since then has been an effective mechanism for enforcing the interstate fishery management plan for the striped bass, and I urge my colleagues in the House to support this legislation.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that today the House is considering H.R. 4408, a bill to reauthorize the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. Striped bass are extremely important to many people on the east coast, including my home State of New Jersey. In New Jersey, commercial fishing is prohibited but recreational anglers spend a great deal of time and money pursuing striped bass. These anglers support State tourism industries, including charter boat captains and bait and tackle stores.

I introduced H.R. 4408 to continue the recovery program for this important species. The recovery of this species stands as a rare example of bringing an irreplaceable resource back from the brink of disaster. Reauthorization of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act is a critical component of the management strategy for striped bass.

The original striped bass legislation was enacted in 1984, several years after the Atlantic Coast stock of striped bass suffered a severe population crash. The Striped Bass Act provides a means to enforce a single interstate management plan through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. As it turns out, this was the action that was needed to save the species. Over the last 16 years this program has succeeded beyond any expectations. In 1984, the outlook was truly bleak for striped bass and the fishermen who depend on them. Striper populations have since recovered to fishable levels. The stocks appear to be strong, although there is some concern that we have continued to allow overfishing in some areas.

H.R. 4408 is a simple bill to reauthorize the Striped Bass Act. The bill provides funding for the ongoing striped bass research that has been carried out through the National Marine Fisheries Service at universities such as Rutgers. The restoration program relies on this research to make informed, science-based management decisions. H.R. 4408 authorizes an additional $200,000 a year to carry out these studies. It is my hope that this additional funding will be used to focus on the predator/prey relationships between striped bass and bluefish, as required by the act.

H.R. 4408 also includes $250,000 to study the population structure of Atlantic striped bass. I am concerned that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has allowed fishermen to overharvest the larger and older striped bass. Stock assessment data for 1998 indicate that fish over 8 years old are rare, and that the fish may have been decimated by fishing pressure. These bigger fish are not only valued by the recreational fishermen in my district, but they play an important ecological role in ensuring sufficient numbers of young fish in the next generation of striped bass. The larger fish produce proportionally more eggs, and are the most important age group during the spring spawning runs.

Despire their importance, reauthorization of the Striped Bass Act and continuing research on the species is not enough. Congress needs to provide adequate funding to NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service to continue regular stock assessment and data collection for this species. We also need to continue to investigate other factors that affect striped bass, such as pollution, environmental change, and competition with other species. We need the best information possible to protect the gains that we have made.

Mr. Speaker, today we have the opportunity to build upon our past successes with Atlantic striped bass, and I urge the House to support this measure.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I speak today in support of the reauthorization of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act.

The Atlantic striped bass is a valuable coastal resource and one of the most important fisheries for recreational anglers—especially within the Sixth Congressional District of New Jersey. As a senior member of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife, and Oceans, I have a long history of involvement in protecting, preserving, and enhancing the striped bass. In fact, I have sponsored legislation to designate the striped bass as a federal gamefish. This bill would prohibit the commercial harvesting of striped bass and reserve this resource for recreational catches only, therefore ensuring a healthy sustainable recreational fishery.

The recovery of the striped bass fishery since the crash of the late 1970's is a example of successful state and federal cooperation and angler support over the last two decades. By the numbers, the Atlantic striped bass fishery appears to be thriving and healthy, but maintaining these harvests will require continued coordination and careful management.

The 1998–99 harvest data show a harvest increase for both commercial and recreational fishermen over previous years. In fact, harvest levels have been increasing steadily since the moratorium on striped bass fishing was lifted in 1990. In its 1999 report to Congress, the Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission states that the 1999 stock assessment revealed cause for concern that striped bass were fished above the target level in 1998 and 1999.

Of particular concern was the finding that fishing mortality for older (age 8 and up) fish exceeded the definition of overfishing in 1998. These age 8 and older fish represent the most important age class for recreational fishermen, and provide a large percentage of the spawning biomass.

While these stock assessment figures raise concerns about the harvest of larger fish, the fishery does not appear to be in danger of collapse in the near future. However, I believe we must take precautionary measures now to avoid that potential threat of a collapse in the future.

In 1979, Congress first authorized the Emergency Striped Bass Study as part of the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act to address the problem of declining striped bass stocks. This legislation was later expanded by the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act of 1984 which ensured that the states would comply with a coast-wide fishery management plan. Since its inception, this bill has been a positive step in managing the Atlantic striped bass fishery. It is for that reason that I support passage of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Reauthorization.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4408, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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GREATER YUMA PORT AUTHORITY PROPERTY CONVEYANCE

Mr. SHERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3023) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to convey property to the Greater Yuma Port Authority of Yuma County, Arizona, for use as an international port of entry, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3023

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

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF LANDS TO THE GREATER YUMA PORT AUTHORITY.

