

alternative to the line item-veto legislation that the Supreme Court struck down in 1998.

Now, I am introducing an updated version of this bill that focuses directly on the President's suggestion that disaster response costs be offset with spending cuts.

The bill is called the Stimulating Leadership In Cutting Expenditures or, "SLICE" Act.

That name fits because the bill would promote Presidential leadership and Congressional accountability on proposals to reduce other spending in order to offset the costs of responding to the recent natural disasters.

Toward that end, it would authorize the President to identify specific items of Federal spending that he thinks should be cut and would require Congress to vote on each of those items.

The bill would apply not only to regular appropriations, but also to the transportation bill that was passed and signed into law earlier this year.

The bill would establish a two-phase process: the President would have until November 1st to tell Congress which, if any, of the spending in the transportation bill should be cancelled. And he would have until the end of this year to identify any items in fiscal year 2006 appropriations bills we want to eliminate.

In each case, if the President proposes a cut, Congress would have to vote on it—we could not ignore the proposal, as can be done under current law—and if a majority approved the cut, it would take effect.

Mr. Speaker, as our budget situation has grown worse, there has been a lot of talk about "earmarks," meaning funding allocations initially proposed by Members of Congress rather than by the Administration.

Some people are opposed to all earmarks. I am not one of them. I think Members of Congress know the needs of their communities, and that Congress as a whole can and should exercise its judgment on how tax dollars are to be spent. So, I have sought earmarks for various items that have benefited Colorado and I will continue to do so.

At the same time, I know—everyone knows—that sometimes a large bill includes some earmarked items that might not be approved if they were considered separately, because they would be seen as unnecessary, inappropriate, or excessive.

Dealing with that problem requires leadership and accountability. My bill would promote both.

Presidents are elected to lead, and only they represent the entire Nation. The bill recognizes this by giving the President the leadership role of identifying just which other spending he thinks should be cut in order to offset some of the amounts the Federal Government will be spending in response to recent natural disasters.

And, under the Constitution, it is the Congress that is primarily accountable to the American people for how their tax dollars will be spent. The bill respects and emphasizes that Congressional role by requiring a vote on each spending cut proposed by the President.

I do not know exactly which spending the President might propose to cut, so I do not know whether I would support some, all, or any of those proposals.

But I do know that we should stop wasting time in theoretical debates about whether we should make spending cuts and start debating specific proposals.

My bill is intended to get that debate started now.

For the benefit of our colleagues, here is an outline of the bill:

STIMULATING LEADERSHIP IN CUTTING EXPENDITURES (SLICE) ACT

The purpose of the bill is to facilitate Presidential leadership and Congressional accountability regarding reduction of other spending to offset the costs of responding to recent natural disasters.

The bill would amend the Budget Act to provide as follows:

The President could propose rescission of any budget authority provided in the recently passed transportation bill or an appropriations Act through special messages including draft bills to make those rescissions.

The President would have until November 1, 2005 to propose canceling spending items in the new Transportation Act and until January 1, 2006 to propose rescissions from FY 06 appropriations bills.

The House's majority leader or minority leader would be required to introduce a bill proposed by the President within two legislative days. If neither did so, any Member could then introduce the bill.

The relevant Committee would be required to report the bill within seven days after introduction. The report could be made with or without recommendation regarding its passage. If the Committee did not meet that deadline, it would be discharged and the bill would go to the House floor.

The House would debate and vote on each proposed rescission within 10 legislative days after the bill's introduction. Debate would be limited to no more than four hours and no amendment, motion to recommit, or motion to reconsider would be allowed.

If passed by the House, the bill would go promptly to the Senate, which would have no more than 10 more days to consider and vote on it. Debate in the Senate would be limited to 10 hours and no amendment or motion to recommit would be allowed.

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

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I applaud the gentleman's bipartisan effort to find ways to pay for these unanticipated expenses that we have come across, and I wish him the best in that effort. I think it is important that we all recognize on both sides of the aisle that offsets are going to be necessary and that we do have to reprioritize.

As the gentleman knows, the President submitted a list through the regular budget process of 150 programs to cut or eliminate earlier this year, and some of them received some attention and others received more attention than others. It is certainly a difficult proposition in this town to eliminate any program, but the President led early this year with that thought in mind and he had mixed success.

Again, recognizing the importance of your bipartisan effort and recognizing the facts that we are going to have to have these offsets, this bill, this rule that we are here to consider essentially keeps the government from shutting down while we have that debate. It appears that there is genuine broad support for the CR and for the rule, and I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI) for her work on the Rules Committee and what is essentially a broad commitment that we have to have this CR through November 18. Frankly, it is not for lack of effort on the House side. Both parties have a lot of reasons to be proud of the efforts of our appropriators and the entire House. We had a Herculean effort this summer to move these bills on schedule, move them out before July 4th, and because of Supreme Court nominations and everything else obviously the Senate has had other issues on their agenda, and we are in a holding pattern on the appropriations. Nobody wants to see the government shut down after Saturday, so it is important that we move this rule, move the underlying CR, and allow the regular order, the talent and skills that exist within this House, to work their magic as we deal with these unanticipated effects from two gulf storms, and we are not even finished with hurricane season yet.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

adoption of H. Res. 470, by the yeas and nays;

motion to suspend the rules on H. Res. 388, by the yeas and nays;

motion to suspend the rules on H. Con. Res. 245, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3824, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the vote on adoption of House Resolution 470 on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 252, nays 171, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 502]

YEAS—252

Abercrombie	Baca	Bartlett (MD)
Aderholt	Bachus	Barton (TX)
Akin	Baker	Bass
Alexander	Barrett (SC)	Beauprez