

very concerned. As a matter of fact, I think I have gotten a letter indicating there are 36 attorneys general around the country, Republican and Democrat, who have concerns with this bill.

Mr. Leader, I would hope that the leadership on your side would convey to the Rules Committee the necessity to have, A, open debate, and hopefully, as well, significant possibility of amendment.

I do not know whether it would be an open rule or certainly, I hesitate to use this word, but a liberal rule which will allow significant amendments to be considered by this House, again, in light of the fact that it has had no hearings whatsoever as it comes to this floor.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman is probably aware, this bill has been around for many, many years. There has been lots of discussion and debate about this bill. It did come out of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

The reason for the split rule is because there are a significant number of Members going to the gulf coast this afternoon to review the recovery, and we knew we would only get through the general debate today.

The Rules Committee is expected to meet and to finalize the rule. Those discussions about what the rule will look like and the number of amendments and the type of amendments is continuing.

But I clearly understand the interest of my colleague from Maryland for a more open rather than a more closed process.

Mr. HOYER. That word will do if it becomes reality. We appreciate your comments, Mr. Leader.

The PATRIOT Act, that was supposed to be on the calendar, we thought, this week. It is not on the calendar. I see you have not mentioned it in the work for next week.

Can you tell me whether we expect it to come before us next week as a suspension bill or under a rule?

Mr. BOEHNER. We thought that we would have the bill up yesterday because the Senate was contemplating action yesterday morning. The expiration date of the temporary extension of the PATRIOT Act is soon to expire.

We expect that the Senate will take this bill up tomorrow. If, in fact, that is the case, it will be brought up on Tuesday under the suspension calendar.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that comment. Let me move on, if I can, to the budget resolution.

Can you give us a sense at this point in time of the timing of the budget resolution? We know that there have been some concerns raised in the other body; obviously, some concerns raised here. We understand that it was the intention to bring that up prior to the St. Patrick's Day recess.

Can you tell me whether that is still the intent and when we might expect to see that bill on the floor?

□ 1245

Mr. BOEHNER. That was a rumor that was floating around. We expect that the budget resolution will move sometime soon. Whether it happens next week or the week after is still up for discussion. When we get closer to having a firm plan for moving it, you will be the first to know.

Mr. HOYER. Well, that will be a first, if I am the first to know.

Mr. BOEHNER. Once I know.

Mr. HOYER. This is a new era in which we are moving, and I cannot tell you how excited I am about that.

Mr. BOEHNER. I can tell.

Mr. HOYER. And how I stand here in anticipation of that fact. If the leader does not mind, I will hold him to that.

Mr. BOEHNER. I will do my best.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you, sir.

On the supplemental appropriation, we know that the President has made a request. Can you tell us when the supplemental appropriation might be considered?

Mr. BOEHNER. In discussions with Chairman LEWIS of the Appropriations Committee, there is a lot of work being done, hearings scheduled. Again, I do not think we have a firm timetable for moving the supplemental, but over the next week or so I think we will have a much better idea. And I will be glad to inform you as soon as I know.

Mr. HOYER. I see there is not a representation, however, that I will be the first to know on this one.

Mr. BOEHNER. I am protecting myself.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate that.

Last, these are all important and while we are being humorous to some degree about when we know about these, clearly we have a lot of important business to do, and we are now going into the third month of the year. Can you tell us what your expectations are on the tax reconciliation conference report? Obviously, that was a very contentious bill as it passed out of the House as you know, Mr. Leader; and we would like to be prepared for that bill when it comes back, when the conference committee comes back to the House.

Mr. BOEHNER. The tax reconciliation bill is in conference. I know there have been some discussions. From my standpoint, I would rather have that conference report sooner rather than later. But I have not had any indication from Chairman THOMAS that it is imminent; and secondly, it is important for the House to go to conference with the Senate on the pension bill. We are approaching a very critical deadline on the interest rate used to calculate the obligations of a defined benefit pension plan that expired at the end of the year. That interest rate

needs to be reset in the large pension overhaul bill. I have got to tell you that we are waiting on Senate action. Because there are tax provisions in it, they have to take up the House bill. I suspect they will reject the House bill and go to conference. But it is important for us to get into conference on the pension bill and action is going to be required rather quickly. I do expect the tax reconciliation bill, over the next couple of weeks, I would hope that they will be finished.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate the leader's information.

Again, in closing, I would ask the leader if he would use his good offices on the food bill because there is substantial controversy around the country, as well as on the House floor, on that bill to provide for as full a consideration and amendatory process as possible. I appreciate the leader's attention to that.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4167.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 702 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4167.

□ 1250

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4167) to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for uniform food safety warning notification requirements, and for other purposes, with Mr. BOOZMAN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity