal essence of our democratic process, and all of the components of the legislative branch are well treated in this conference agreement.

It prioritizes our capital improvement program, confronting, not deferring, personnel issues, such as an aging work force and retention challenges, and I do not mean the Members, I am referring to many of the staff up here on the Hill, and funding several new technology projects that will allow us to perform our work more efficiently, to make this work more readily available to the public and to preserve it for posterity.

The Library of Congress, the General Accounting Office, the Government Printing Office, and the Congressional Budget Office will largely receive what they requested. Joint committees and leadership accounts will receive what they will need.

In addition, this bill includes provisions that will help us respond and be better prepared for the new terrorist threat.

Let me stress that security and the need to preserve the ability of this institution to continue to function have been our paramount concerns. This agreement provides the funds to hire

an additional 79 police officers, bringing the Capitol Police force to 1,481 full-time equivalents and to fund their benefit increases. Between this agreement and the funding set aside in the fundamentals, this institution should be receiving all the resources it needs to address our security needs.

The bill also includes provisions that address several long-standing problems that should now be resolved.

I want to recognize the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and express my appreciation for the successful effort that he led to end the long-standing practice by the Architect of the Capitol of using temporary workers for long-term projects to get around providing them health and pension benefits. These temporary workers have been employed by the Architect on an average of 4½ years.

Recognition should also be given to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for her efforts to help contract cafeteria employees who have been without pay since the closure of the Ford and the Longworth cafeterias, so that they can be compensated for their lost wages.

I am also pleased to see the conference agreement set aside sufficient funds to enable all offices, be it a Member's office, a committee, or the Congressional Budget Office or the Government Printing Office, to provide their employees with a \$65-per-month employee transit benefit which should increase to \$100 tax free by next year. In light of the terrorist attacks on September 11, this benefit and the effort to reduce the number of parking spaces and cars around the Capitol have taken on even greater importance.

On a related issue, I am pleased the House Administrative Officer will be working on a plan to help more Members, staff, committees, and legislative branch agencies access their computer systems from a remote location. In times of peace, this initiative would have been called teleworking. In times of war, and our experience with the closure of House offices, providing Members access from a remote location, be it from the General Accounting Office or their home computer, has become an essential requirement to preserve the operations of this institution.

I want to be certain we are doing all we can to ensure that we can function effectively no matter what the context, and certainly we have learned from our experience when the House office buildings were shut down.

Over the long term, I believe that the transit benefit, assistance on student loan repayments, and greater teleworking opportunities are good personnel policies that will also help us attract and retain employees and professional staff in all legislative branch agencies.

I do want to say a word about the student loan program. It will apply to

the Senate, the CBO, the GAO, but not the House of Representatives; and this inequity is unfortunate and should not have occurred. It is largely due to inaction on the part of the Committee on House Administration and will give the Senate and other legislative branch agencies yet another edge on the House in recruiting qualified employees. The lack of this student loan incentive gives an advantage to the Senate that the House does not have in recruiting qualified employees.

I would hope that the Committee on House Administration will move quickly to recommend criteria and guidelines so that we can set up such a program as soon as possible. I have spoken to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) about this, and I know that he is ready, and has been ready, to work with Chairman NEY to develop the kinds of guidelines that we need to make this student loan repayment program work and provide another incentive to get top-notch staff working for us here on the House side. Unfortunately, we could not do it in time for this conference, but I trust it will be done.

Similarly, the House administration needs to authorize the full transit benefit permitted under current law. With enactment of this agreement, money should no longer be an issue, though. This appropriation provides the money. We still do need authority from the Committee on House Administration. If my colleagues at the Federal executive branch, State and local governments, and the private sector can find the resources to provide their employees transit benefits, assistance repaying student loans, and teleworking options, so can we.

In all, I think we have a good agreement that will go a long way toward addressing the needs and operations of the legislative branch for the balance of this fiscal year, and I urge my colleagues to not only approve the rule but to approve the conference report on the legislative branch appropriations bill.

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

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I think House Members would be interested in what I consider to be an egregious anomaly in this bill.

Today, administrative assistants in the other body are paid, on average, \$118,000. In this institution they are paid approximately \$22,000 less per person. A legislative director in the other body is paid about \$85,000, on average. That is about \$25,000 more than we pay for similar responsibilities in the House. For a legislative assistant, the gap is about \$15,000 between the pay afforded to a House staffer versus a Senate staffer.

We have another provision in this bill which is going to make it even more difficult for House Members to retain our staff, because it will be much easier for the Senate to entice staffers to come to work for them, all because of a provision in this bill. There is a provision in this bill that enables the employees of the other body and CBO to begin a student loan repayment program.

Now, I have nothing against that, but the problem is that that will not happen in the House of Representatives because we have not had the proper authorizations approved by the committee of jurisdiction in this House. That means that there will be yet another recruiting tool that will enable the Senate to entice our staffers away to work in the Senate. We cannot function as effectively as the People's House ought to function if we are essentially advised by people who have very short tenure in their jobs before they either move over to the Senate to get much better pay or before they go downtown to get much better pay than they can get working in either the Senate or the House.

I would urge everyone with the appropriate responsibilities in this House to recognize that this provision in this bill today will add to our difficulties in retaining quality staff and attracting quality staff in competition with the other body, and I would urge them to take the appropriate action so that we will be able to compete with the other body on an even footing. I think we owe that to the people we represent and to the people who work for us.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have had an opportunity to hear several speakers who have talked about some very important aspects of what this legislative appropriations bill does. We have also heard some of the perhaps downsides or fallacies.

I, like the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), wish to express confidence in the men and women who come to Washington, D.C., who work for the legislative branch. They work tirelessly. They are people who are up till late at night. They are people who care deeply about not only the success of the House of Representatives and the people who work here but also the institution. It is my hope that in the coming years we will be able to further work on issues related to employment, issues related to pay, issues related to student loans.

But I would add an overriding remark, and that is that I believe that this institution and body is well served by the men and women who are here. And we have not only respect for them, but we also give them our gratitude

and our thanks; and that goes for all the people who are living through some very difficult times now, when we have some offices closed, when we have some uncertain times that we are dealing with. And I think that they should hear, just as the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) have stated, that we are proud of the men and women who work here, the police who protect us, and the people who day-to-day come into contact with us, including those people who serve in our cafeterias and other avenues to support this institution.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good conference report which we have been discussing. It is one which responds to the critical needs of the first branch of our government, which is the legislative branch. Adopting this rule will allow us to consider this important conference report and send it quickly to the President for his signature. I urge a "yes" vote on the rule and adoption of this must-do piece of legislation.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule for the Legislative Branch Conference Report. I commend the conferees for their work in preparing this report. The report includes important provisions that have a beneficial impact on the entire Washington, D.C. region and improve the quality of life for the thousands of men and women working on Capitol Hill.

I came to Congress to promote more livable communities with the Federal Government being a better partner to make our families safe, healthy and economically secure. An important part of making those communities livable is ensuring that people have choices about where they live, work, and how they travel.

During these troubled times that have fallen upon us since September 11, it is easy to lose sight of the essential daily items that improve quality of life. I commend my colleagues for moving forward on key provisions that will strengthen communities and give employees improved choices on how they live and work.

These livability provisions include the full funding of an increase in the allowable amount to \$65 for Legislative Branch employees participating in the transit benefit program. In addition to this important provision, language is also included to update bike facilities here on the Hill including providing new, more secure bike lockers for those Representatives and staff who bike to work, and to study alternatives for a staff fitness center.

These types of provisions that improve quality of life for employees and the livability of the communities in which they live is an important step in making America stronger and more resilient no matter the disconcerting circumstances at hand.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, 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 (Mr. LATOURETTE). The question is on the resolution.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

□ 1630

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, and the Chair's prior announcement, the Chair will now put each question on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today in the following order:

On approving the Journal, de novo;

Conference report on H.R. 2590, by the yeas and nays; and

House Resolution 273, de novo.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for the third electronic vote in this series.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the pending business is the question of the Chair's approval of the Journal of the last day's proceedings.

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

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground 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.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

This will be a 15-minute vote followed by a second 15-minute vote followed by a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 374, nays 39, answered "present" 1, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 412]

YEAS—374

Abercrombie	Bentsen	Boucher
Ackerman	Bereuter	Boyd
Akin	Berkley	Brady (TX)
Allen	Berman	Brown (FL)
Baca	Berry	Brown (SC)
Baker	Biggert	Bryant
Baldacci	Bilirakis	Burr
Baldwin	Bishop	Burton
Ballenger	Blagojevich	Buyer
Barcia	Blumenauer	Callahan
Barr	Boehlert	Calvert
Barrett	Boehner	Camp
Bartlett	Bonilla	Cannon
Barton	Bonior	Cantor
Bass	Bono	Capito
Becerra	Boswell	Capps