this on the bill we just passed? I voted for the bill that we just passed. But there is a lot of concern, as my colleague knows. And I presume we are going to conference on this bill.

Is that correct, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I cannot hear the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER]. How did he vote?

Mr. HOYER. I voted ''aye'' on the bill.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Good.

Mr. HOYER. I know the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. SMITH] thinks that is good. The chairman or the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations does not think it is good. The reason he does not think it is good is because we on the Committee on Appropriations are concerned that there is already a done deal and the Committee on Appropriations is going to be in a bad strait as a result.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I say to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] that there has been no negotiation with the Senate, the other body. There has been not one word from me or anyone in the House or on the Committee on Agriculture or by the staff. We have been awaiting the passage of a clean bill, which all should support. We have heard the questions raised from some as we debated the bill.

I understand the issues. Both parties will be, of course, represented in the conference. And I understand the concern of the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER].

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. SMITH].

Under those circumstances, I will not object.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I would like to yield to the chairman, the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. SMITH], to ask a couple of questions with regard to the conference that the committee would have on this bill.

The question I have is, if we are going to conference, my understanding is there is a large difference between the Senate version and the House version in one critical respect, that the Senate version extracts $1.2 billion in savings from food stamp programs through administrative accounts, and my understanding from the Senate bill is that none of that money was put back into food stamps.

On this side, some of my colleagues are concerned that none of the money, that $1.2 billion, will be used to restore food stamp programs, $27½ billion that was cut last year.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BECERRA. I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California is correct, the House bill is an authorization of $2.8 billion to various States regarding agricultural research, which has come unanimously from the Committee on Agriculture.

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The Senate bill has an additional $1.25 billion, and frankly I am not exactly sure how they want to distribute it. But I have heard, as I mentioned, from many people, including the gentleman from California, regarding his concern. He will have representatives on the conference committee. So will we. To try to suggest to him what will be finally decided by the conference committee, I cannot. All I can say to the gentleman is if this bill does not pass and the gentleman objects, then he has no possibility of gaining anything that he wants out of the conference committee.

Mr. BECERRA. Reclaiming my time, my understanding is we are operating under martial law which allows any bill to come to the floor under a unanimous-consent request. Most of us who opposed the bill right now on suspension are not opposed to this House bill. What we are opposed to is the preconferencing that we are aware of that has already been undertaken on this bill with the Senate which did not include funding for food stamps, at least not to any measurable degree. The concern on the part of a number of us is that the $1.2 billion that will be taken out of food stamps will not be used to any measurable degree to go back to food stamps. Otherwise, I think he would find that virtually with a unanimous vote, this bill would go through if there were some assurance that there would be money invested in food stamps to restore some of the $27.5 billion that we cut from food stamps last year.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. If the gentleman will yield further, I am sorry the gentleman missed the debate. He could have responded in exactly that way instead of at this late date. But let me say to the gentleman as I have responded to the gentleman from Maryland, there has been no preconferencing of this bill. Beyond that, it is very difficult for me to predict what will occur in a conference committee. I can tell the gentleman that his side will be represented and I have heard his concerns. I reiterate. If the gentleman does not allow this bill to pass, he will have no chance to increase funding for his concerns at all. If he allows this bill to go forward, he will have a chance in the conference, and if he does not like it, he merely defeats the conference report.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BECERRA. I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I voted for the bill but I also support the cause for I know why 125 did not. I voted for the bill because nothing in the bill itself says it is going to take any of that money to use it in any way. But because people have the lack of trust in the conferencing process, they are now expressing their will now. Not because of the bill. I guess if the chairman and the ranking member could assure that in that process that those moneys that have been allocated to food, $1.2 billion, would not be deviated or given to other things, I think that kind of advocacy or opportunity for advocacy would reassure people here that what is now clean would later become convoluted and taking away much needed resources from people who need it who are hungry.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. If the gentleman will yield further, just as I have not preconferenced with the Senate nor do I want to preconference with this body, the point is that I have listened, as has the ranking member on the Committee on Agriculture who no doubt will be on the conference committee. We understand the gentlewoman's concerns and we will take them to the conference.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BECERRA. Further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to arbitrarily cut this off, but at the same time I do not want the House to engage in needless conversation when this proposition is going to be objected to, and I am going to object. The fact is that we have been told by a lobbyist on good authority that he has already been told what number he is going to get under the conference agreement. It seems to me that there may not have been a preconference, but it appears to me that there is a pretty good idea of what is likely to happen once that conference takes place.

I do not want this House to be in a position where Members, regardless of which side of the issue they are on, find the committee coming back in the dead of night with a done deal and having this bill pass with virtually nobody on the floor.

To try to help save Members from that, I do object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). Objection is heard.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, AND EDUCATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1997

(Mr. SMITH of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I think the point is here, and I can speak for the gentleman from Texas, neither he nor I have discussed, or preconferenced this bill with the Senate or with any lobbyist.

