

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3058, TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JUDICIARY, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 342 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 342

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3058) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: beginning with the comma on page 5, line 25, through "and" on line 26; beginning with "for" on page 11, line 22, through the first comma on page 12, line 1; beginning with the colon on page 12, line 12, through "Program" on line 17; beginning with "Notwithstanding" on page 16, line 8, through the comma on line 8; sections 110, 112 and 130; beginning with the colon on page 32, line 25, through "Congress" on page 33, line 3; beginning with "Notwithstanding" on page 34, line 4, through the comma on line 4; and sections 151, 218, 808, 928, and 945. Where points of order are waived against part of a paragraph or section, points of order against a provision in another part of such paragraph or section may be made only against such provision and not against the entire paragraph or section. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of

this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1230

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the rule provides 1 hour of general debate, evenly divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. It provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

I would like to take a moment to reiterate that we bring this rule forward under an open rule. Obviously, historically, appropriations bills have come to the House floor with open rules; and we continue to do so in order to allow every Member in this House the opportunity to submit amendments for consideration, obviously as long as they are germane.

This is the last rule bringing forth an appropriations bill for the fiscal year 2006, Mr. Speaker; and I think that it speaks very highly of the Committee on Appropriations. Obviously, the chairman and the ranking member have had much to do with that, as well as all of the members of the Committee on Appropriations who have worked very hard in bringing forth all of these appropriations bills in such a timely fashion.

The bill that we are bringing forward today appropriates over \$66 billion for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, and independent agencies, an increase of 6 percent over last year. The bill is fiscally sound. It represents our commitment to provide necessary resources for programs and projects throughout the Nation, ranging from transportation, to housing, the Judiciary, the Executive Office of the President, the District of Columbia.

As all Members of this House know, the transportation infrastructure of the country is really the backbone of the economy, and its continued strength is essential to foster economic growth. The underlying legislation brought forth today goes far in ensuring that we have a reliable and stable transportation infrastructure to continue to help the economy grow.

The bill includes \$37 billion in funds for the highway system, representing an increase of almost \$2 billion. H.R. 3058 includes \$14.5 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration, an increase of \$887 million. Included in that amount is \$25 million to hire and train 595 new air traffic controllers. I think it is vitally important as air traffic controllers retire and air traffic continues to grow. This is really essential to so many of our districts.

In my district, home to Miami International Airport, the third largest international airport in the country, without an increase in the number of air traffic controllers, MIA would not

be able to continue its projected growth and continue to serve really as the hub of the Americas.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is funded at \$37.5 billion, an increase of \$1.5 billion. These funds will permit the Department to administer programs that assist the public with housing needs, economic and community development, and fair housing opportunities. These funds will also empower low- and moderate-income residents towards self-sufficiency.

Under HUD, the bill includes funding for such important programs as Tenant Based Rental Assistance, also known as section 8; and Project Based Rental Assistance. These two programs serve almost 3.5 million households with vouchers and project-based housing. The bill includes \$20.63 billion in funds for the program, an increase of almost \$1 billion. In Miami-Dade County alone, which I am honored to represent, the housing authority uses the funds provided through these programs to house over 30,000 residents and for payment vouchers for 16,000 units.

H.R. 3058 provides \$5.8 billion for the judiciary, an increase of 6 percent over the current fiscal year. This will fully fund the courts' revised requests for security improvements at Federal judicial facilities and enable the courts to effectively process the priority criminal, civil, and bankruptcy cases.

This legislation was introduced by the chairman of the subcommittee, who has done a tremendous job, the gentleman from Michigan (Chairman KNOLLENBERG), and reported out of the Committee on Appropriations on June 21 by voice vote. It is good legislation. It is essential to our continued commitment to the security and safety of all in the United States, and we bring it forth under a fair and open rule.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Chairman KNOLLENBERG) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER), for their leadership on this important piece of legislation. I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and underlying legislation.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 6 minutes.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this rule and to the bill. Simply put, this bill significantly and irresponsibly shortchanges key funding for Amtrak and several programs in the Housing and Urban Development Department. While this bill provides slight funding increases for highways, transit and aviation programs, it slashes Amtrak to the point of extinction and eliminates important HUD programs like Brown-field and Youthbuild.

This bill provides \$550 million for Amtrak, an amount that places the future of national passenger rail in jeopardy. This \$657 million cut will not only terminate all intercity passenger rail service, but will also cause a massive disruption of the commuter and freight rail system across the country. Quite literally, this allocation is a death sentence for Amtrak.

Ironically, the amount provided in this bill is a whopping \$1.25 billion below the level that President Bush's appointed Amtrak Board of Directors recommended. President Bush and the Republican leadership believe that starving Amtrak will save it. The administration and the Republican leadership believe that a forced bankruptcy upon Amtrak will bring about a change for the better, that it will create a more efficient system.

Mr. Speaker, this just does not make any sense. You do not save starving children by denying them food, and I cannot understand how the President believes Amtrak can be saved by slashing its funding. I guess by "better," Amtrak opponents mean no intercity rail service anywhere, and by "more efficient," apparently these same opponents mean costs of upwards of \$900 million for severance payments and mandatory debt service and labor payments. All in all, the closure of routes will result in layoffs of thousands of workers, which in turn creates hundreds of millions of dollars of immediate debt.

Mr. Speaker, this backward argument that squeezing the life out of Amtrak will save it is unacceptable and irresponsible. The only thing that starving Amtrak will do is destroy it.

On top of making Amtrak extinct, this bill eliminates several critical programs within HUD. Programs like brownfield cleanup, Empowerment Zones, section 108 loan guarantees and La Raza activities have all been eliminated. Every single one of these programs has contributed to the overall improvement of our communities, and it is shameful that Congress is turning its back on our neediest communities.

In my home State of Massachusetts, brownfields cleanup has proven to be a highly successful, efficient tool for cleaning up the environment and revitalizing a community. In the 2005 annual report of the Massachusetts Brownfields Redevelopment Fund, it is noted that 4,500 new housing units and 3,250 new jobs have been created by the Brownfields program. Because redevelopment is concentrated in areas that are already in use, brownfield cleanup preserves open space, bringing opportunity to economically distressed parts of a community. Zeroing out Brownfields is a bad move, and I encourage my colleagues to offer any amendments that could provide for its funding.

Another important program that has been placed on the chopping board is Youthbuild. Youthbuild is a nonprofit program which pays at-risk youth to

build houses in low-income neighborhoods. This community development program offers job training, education, counseling, and leadership opportunities to unemployed and out-of-school young adults ages 16 through 24. These at-risk youth build and rehabilitate affordable housing in their own communities, garnering life skills and adding to revitalization in their own backyards.

Mr. Speaker, how can such a thoughtful program that is full of incentives be eliminated? There are 226 Youthbuild programs in 44 States across the country, attracting 7,000 young adults. In 2004 alone, 10,000 young men and women had to be turned down for the program due solely to the lack of funding. The demand is high and the need is even greater for programs like Youthbuild. We should not turn our backs on the youth of America.

It is clear that the Republican leadership is doing its best to protect tax cuts for the wealthiest in this country while eliminating programs that benefit the neediest. At the same time, the Republican leadership hides behind a veil of fiscal discipline.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that argument just does not cut it, and the American people know it. These programs are being starved simply because the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate refuse to acknowledge their mistakes. Their tax cuts have drained the Federal surplus. Their policies continue to drive this Nation further into debt.

This is an important bill. We have a responsibility to fund Amtrak, to fund Brownfields and Youthbuild, and we have the means to do it if the Republican leadership would just acknowledge their mistakes.

My friend from Massachusetts, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Transportation of the Committee on Appropriations, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER), offered an amendment in the Committee on Rules yesterday that would have restored \$1.2 billion of funding to Amtrak, as well as funding to Brownfields and Youthbuild. This funding would have been paid for by a slight reduction in the tax breaks given to millionaires.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership once again proved that protecting millionaires' tax breaks is more important than keeping Amtrak trains running, and they denied the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) the opportunity to have his amendment voted on.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve a fully funded, nationwide intercity rail system that services the entire country. They deserve effective housing programs. They deserve Brownfields funding and Youthbuild, which revitalize our communities and improves the quality of life.

I will vote "no" on the rule and vote against this bill because the American people deserve better than this.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), the chairman of the subcommittee, who, along with the chairman of the full committee, have done tremendous work in bringing forth these pieces of legislation, including the one on the floor today.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me time and for bringing the rule to the floor on H.R. 3058. It is a bill making appropriations for, as has been mentioned, Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies, and that is why we call it TTHUD.

□ 1245

This is a good rule for a really good bill. We have tried diligently to work with the many authorizing committees of jurisdiction on the various provisions of our bill, and I think we have come to a great deal of agreement on those provisions. I thank my colleagues for working with us in such good faith, and I appreciate their help in bringing this bill to the floor tomorrow.

This bill fully funds surface transportation programs as authorized by TEALU and aviation programs as authorized in VISION-100. I want to repeat this; at least I want to say it once and maybe twice: we fully fund Section 8 and many other housing and assistance programs under HUD. We fully fund Section 8. We have even managed to keep CDBG in HUD. Not one dime did we not fund in the request. Did we have to make some hard decisions? Yes, we did. But we funded the most important, the most beneficial, the most effective programs under our jurisdiction.

