

the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1894.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HERGER. 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 question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. 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 the motion to instruct on H.R. 3058.

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO GO TO CONFERENCE ON H.R. 3058, TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JU- DICARY, THE DISTRICT OF CO- LUMBIA, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1 of rule XXII and by direction of the Committee on Appropriations, I move to take from the Speaker's table 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, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OLVER

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Olver moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 3058, be instructed to recede to the Senate levels for the National Railroad Passenger Corporation and the revitalization of severely distressed public housing (HOPE VI) and recede to the Senate on Section 722 of the Senate amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) and the gentleman from Michi-

gan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

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

Mr. Speaker, we are approaching the end of what has been a long and complicated process.

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As we all know, the Treasury, Transportation, HUD and other agencies, commonly known as the THUD bill, has many moving parts; and while there are many issues to be addressed in the conference, I want to highlight a few today to refresh our memory.

The motion to instruct is fairly straightforward and simple. It addresses three items that deserve the body's attention. The first is funding to ensure that the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, commonly known as Amtrak, maintains its current level of service. It is funded in both bills; however, the House bill provides \$1.18 billion and the Senate bill provides \$1.4 billion. As you can see, it is intent of both houses of this Congress to fund Amtrak, and my motion to instruct conferees insists on sufficient funding to ensure that Amtrak can continue to provide service, make capital improvements and pay its debt.

The second item deals with the micropurchase cap. The second Katrina supplemental budget included an administration proposal to increase the micropurchase threshold from \$15,000 to \$250,000. This means that authorized holders of government credit cards can now charge items that cost up to a quarter of a million dollars. This is far beyond the purpose of the government card program and invites the possibility for fraud and abuse. The Senate's version of H.R. 3058, the Senate's amendment to H.R. 3058, included a provision that repeals the increase to the micropurchase threshold. My motion to instruct insists on the Senate provision that repeals the unnecessary and excessive increase to the micropurchase threshold.

And the final issue, Mr. Speaker, deals with HOPE VI. The House bill funded the program at \$60 million as a result of an amendment passed on the floor. The Senate funded this important program at \$150 million. The fiscal year 2005 level for this program was \$142 million.

The HOPE VI program is vital to the rehabilitation of urban areas. And once again, Congress has shown its intent to support this important program, and my motion insists on its being funded at the higher level.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a simple motion that instructs the conferees to support the highest possible funding level to ensure Amtrak can maintain the current level of service; to recede to the Senate level for HOPE VI; and to recede to the Senate language in order to repeal the micropurchase cap increase that had been adopted in the

second Hurricane Katrina supplemental budget earlier this fall.

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for his commitment to the programs in this bill and for his partnership in what has been a most interesting journey to bring this bill to a conference.

This bill is a huge compilation of government operations, public service programs and critical national infrastructure. Like other appropriations bills, our allocation and commitment to fiscal responsibility makes funding these programs a challenge. Our task was to fund well-run, effective programs to the greatest extent that we could and encourage reform in others. Two of the motions, Amtrak and HOPE VI, fall into the latter category.

Starting first with Amtrak, this is a railroad in desperate need of reform. This year alone Amtrak will carry over \$120 million in funds that were provided to them by the Congress in fiscal year 2005 but not used. The DOT Inspector General, an official respected on both sides of the aisle, has informed us that \$1.275 billion is sufficient for Amtrak to continue operating its existing route structure without reductions in frequency, and to dedicate sufficient resources to continue the effort to bring Amtrak-owned infrastructure to a state of good repair. Also included in this figure is \$278 million to meet Amtrak's debt service obligations on its nearly \$4 billion in outstanding loans.

HOPE VI is a program that is just that for many people, hope that the grant to create new public housing will actually be spent in their neighborhoods. Currently, over \$2.8 billion in HOPE VI grants has not been spent. Only 37 of the 224 communities have actually seen the finished product.

For those 37 communities, HOPE VI is a terrific program, and I was a supporter of HOPE VI for that reason, because there are some good examples. However, HOPE VI is not working for the other 187.

Here is another program in desperate need of reform, and I am hopeful for that in the coming year, with whatever level of funding is provided for the program. The authorizing committees of jurisdiction will look for ways to make this program more effective.

Section 722 of the Senate bill deals with micropurchases. I believe the administration has already acted on this issue, and we are supportive of the Senate's provisions.

In the end, we recognize the challenges of reform and have not abandoned our commitment to fund good programs. We will do our best under this allocation that we have to meet to fund the priority programs, including HOPE VI and Amtrak. Again, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts and