

agreement America signs onto should meet: the broad fulfillment of America's economic interests, the opening of fair markets for America's goods and services and the reversal of America's ever-growing trade deficit.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, today I support H.R. 4340, The U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement. Bahrain is an important political, economic and military ally, and in the years since 9/11, has been a valued partner in the War on Terror. The U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement will strengthen this key relationship and bolster the important reforms currently taking place in Bahrain.

Bahrain deserves special recognition for its military cooperation with the United States military. Since 1995, Bahrain has been home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. From this location, the 5th Fleet's area of responsibility encompasses 7.5 million square miles and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman and parts of the Indian Ocean. As a Commander in the Navy Reserve, I fully appreciate the value of Bahrain's willingness to host our fleet in this strategic region.

The U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement is also significant because it rewards Bahrain for its rapprochement towards Israel. Last month, Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Muhammad bin Mubarak confirmed that his country decided to lift its boycott of Israeli products. In the face of the Arab League's efforts to intensify the boycott, Bahrain has taken a bold and symbolic step towards peace in the Middle East.

Bahrain has shown that it is committed to reform, and we are equally committed to joining with them with open markets. I proudly support this bill that expands trade bilaterally and moves closer to the vision of a peaceful, democratic, and freely trading Middle East.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4340, the "United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act." In spite of my support, I do have some concerns. For example, as in all other U.S. Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) the text of the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement requires only that the two countries enforce their own labor laws. It is my understanding that in 2002, Bahrain completed a major revision to its own labor laws to comply with internationally-recognized standards and to ensure that working people in its country share fully in the benefits of globalization. However, six provisions of Bahrain's law, as currently written, raise concerns with regard to basic international labor standards. These six provisions have been identified by the U.S. Department of State and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

These concerns force me to believe that the workers' rights provisions in the Bahrain FTA are somewhat weak. In contrast to the U.S.-Jordan FTA, the Bahrain agreement contains only one enforceable provision on workers' rights which is an obligation to enforce domestic labor laws.

While the labor chapter also contains a commitment to uphold the ILO core workers' rights and not to weaken labor laws, these provisions are explicitly excluded from coverage under the dispute settlement chapter, rendering them essentially useless from a practical standpoint. To put it bluntly, under this agreement, a country could ban unions, set the minimum age for employment at ten years old, and reinstate slave labor. While I

believe this will not happen, the fact that it could raises concerns.

Before closing, let me note that I appreciate the efforts made to negotiate a commitment from the Bahraini government to bring its labor laws up to ILO standards in the near future, and I hope that this agreement is honored. I must also note that a commitment to improve labor laws in the future is not an adequate substitute for having decent labor laws in place, especially when the labor provisions in the agreement raises concerns. To this end, I am pleased to note that I have been promised a letter from the Bahrain government expressing the fact that child labor will not be an issue and that such labor will not be used as a result of this agreement. Unfortunately, if the promise is not honored, there is no recourse that can take in the context of the FTA itself, other than to engage in consultations. While I overall support free trade agreements, I strongly believe that we need to make sure that we are not setting ourselves up for a pit fall.

□ 1630

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 583, the bill is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

Mr. SHAW. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. 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 subject of the bill just under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO GO TO CONFERENCE ON H.R. 3010, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. REGULA. 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. 3010) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services,

and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the further conference asked by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OBEY

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Obey moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 3010, be instructed to insist that the conference agreement include \$4.183 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), an increase of \$2.176 billion over the House bill and \$2 billion over the Senate bill, to help the elderly and the poor cope with rising energy prices, and that the additional cost be offset through reductions in tax cuts for households with incomes above \$1,000,000. The additional amounts above the House-passed level should be appropriated to the LIHEAP contingency fund, and in allocating the funds among States the Secretary should be directed to give due regard to estimated increases in the heating and cooling costs for low-income households during fiscal year 2006 as compared to the previous year.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I make a point of order against the motion because it violates clause 9 of rule XXII by proposing to direct the conferees to exceed the scope of matters committed to conference.

I ask for a ruling from the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Does any Member wish to be heard on the point of order?

Mr. OBEY. Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago the Labor, Health appropriation bill was defeated on this floor largely because it contained inadequate investments in education and health. Today, the bill is back, and what this motion would do is to say to the majority that if they do not want to recognize the need for additional education and health funding, that they at least recognize that an emergency situation exists with respect to the rapidly rising home heating costs with natural gas, for instance, expected to be 50 percent higher than it was last year and with only 15 percent of persons in the country who are eligible getting help from LIHEAP as it is.

I would simply ask the majority to withdraw the point of order in order to allow us to simply proceed to at least debate and vote on the question of rearranging priorities so that we can add \$2 billion to the Low Income Heating Assistance Program and fully pay for that by cutting back the scheduled tax cut for persons who make over \$1 million to \$131,000. I think that is quite ample for them. I would urge the gentleman from Ohio to withdraw his point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is prepared to rule on the point of order.