There are some programs, like Hope 6, Youthbuild, and Amtrak, which are in desperate need of reform or reauthorization. We felt that rather than continuing to throw money at these programs, we would let the authorizers have their chance to provide oversight and legislative direction. All in all, this is a balanced and good bill that we will consider tomorrow.

I thank the gentleman from California (Chairman DREIER) and the Committee on Rules, particularly the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) here today, for their work, and I urge a "yes" vote on this rule.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), my colleague on the Committee on Rules.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, we have seen repeated appropriation bills moved through the House ignoring the priorities of Americans, including those residing in my hometown of Sacramento. With each bill, we see the

negative impact of the Republican-passed budget resolution on the day-to-day lives of our constituents.

As we take up the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies appropriation bill, also known by some as the Throw the Leftovers Into One Tupperware Catch-all bill, we, yet again, see the bind the budget resolution has placed us in. We see the programs important to all of our constituents and our communities forced to compete against each other for limited funding, and we see these programs being gutted.

As it stands, this bill dismantles Amtrak, slashing funding by over half, threatening its long-term health. With 9.3 million passengers in California, Amtrak is extremely popular, especially in Sacramento. With the line closures and funding cuts, it will be impossible for Amtrak to continue to operate. After severance obligations and debt service pay, nothing would remain to continue running even the lines deemed successful. Further complicating the situation, the bill fails to even fund the minimum maintenance on tracks and trains necessary to keep the thriving lines operational.

I cannot begin to estimate the negative impact this will have. Businesses which rely on the dollars commuters spend in the community and the revitalization of the city, a transformation that is not exclusive to my hometown, will be affected. Because of Amtrak, Sacramentans are rediscovering downtown. And with funding from the Community Development Block Grants, the city is able to make needed improvements to downtown and the entire city, and that is a benefit to businesses and the overall economy of our region and State.

CDBG supports over two dozen projects improving Sacramento, but CDBG is not just throwing money at a city. In addition to improving the overall look of a city, it fosters a sense of community.

Earlier this year, I was home in Sacramento and participated in a program which receives money from CDBG called Rebuilding Together, an effort to rehabilitate homes for those with low and moderate incomes. Hundreds of people came out to give back to their community and neighborhood. And, because of their work, local senior citizens, who would otherwise find it challenging, received assistance to make the enhancements and repairs their homes need.

Because of funding from CDBG, Sacramento has a program to assist first-time home buyers with down payment and closing costs. We all know the benefits of homeownership to the community: improved neighborhoods, increased civic participation, and to the individual, tax benefits, increased wealth, and increased confidence.

Unfortunately, the misguided priorities of the Republican-passed budget

mean cuts to funding for worthwhile programs like CDBG and Amtrak.

But this did not have to be the case. I was disappointed that an amendment offered by my good friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) was not made in order by the Committee on Rules. It would have restored the necessary dollars to fund programs like Amtrak and CDBG by reducing the tax benefits of those with incomes over \$1 million. Instead of receiving a tax break of \$140,000, they would receive \$131,000, a \$9,000 reduction.

Because of the need for the Olver amendment and, importantly, the need to continue these defective programs, I would urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the rule governing this bill.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think this is a very important piece of legislation that deserves our support. And, obviously, the rule bringing forth the underlying legislation in an extremely fair manner, with an open rule, deserves our support, but also the underlying bill, the underlying appropriations bill. It grows, it increases over last year by approximately 6 percent. It provides over \$66 billion for the Departments of Transportation and Treasury and HUD, the Judiciary, and Independent Agencies. That is an increase of six percent, Mr. Speaker.

Now, we hear from our friends on the other side of the aisle more requests for spending, more and more and more and more. But I think it is important to keep in mind that what we are bringing forth, the bill that we are bringing forth to the floor increases spending, this bill increases spending by 6 percent over the current fiscal year. I think sometimes perspective is proper. So I wanted to mention that as I reiterate my support for the rule bringing forth this legislation as well as the underlying legislation and asking colleagues to support them both.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Let me just respond to the gentleman from Florida, my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, those on the other side keep on talking about the tough decisions that have to be made. My question is, why do always the tough decisions fall on the backs of middle income families and those who are most vulnerable? Why can not, for example, some of the sacrifice be made by those who are earning over \$1 million? That is what the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) tried to do yesterday in the Committee on Rules.

We disagree with your budget priorities. We disagree that all of this money should be going for tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. We think that protecting programs like Youthbuild, that protecting Amtrak is important.

This bill, if it passes and the funding for Amtrak is not adjusted, is the

death knell for Amtrak. It is that simple. There is no way to spin your way out of it. For those of us who support a vibrant, strong, intercity rail system, this bill, with these numbers right now, is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this rule for two reasons. One is because of this, a little piece of plastic called a credit card. All too often, little cards like these are issued by bloodsuckers. This bill, as it went to the Committee on Rules, contained a provision to defend average consumers from some of these credit card companies who abuse their privileges under the law and wreak havoc on people's financial rights.

Right now, there are a number of credit card companies who feel no compunction whatsoever about the idea of changing your interest rate on your credit card, even if you have never missed a payment, even if you have never been a day late with that company. They still reserve the right to jack up your interest rate to the default rate called the universal default rate if you have missed some other payment on somebody else's bill. Example: if you go on a vacation and you are a week late paying a mortgage bill, or you are a week late paying a light bill, if that gets reported on somebody else's credit report, a credit card company can make you pay 30 percent interest, no questions asked, even though you have never been late with a payment for them.

As Linda Sherry of Consumer Action said, "It is the only industry in the world to reprice something you have already paid for."

Now, the bill, as it went to the Committee on Rules, contained an amendment which I offered which passed by a 10-vote margin on a bipartisan basis in the Committee on Appropriations. Yet, the rule does not protect that provision from being stricken on a point of order.

So under this rule, any one Member out of 435 in this House can come to the floor and, for any reason they want, can knock this provision out of the bill.

Now, we will be told by friends on the majority side of the aisle, "Well, this provision belongs under the jurisdiction of another subcommittee, or another committee." There are dozens of provisions in the bill before us that require waivers of points of order, but this one was singled out to be not protected. It will be very interesting to see whether any individual Member has the chutzpah to come on to this floor and knock out this provision, which is a protection for consumers that is long overdue.

The second reason that I will vote against this rule is because it does not make in order the Olver amendment. The Olver amendment is very simple.

It says that instead of giving people who make a million bucks a year a \$140,000 tax cut next year, we ought to scale that back to \$131,000 so you have enough room in this bill to meet our national obligations in funding Amtrak and in funding the other high priority plans in this bill.

Now, the Republican majority has steadfastly insisted on hanging on to those super-sized tax cuts for the most fortunate people in this society. And that is why we had to have a hearing in the Subcommittee on Military Construction this morning when we find out that even though the Veterans Department is now admitting that they are more than \$1 billion short in veterans health care funding this year and they are going to be more than \$2.6 billion short next year, even though we face those shortages, the majority is insisting that we not treat that problem as an emergency because, "oh, it will put pressure" on them to reduce the size of those tax cuts.

These are minimal actions that this Congress ought to take to protect the public who needs decent transportation, to protect veterans who need decent health care, and to protect consumers who are sick and tired of being bullied by shysters who take advantage of little print on their forms that charge people an arm and a leg on their credit cards.

□ 1300

These three little things the majority could have helped out. They have not. Those are three good reasons for voting against this rule.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM).

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I am going to surprise my colleague, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), and support what he just said, part of it, just parts of it. I voted with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) on the credit card issue in the committee. And I say to the gentleman from Wisconsin, I do not know where the right place is to do this, but just think about the issue itself. Any one of us, our children or anybody else can receive a notice, or the credit card company can get a notice, maybe you do not cash a check on time and you get it there, maybe you miss a payment. That person can notify the credit card company, and they can raise your rates by 30 percent. My own daughter went through a credit card fraud where there were people cashing her credit cards all over the country. And that was hard enough.

But the issue the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) is talking about is a valid one. And I hope somewhere, someplace, if someone does object, I will not. We can resolve that issue because it is a terrible issue.

On the issue of tax breaks for the rich, of course we will arm wrestle. Fifty percent of the money that goes to

Sub S corporations provides about 70 percent of the jobs in this country. And if you take a look, the economy is improving. The interest rates are low. Inflation is low. The job rate is 5.1 percent, and we are improving a lot because of the things that we have done together in many ways to stimulate the economy.

Now, the tax relief. I happen to believe that the death tax is absolutely wrong. You work your whole life and pay everything you have to build a farm or business, and then the government comes in and wants to take a portion of that. I do not care if it is a million dollars or a hundred million; it is money, labor that you put in to your investment. And many of us feel that that is just wrong. It is not a tax break for the rich, and it improves the economy.

So I do not disagree with my friend on the issue of the credit card. But what I would ask my colleagues, every single bill that I have seen come forward, it is bashing the administration, it is bashing the Republicans. If we take a look and get our arms around this budget and balance the budget, there is going to be more money.

It is like everybody here, you have a checkbook. If you continue to spend more money than you take in, and whether it is Big Bird, whether it is Amtrak, whether it is other things, most of us support the veterans; and hopefully that will come forward in the other body, and we will be able to add money to that. But I would sure like to see less bashing and us reaching across and trying to work together rather than partisan politics. I have a lot of friends on the other side of the aisle, and it grieves me over these last bills to see the action on the House floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) had asked who would have the chutzpah to come on the House floor and to object to his provision regarding credit cards. I should tell you that last night in the Rules Committee, I offered an amendment to protect this language, the language that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) championed, the language that the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) has said he agrees with. I offered an amendment to protect this from a point of order, and every single Republican on the Rules Committee that was present last night had the chutzpah to not protect it, which I think is outrageous.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, once again the majority of this House shows its true priorities. The resolution that is before us, the rule that governs debate on the fiscal year 2006 Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies bill, does not make in

order my amendment that reflects important national public priorities. My amendment would have added an additional badly needed \$2.092 billion to the bill.

Of that \$2 billion, \$657 million was for Amtrak, bringing funding for our national passenger rail system to exactly the present year's level, thereby avoiding the shutdown of 18 passenger rail routes and the termination of all passenger rail service in 23 States. But rather than funding Amtrak to keep passenger rail service available, the majority decided that tax cuts for millionaires were more important.

Of that \$2 billion, \$180 million was for tax law compliance. But rather than making a dent in the over \$300 billion of taxes owed under the law that goes uncollected annually, tax cuts for the superwealthy were more important.

Of that \$2 billion, \$143 million was for the Hope VI program for revitalization of severely distressed public housing. Over the past 10 years, Hope VI has replaced thousands of the worst housing units in urban communities all over the country. Rather than funding Hope VI, which is zeroed out in this bill, tax cuts averaging \$140,000 for all persons reporting taxable income of more than \$1 million were more important.

Of that \$2 billion, \$250 million was for community development block grants, just to bring that appropriation up to the present year's appropriation, for a program that affects every State and virtually every community over 25,000 people in population, and a great many smaller communities as well. Again, tax cuts were more important for the superwealthy.

Of that \$2 billion, \$800 million was to fund the Help America Vote Act, the HAVA Act, and that \$800 million which would pay for the national voter registration file that is mandated under the HAVA Act by the first of January 2006 in time for the 2006 elections, this Congress owes that money to the States. It is an unfunded mandate that ought to be paid. The majority chose those \$140,000 tax cuts for each and every millionaire in America. Ninety-five percent of Americans do not have that total amount of income for a whole family as would be the amount of the tax cut for the few very most fortunate people.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, \$62 million was for Youthbuild, a program which helps school dropouts gain construction skills and experience while building and rehabilitating housing. Rather than funding Youthbuild, which has been a proven success over 10 years and is requested by the President in his budget proposal, the majority once again believes helping the wealthiest Americans with huge tax cuts is more important.

The cost of this amendment was fully offset by a slight 6.5 percent reduction in the tax benefits received by those persons who report an annual taxable income of \$1 million or more. Instead of receiving an average tax break of

\$140,000, they would receive an average of only \$131,000 instead. This small reduction in tax cuts for the most affluent Americans is a very small price to pay for the priorities included in my amendment, which was not allowed to even be debated under this rule. And we will not be able to debate it tomorrow.

I do not blame the chairman of the subcommittee for the difficult choices in this bill. The President's budget was inadequate in these and other respects and left gaps that had to be filled. Under these circumstances, the chairman did his best to provide a fair allocation of the money within the amount assigned to the committee. Creative ways were found to plug some of the holes; however, many problems still remain because of the majority party's decision to make huge tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans their number one priority, first and foremost, above all else, putting aside human needs, ignoring the largest yearly deficits in the history of our Nation, and the national debt that has gone up 50 percent in just the last 4 years. The majority party would rather help those that do not need it than those that do.

My amendment would have corrected this imbalance, and I urge all my colleagues to put our national public priorities first and oppose this rule.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of points to put the debate back in the perspective and the context of what we are doing today. We are debating the rule bringing forth the appropriations bill that funds the Department of Transportation, Treasury, Housing Urban Development, the Judiciary. This bill includes over \$66 billion. It provides to those Departments being funded an increase of 6 percent over the current fiscal year, an increase of 6 percent.

A number of issues have been brought out, for example, the issue of an amendment that was passed in the Appropriations Committee. The substance of that amendment was debated September 10 of the year 2003 here on the floor of this House on an authorizing bill, and again, this may sound technical to some folks, especially if they are watching on TV, the rules of the House say that appropriations bills should not be vehicles for legislating, in other words, for changing the law. Rather, they are vehicles to fund, to appropriate the Federal Government.