The gentleman has on his shoulders now the rejection of $2.8 billion of research to agriculture throughout the

United States, which I think is a horrible thing to do. I am sorry that he objected. He will have to answer for his objection.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent——

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, that is fine. The gentleman can live with the objection. I was trying to do him a favor. Forget it. No, I do not want to speak now. If the gentleman does not want to work it out, then I object.

REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE HOUSE

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. For 1 minute?

Ms. KAPTUR. I hope for at least 3 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio to address the House for 1 minute?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the right to object. I would like to ask the gentlewoman what subject she would like to discuss.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I would like to ask the chairman a question or two.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I suppose that that is in order, Mr. Speaker, but since the issue is no longer before us, there was an objection made, then we cannot go forward, so this issue is dead. So I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

REQUEST TO SPEAK OUT OF ORDER

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 1½ minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection has just been heard to that request.

Ms. KAPTUR. Who objected to that?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. I did.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it is obvious to the membership that something is going on here. Something is going on here that should trouble the membership.

REQUEST TO SPEAK OUT OF ORDER

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 1 minute.

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

Ms. KAPTUR. I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2264) ''An Act making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes.''

READING EXCELLENCE ACT

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2614) to improve the reading and literacy skills of children and families by improving in-service instructional practices for teachers who teach reading, to stimulate the development of more high-quality family literacy programs, to support extended learning-time opportunities for children, to ensure that children can read well and independently not later than third grade, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2614

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 ''Reading Excellence Act''.

TITLE I—READING GRANTS

SEC. 101. AMENDMENT TO ESEA FOR READING GRANTS.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE XV—READING GRANTS

''SEC. 15101. PURPOSE.

''The purposes of this title are as follows:

''(1) To teach every child to read in their early childhood years—

''(A) as soon as they are ready to read; or

''(B) as soon as possible once they enter school, but not later than 3d grade.

''(2) To improve the reading skills of students, and the in-service instructional practices for teachers who teach reading, through the use of findings from reliable, replicable research on reading, including phonics.

''(3) To expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs.

''(4) To reduce the number of children who are inappropriately referred to special education due to reading difficulties.

''SEC. 15102. DEFINITIONS.

''For purposes of this title:

''(1) ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDER.—The term 'eligible professional development provider' means a provider of professional development in reading instruction to teachers that is based on reliable, replicable research on reading.

''(2) ELIGIBLE RESEARCH INSTITUTION.—The term 'eligible research institution' means an institution of higher education at which reliable, replicable research on reading has been conducted.

''(3) FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES.—The term 'family literacy services' means services provided to participants on a voluntary basis that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family (such as eliminating or reducing welfare dependency) and that integrate all of the following activities:

''(A) Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.

''(B) Equipping parents to partner with their children in learning.

''(C) Parent literacy training, including training that contributes to economic self-sufficiency.

''(D) Appropriate instruction for children of parents receiving parent literacy services.

''(4) READING.—The term 'reading' means the process of comprehending the meaning of written text by depending on—

''(A) the ability to use phonics skills, that is, knowledge of letters and sounds, to decode printed words quickly and effortlessly, both silently and aloud;

''(B) the ability to use previously learned strategies for reading comprehension; and

''(C) the ability to think critically about the meaning, message, and aesthetic value of the text.

''(5) READING READINESS.—The term 'reading readiness' means activities that—

''(A) provide experience and opportunity for language development;

''(B) create appreciation of the written word;

''(C) develop an awareness of printed language, the alphabet, and phonemic awareness; and

''(D) develop an understanding that spoken and written language is made up of phonemes, syllables, and words.

''(6) RELIABLE, REPLICABLE RESEARCH.—The term 'reliable, replicable research' means objective, valid, scientific studies that—

''(A) include rigorously defined samples of subjects that are sufficiently large and representative to support the general conclusions drawn;

''(B) rely on measurements that meet established standards of reliability and validity;

''(C) test competing theories, where multiple theories exist;

''(D) are subjected to peer review before their results are published; and

''(E) discover effective strategies for improving reading skills.

''SEC. 15103. GRANTS TO READING AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIPS.

''(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary may make grants on a competitive basis to reading and literacy partnerships for the purpose of permitting such partnerships to make subgrants under sections 15104 and 15105.

''(b) READING AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIPS.—

''(1) COMPOSITION.—

''(A) REQUIRED PARTICIPANTS.—In order to receive a grant under this section, a State shall establish a reading and literacy partnership consisting of at least the following participants:

''(i) The Governor of the State.

''(ii) The chief State school officer.

''(iii) The chairman and the ranking member of each committee of the State legislature that is responsible for education policy.

''(iv) A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, of at least 1 local educational agency that has at least 1 school that is identified for school improvement under section 1116(c) in the geographic area served by the agency.

''(v) A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, of a community-based organization working with children to improve their reading skills, particularly a community-based organization using volunteers.

''(B) OPTIONAL PARTICIPANTS.—A reading and literacy partnership may include additional participants, who shall be selected jointly by the Governor and the chief State school officer, which may include—