(a) AUTHORITY TO CONVEY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, may, in the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and in accordance with the conditions specified in subsection (b) convey to the Greater Yuma Port Authority the interests described in paragraph (2).

(2) INTERESTS DESCRIBED.—The interests referred to in paragraph (1) are the following:

(A) All right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands comprising Section 23, Township 11 South, Range 24 West, G&SRBM, Lots 1–4, NE¼, N½ NW¼, excluding lands located within the 60-foot border strip, in Yuma County, Arizona.

(B) All right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands comprising Section 22, Township 11 South, Range 24 West, G&SRBM, East 300 feet of Lot 1, excluding lands located within the 60-foot border strip, in Yuma County, Arizona.

(C) All right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands comprising Section 24, Township 11 South, Range 24 West, G&SRBM, West 300 feet, excluding lands in the 60-foot border strip, in Yuma County, Arizona.

(D) All right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands comprising the East 300 feet of the Southeast Quarter of Section 15, Township 11 South, Range 24 West, G&SRBM, in Yuma County, Arizona.

(E) The right to use lands in the 60-foot border strip excluded under subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), for ingress to and egress from the international boundary between the United States and Mexico.

(b) DEED COVENANTS AND CONDITIONS.—Any conveyance under subsection (a) shall be subject to the following covenants and conditions:

(1) A reservation of rights-of-way for ditches and canals constructed or to be constructed by the authority of the United States, this reservation being of the same character and scope as that created with respect to certain public lands by the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 391; 43 U.S.C. 945), as it has been, or may hereafter be amended.

(2) A leasehold interest in Lot 1, and the west 100 feet of Lot 2 in Section 23 for the operation

of a Cattle Crossing Facility, currently being operated by the Yuma-Sonora Commercial Company, Incorporated. The lease as currently held contains 24.68 acres, more or less. Any renewal or termination of the lease shall be by the Greater Yuma Port Authority.

(3) Reservation by the United States of a 245-foot perpetual easement for operation and maintenance of the 242 Lateral Canal and Well Field along the northern boundary of the East 300 feet of Section 22, Section 23, and the West 300 feet of Section 24 as shown on Reclamation Drawing Nos. 1292–303–3624, 1292–303–3625, and 1292–303–3626.

(4) A reservation by the United States of all rights to the ground water in the East 300 feet of Section 15, the East 300 feet of Section 22, Section 23, and the West 300 feet of Section 24, and the right to remove, sell, transfer, or exchange the water to meet the obligations of the Treaty of 1944 with the Republic of Mexico, and Minute Order No. 242 for the delivery of salinity controlled water to Mexico.

(5) A reservation of all rights-of-way and easements existing or of record in favor of the public or third parties.

(6) A right-of-way reservation in favor of the United States and its contractors, and the State of Arizona, and its contractors, to utilize a 33-foot easement along all section lines to freely give ingress to, passage over, and egress from areas in the exercise of official duties of the United States and the State of Arizona.

(7) Reservation of a right-of-way to the United States for a 100-foot by 100-foot parcel for each of the Reclamation monitoring wells, together with unrestricted ingress and egress to both sites. One monitoring well is located in Lot 1 of Section 23 just north of the Boundary Reserve and just west of the Cattle Crossing Facility, and the other is located in the southeast corner of Lot 3 just north of the Boundary Reserve.

(8) An easement comprising a 50-foot strip lying North of the 60-foot International Boundary Reserve for drilling and operation of, and access to, wells.

(9) A reservation by the United States of 15/16 of all gas, oil, metals, and mineral rights.

(10) A reservation of 1/16 of all gas, oil, metals, and mineral rights retained by the State of Arizona.

(11) Such additional terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(c) CONSIDERATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As consideration for the conveyance under subsection (a), the Greater Yuma Port Authority shall pay the United States consideration equal to the fair market value on the date of the enactment of this Act of the interest conveyed.

(2) DETERMINATION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the fair market value of any interest in land shall be determined—

(A) taking into account that the land is undeveloped, that 80 acres of the land is intended to be dedicated to use by the Federal Government for Federal governmental purposes, and that an additional substantial portion of the land is dedicated to public right-of-way, highway, and transportation purposes; and

(B) deducting the cost of compliance with applicable Federal laws pursuant to subsection (e).

(d) USE.—The Greater Yuma Port Authority and its successors shall use the interests conveyed solely for the purpose of the construction and operation of an international port of entry and related activities.

(e) COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS.—Before the date of the conveyance, actions required with respect to the conveyance under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), and other applicable Federal laws must be completed at no cost to the United States.

(f) USE OF 60-FOOT BORDER STRIP.—Any use of the 60-foot border strip shall be made in coordination with Federal agencies having authority with respect to the 60-foot border strip.

(g) DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY.—The exact acreage and legal description of property conveyed under this section, and of any right-of-way that is subject to a right of use conveyed pursuant to subsection (a)(2)(E), shall be determined by a survey satisfactory to the Secretary. The cost of the survey shall be borne by the Greater Yuma Port Authority.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—

(1) 60-FOOT BORDER STRIP.—The term ''60-foot border strip'' means lands in any of the Sections of land referred to in this Act located within 60 feet of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico.

(2) GREATER YUMA PORT AUTHORITY.—The term ''Greater Yuma Port Authority'' means Trust No. 84–184, Yuma Title & Trust Company, an Arizona Corporation, a trust for the benefit of the Cocopah Tribe, a Sovereign Nation, the County of Yuma, Arizona, the City of Somerton, and the City of San Luis, Arizona, or such other successor joint powers agency or public purpose entity as unanimously designated by those governmental units.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD).

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

Since the early 1990s, automobile and truck traffic at the United States port of entry in Yuma County, Arizona, has exceeded the capacity of the existing port of entry. The current port is located directly in the heart of the City of San Luis, just south of downtown Yuma.

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Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3023 was introduced on October 5, 1999, by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. PASTOR) to improve the United States Port of Entry in Yuma County. This bill would convey to an organization known as the Greater Yuma Port Authority an area of land currently controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation consisting of approximately 330 acres just east of the city of San Luis for the purpose of the construction of a commercial Port of Entry. This land would be conveyed to the Greater Yuma Port Authority at fair market value.

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) has explained the bill. There is not much more to say about this bill. It is a simple land transfer bill, and the land will be conveyed at a price that fairly reflects the value of the property. I urge our colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3023 and I want to personally thank Chairman YOUNG and Chairman DOOLITTLE, and Ranking Member MILLER and Ranking Member DOOLEY for there cooperation and persistence in moving this legislation so quickly. I also want to thank the Cities of Somerton, San Luis, and Yuma, the Cocopah Indian Nation, and the Bureau of Reclamation. Without the cooperation of all, we would not be considering this legislation today.

H.R. 3023 is critical to the continued economic development of Yuma, Arizona. It is relatively simple legislation, but it is a tremendous and important step toward relieving congestion at one of the busiest border crossings in our nation. It would convey a portion of land, approximately 330 acres, to the Greater Yuma Port Authority for the construction and operation of an International Port of Entry.

Since the early 1990s, the Port of Entry in Yuma County, Arizona began to experience serious delays, particularly with commercial traffic. The current Port is located directly in the heart of the City of San Luis, just south of downtown Yuma. Delays continued to grow over the years, with vehicles backing up on both sides of the border.

Then, of course, with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, the traffic has since become such that individuals are having to wait anywhere from two to four hours to make the crossing. This is particularly true in the case of commercial vehicles.

Because of the serious impact these delays are having on commerce and the quality of life of the people in the region, I began working with the communities to develop some solution to this border crossing nightmare.

H.R. 3023 would convey to the Greater Yuma Port Authority an area of land currently controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation just east of the City of San Luis, for the construction of a commercial Port of Entry. This land, of course, would be conveyed to the Greater Yuma Port Authority at ''fair market value.''

This bill, as passed by the Committee on Resources, has been carefully crafted by all parties involved over several months. The Cities of Yuma, Somerton, and San Luis, the County of Yuma, the Cocopah Indian Nation, and the Bureau of Reclamation all contributed to the final version of this legislation. Also, the Border Patrol and the State Department were consulted. After several very lengthy and detailed meetings, all parties involved agreed with the spirit and with the letter of this legislation.

The Bureau of Reclamation had several suggested changes to the original version. These changes were primarily technical changes and the simple rearrangement of Sections and phrases to better fit the flow of the legislative intent. All of the Bureau of Reclamations suggested changes were accepted by myself and the representatives of the Greater Yuma Port Authority and were incorporated into this bill during the Subcommittee on Water and Power mark-up session.

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple land transfer which have a significant impact on the lives of people of Yuma. It will ensure a much more timely and convenient crossing for individuals and for commercial enterprises.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3023.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion

offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3023, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3023 and H.R. 4408.

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

There was no objection.

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KEEPING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE SOLVENT

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the President is releasing his mid-session economic review. That review indicates that there will be over $800 billion more revenues coming into the Federal Government in the next 10 years than was projected just last January, $800 billion. There is a substantial increase in this year, 2000, of $45 billion more than we anticipated just 6 months ago. It is $64 billion more next year in 2001 than we anticipated.

That means that the Social Security ''lockbox'' as well as the Medicare ''lockbox'' that we passed last week is going to be maintained. It means that, with a little discipline from this body, we will not be spending that Social Security surplus or the Medicare trust fund surplus.

I think we are in a unique position and that unique position means that we have an opportunity now to keep Social Security and Medicare solvent. We have an opportunity to make the kind of changes that will not leave our kids and our grandkids with a huge debt and, in effect, say to them that they are going to be responsible for paying off that kind of debt, that now amounts to $5.7 trillion.

And why would they be responsible for more debt? It is because this body and the President of the United States have found it to their political advantage to simply spend more and more money.

At some time we are going to have to decide, as part of good public policy, how much taxes should be in this country, what is reasonable in terms of the percent of what a worker earns, should go for taxes. Right now, an average taxpayer, pays 41 percent of every dollar they earn in taxes.

After we decide on a reasonable level of taxation, then we have got to prioritize spending. Part of that priority has got to make sure that we keep Social Security and Medicare solvent.

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CHURCH PLAN PARITY AND ENTANGLEMENT PREVENTION ACT

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1309) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to provide for the preemption of State law in certain cases relating to certain church plans.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1309

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

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is only to clarify the application to a church plan that is a welfare plan of State insurance laws that require or solely relate to licensing, solvency, insolvency, or the status of such plan as a single employer plan.

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION OF CHURCH WELFARE PLAN STATUS UNDER STATE INSURANCE LAW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of determining the status of a church plan that is a welfare plan under provisions of a State insurance law described in subsection (b), such a church plan (and any trust under such plan) shall be deemed to be a plan sponsored by a single employer that reimburses costs from general church assets, or purchases insurance coverage with general church assets, or both.

(b) STATE INSURANCE LAW.—A State insurance law described in this subsection is a law that—

(1) requires a church plan, or an organization described in section 414(e)(3)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and section 3(33)(C)(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1002(33)(C)(i)) to the extent that it is administering or funding such a plan, to be licensed; or

(2) relates solely to the solvency or insolvency of a church plan (including participation in State guaranty funds and associations).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

(1) CHURCH PLAN.—The term ''church plan'' has the meaning given such term by section 414(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and section 3(33) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1002(33)).

(2) REIMBURSES COSTS FROM GENERAL CHURCH ASSETS.—The term ''reimburses costs from general church assets'' means engaging in an activity that is not the spreading of risk solely for the purposes of the provisions of State insurance laws described in subsection (b).

(3) WELFARE PLAN.—The term ''welfare plan''—

(A) means any church plan to the extent that such plan provides medical, surgical, or hospital care or benefits, or benefits in the event of sickness, accident, disability, death or unemployment, or vacation benefits, apprenticeship or other training programs, or day care centers, scholarship funds, or prepaid legal services; and

(B) does not include any entity, such as a health insurance issuer described in section 9832(b)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or a health maintenance organization described in section 9832(b)(3) of such Code, or any other organization that does business with the church plan or organization sponsoring or maintaining such a plan.

(d) ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, for purposes of enforcing provisions of State insurance laws that apply to a church plan that is a welfare plan, the church plan shall be subject to State enforcement as if the church plan were an insurer licensed by the State.

(e) APPLICATION OF SECTION.—Except as provided in subsection (d), the application of this section is limited to determining the status of a church plan that is a welfare plan under the provisions of State insurance laws described in subsection (b). This section shall not otherwise be construed to recharacterize the status, or modify or affect the rights, of any plan participant or beneficiary, including participants or beneficiaries who make plan contributions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 1309.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1309, to clarify the status of church-sponsored health plans. Church plans are treated similarly to the health plans for the employees of State and local governments. These health plans are defined in the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, or, as we know it, ERISA, and then excluded from its provisions. This exclusion is important because of the need to protect unnecessary Government entanglement in the internal affairs of churches.

Ironically, our Federal effort to prevent Government intrusion has left the status of these church programs under State laws uncertain. State laws have developed without regard to the special characteristics of church benefit programs. Accordingly, these church programs are potentially subject to regulation by individual States, which was never intended when church plans were designed.

The impetus for the present legislation is twofold. First, from time to time, State insurance commissioners raise questions as to the need for church plans to obtain a license as an insurance company; and, secondly, due to their exclusion from ERISA, many insurance companies and health care providers are ambivalent about their capacity to contract with church plans for coverage or services.