Now, on an authorizing bill, which is expected and called for in the rules of the House, this credit card issue was brought forth and it was debated. Again, September 10, 2003. The amendment by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) on this issue was defeated 272-142. So I think it is important to mention that because facts, I think, should be relevant to debates.

And then, Mr. Speaker, again, the issue of tax cuts. We hear time and time again, no matter what the issue

before us, tax cuts for the wealthy, tax cuts for the wealthy. The policies under the leadership of President Bush that we have put into law, including tax relief have benefited all taxpayers. Every taxpayer, every payer of Federal income tax in this country received tax relief. Obviously, if you paid more in taxes than someone else, and everybody gets relief, you get more relief than if you pay less taxes. But everybody obtained tax relief under our policies.

And I think it is relevant to put in context what has happened to the economy ever since we implemented those measures. Ever since we provided tax relief to the American taxpayer: 3 million jobs in the last 18 months alone, unemployment rate at 5 percent.

I think it is relevant, Mr. Speaker, when we hear these attacks continuously against the policies of the majority, I think it is relevant to learn, to note what those policies have accomplished. And the creation of over 3 million jobs in 18 months, an unemployment rate almost at record lows are something that I think all of us should be proud of.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me clear up one fact for my colleagues who are listening to this debate. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) just said that the rules of the House prohibit us from adding legislation to appropriations bills; that is the rules of the House. Well, the majority does that all the time. We routinely waive points of order on these appropriations bills. And this bill is no exception. We had a supplemental appropriations bill where you added the REAL ID legislation to that bill.

□ 1315

We had just recently a legislative branch appropriations bill where you added the continuity of Congress legislation.

The gentleman talks about how great this economy is. I want to tell you, there are a lot of people suffering out there. Poverty has increased since you guys took over here, since George Bush became President. There are more people that are hungry in this country. These jobs that you are talking about being created, a lot of them are jobs that provide people with less pay than they were making before.

Our problem here, and the reason why we want to amend this bill, is we think your priorities are wrong. We think it is more important to save Amtrak than to give a millionaire or billionaire a tax cut. In fact, we are even willing to give millionaires and billionaires a tax cut. What the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) was trying to do was to reduce the amount of tax cut a millionaire would get from \$140,000 a year to \$131,000 a year. That money saved by doing that could have

funded Amtrak, could have funded the Hope VI program for the revitalization of severely distressed public housing. It could have funded more money for community development block grants. It could have funded Youthbuild. It could have funded the Help America Vote Act.

But your priorities are different. You come on to the floor and you debate passionately about the need to give those with the most even more while you neglect what is happening to those who have the least.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to oppose the previous question.

Our Nation is facing a number of challenges. We are fighting a war against terror that will continue to require significant attention and resources. We are facing historic budget deficits with a national debt of almost \$8 trillion.

Our country has pressing needs in education, health care, veterans services and other areas. With all of those challenges before us now, now is not the time for Members of the Congress to be voting themselves a pay raise. We need to be willing to make sacrifices. We need to behave like American families who make tough choices every day. We need to budget, live within our means, and make careful spending decisions based on our more pressing priorities.

A no vote on the previous question will allow Members to vote up or down on the automatic cost of living pay raise for Members of Congress. If the previous question is defeated, I will offer an amendment to the rule. My amendment will block the fiscal year 2006 cost of living pay raise for Members of Congress. Because this amendment requires a waiver, the only way to get to this issue is to defeat the previous question. So again, I urge my colleagues to vote no on the previous question.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I wished to do when my good friend from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) had the floor, I wanted to ask him a question. I was trying to understand and I was a little confused.

Does the gentleman admit that 3 million jobs have been created in the last 18 months in this economy?

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

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Let me say that thank God there were some jobs added in the last few months of the Bush presidency, that made up for the 3½ million jobs that were lost from the first 3 years of his presidency.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. So the gentleman's answer is yes or no?

Mr. OBEY. You came within 100,000 jobs of being first President since Herbert Hoover not to add a single job in his term. It was the most anemic job growth of any president since Herbert Hoover.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Maybe the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) could answer. Have 3 million jobs been created in the last 18 months, yes or no?

Mr. OBEY. 3 million jobs that have been destroyed in the first place by the policies of the very administration that you are bragging about. You destroyed 3 million jobs and then gradually the economy recovered and you built back so you came back to about square one. I would not brag about having the worst job creation record of any president since Herbert Hoover. If you think that is a great achievement, that puts us in a different league.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Reclaiming my time, I think, Mr. Speaker, what I have heard is yes. And I think that what we have seen is remarkable, considering that we had a recession that began toward the end of the year 2000 and that was coupled by the unprecedented attack on in country, including on our economy and on our way of life on September 11, 2001. Despite that unprecedented attack, the policies, yes, under the President's leadership that this Congress instituted have permitted and have incentivated the creation of 3 million jobs in the last 18 months.

We have a record, almost a record low unemployment rate of 5 percent. And I think that despite the static from which I am trying to learn, understand the answers of my respectful questions, the answer is yes. It is a remarkable achievement.

And so to keep in mind and in perspective of what we have seen, Mr. Speaker, job growth, almost a record low unemployment rate, and with regard to what we are doing today, which I think is relevant to remember and put in context. What we are doing today is bringing forth legislation, the appropriations bill on the funding the Treasury Department, Housing and Urban Develop Department, the Department of Transportation, that includes a 6 percent growth, 6 percent growth over and above the legislation for the current fiscal year.

I think the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) has done a great job. I think the Committee on Appropriations has done a great job.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

The recession began in March 2001 under the watch of President Bush. Secondly, poverty in this country has increased dramatically, and for anybody to get up here and to try to boast about this President's job creation record when he is dead last amongst all Presidents is pretty outrageous.

Go outside the Beltway and talk to some people about how they think this

economy is going right now. I will tell you, people feel it is not going as rosy as you think it is. This President has also accumulated the largest debt of any President in history. That is not something we should be proud of. That is passing on a credit card bill to our kids and our grandkids. That is something you should be ashamed about.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I know there was hard work amongst the appropriators and what they had to work with, but I rise with a great deal of disappointment because poverty has, in fact, increased.

Just look at the number of homeless persons across America and the 44 million uninsured. And I would have hoped the Olver amendment could have been passed to allow for additional funds to go into Hope 6 because Hope 6 rebuilds distressed public housing and changes it into mixed housing for those individuals who are without housing.

Right now in my district, there is an application in one of the most distressed areas for a youth bill. Does anyone understand that youth bill puts inner city youngsters, rural youngsters to work building homes in their communities?

What is going to happen to brownfields in our respective areas, rural and inner city areas where we are not cleaning up horribly poisoned areas that could, in fact, contribute to the economy?

In the month of May, the unemployment among African Americans went through the roof. There are no jobs being created. And then, of course, the community development block grant was saved but those dollars are needed, even more dollars are needed to enhance development in our cities and in our rural areas.

It is a shame on America when we do not stand up for our inter city, our Amtrak, our rail system, light rail and rail. And I would have hoped we would have added more than \$25 million for air traffic controllers because America's skyways are overcrowded and air traffic employees are needed to be retrained as well as additional employees are needed. We could have done more if we had cut into that over excessive tax cut for millionaires and billionaires. We could have provided an environmentally safe America with providing dollars for brownfields, a youth bill to ensure that youngsters who are at-risk can help build their community; more dollars for community develop; more dollars for Hope 6.

Yes, poverty is raging in America. There are people without jobs, but more importantly there are people living earning under \$8,000 which is extreme poverty. They do not have housing and it is difficult to house them. This bill needed to do more.

I hope my colleagues will go back to the drawing board. I ask my colleagues to consider the necessary enhancement of funding in the bill to help the most vulnerable.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds.

I urge my colleagues to support any amendment that will be offered today to relax the travel restrictions on Americans to Cuba. I have met with Sergeant Lazo, who is a veteran who served in Iraq who, as a result of the U.S. law, is unable to visit his own parents in Cuba. That is wrong. This man served our country. We should be able to adjust that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me time.

I want to focus on just one deficiency in this bill. I, too, am sorry that the Olver amendment was not made in order.

I want to focus for a minute on what would have happened with Amtrak. It is interesting that we have some in this Chamber who have an almost theological zeal to eliminate national rail passenger service in the United States, leaving us the only major country in the world, in fact, almost all the minor countries have national rail passenger service.

This is not about cost effectiveness. This is made repeatedly clear since I have been in Congress this year. We are going to be giving about \$14 billion for airport construction, \$11 billion for air traffic control. We gave \$15 billion in the aftermath of 9-11 in grant and loans, this to an industry, the air passenger industry, that in its 75-year history has shown a total net profit of zero. Actually, given the performance of the last couple of years, it is less than zero. But Congress lavishes support on air traffic but it is not about to help rail passenger service.

That is particularly ironic because rail passenger service is 38 percent more energy efficient than air travel. It is six to seven times cheaper to upgrade track than build new highways. And, in fact, rail passenger service provides some competition for hard-to-serve communities. This competition holds down the price of airline tickets which would skyrocket, if people did not have a rail passenger alternative.

I am pleased that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) of the majority and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) are going to bring forward an amendment to partially restore funding. I strongly urge my colleagues to support it. Instead of dismantling and starving Amtrak, we should build on our 150-year rail passenger investment.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all the colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have participated in this very interesting debate.

We are bringing forth the last of the appropriations bills with this rule. I think it is a remarkable achievement, and I think the gentleman from California (Chairman LEWIS) really deserves commendation as do all on the Committee on Appropriations. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) has done a great job on this bill.

This particular bill that we are bringing forth with this rule is the Treasury and HUD, Transportation bill. I am not sure if it is the bill that increases the most from the current fiscal year, but it certainly has to be one of the most significant increases at 6 percent. We hear from our friends on the other side of the aisle requests and demands for further spending and for further government growth; and obviously, that is legitimate, that debate is very legitimate.

I think it is also important and legitimate to put in context that this bill which has caused so much angst in terms of it being categorized as insufficient in spending from the other side of the aisle includes 6 percent more than the current fiscal year.

□ 1330

So it not only is an important piece of legislation, but it is funded, obviously, at a very high level.

With regard, again, to points that were made, so many of them were made by colleagues who took the floor. It is an undeniable fact, Mr. Speaker, that the economic downturn began in the third quarter of the year 2000.

It is an undeniable fact that September 11 of 2001 this country suffered a tremendous, unprecedented and horrible criminal attack. That obviously contributed to the economic downturn.

It is also an undeniable fact that due to the policies, certainly it is an undeniable fact that there have been 3 million jobs created in the last 18 months, that the unemployment rate is about 5 percent, and I think we all should be proud of that.

It is important to put in context, in the context of what has happened in the economy, I think, the attacks which we have heard so repeatedly, as though we were living in a different reality. The reality we are living is one of 3 million jobs being created in the last 18 months. The reality we are living is one that reflects one of the lowest unemployment rates in history. It is fair to point that out.

And I think it is fair to point out, yes, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) talked about we will have a debate on the Cuban dictatorship. I am sure we will. There is a lot to report in terms of the repression and torture and the continuation in the local prisons and so much more. So, yes, we will probably see amendments to loosen sanctions on that dictator-

ship, amendments that, if passed and if they became law, would see flows of hard currency going to that dictatorship. We will have that debate, but at the end of the day, I am confident that this Congress will continue to stand with those who suffer and those who are repressed and not those who cause the repression.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, support the underlying legislation which I think, again, we owe a debt of gratitude to the entire Committee on Appropriations not only for having it brought forth in such a timely way but especially the chairman who will now soon take the floor. We have much to commend, and I know that we have all of the chairmen we see here, the gentleman from Arizona (Chairman KOLBE) on the floor as well, so many who have worked so hard to make sure that all of these bills have come forth in really a remarkably timely way.

So, again, I am supporting the underlying legislation, as well as this very fair rule, which is an open rule and urging support for both by all of our colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KOLBE. 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. 3057, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 341 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. 3057.

□ 1335

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. 3057) making appropriations for foreign op-

erations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, with Mr. THORNBERRY in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Under the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am very pleased to present to the House H.R. 3057, the fiscal year 2006 appropriations bill for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs. This bill provides important funding for programs that support the global war on terror, the battle against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, and the national interests of the United States.

The bill includes a total of \$20.3 billion in new budget authority for fiscal year 2006. This represents a reduction of \$2.6 billion, or 11 percent, from the President's budget request. The bill is \$533 million above the fiscal year 2005-enacted level, not including the most recent supplemental appropriations of 2005. With all of the supplemental appropriations of last year included, the recommendation represents a decrease of \$2 billion from the 2005 level.

As to whether this amount is considered adequate, I quote from two headlines in Associated Press articles that appeared after the subcommittee markup of June 14. The first reads: "Lawmakers Propose U.S. Foreign Aid Boost," and less than an hour later the headline reads: "GOP-Led Panel Slashes Foreign Aid Program." Those were headlines an hour apart. So Members can lend their support to this bill because it increases foreign aid, or they can oppose it because it slashes foreign aid, or they can do either way with either one of those ideas.

It is important to state at the outset that the bill was developed in a bipartisan manner. I give enormous credit to the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), my ranking minority member, for engaging in a process that resulted in agreement on the basic components of this package, even if funding compromises had to be found on both sides.

We have made a focus of this year's proposal greater oversight of the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars. The report accompanying this bill includes language that requires more accountability of our foreign assistance dollars by urging the Department to set transparent goals and in tangible ways that measure progress toward these goals. Results, rather than resource levels, should be the yardstick for measuring U.S. assistance programs.

Furthermore, this bill and report include many requirements for the submission of financial plans, limiting expenditures until certain reforms are