

ected Governor of the State of Nevada. As you may be aware, under Nevada law I must formally resign my Congressional office prior to taking office as Governor. I have advised the Speaker of the House of such resignation and hereby inform you of my formal resignation as the representative of the 2nd Congressional District of Nevada to be effective at the close of business on December 31, 2006.

It has been an honor and pleasure representing the Great State of Nevada in Congress over the past 10 years, and I look forward to continuing that service as Governor.

Sincerely,

JIM GIBBONS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 102, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1105 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1105

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mrs. SLAUGHTER), 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. PUTNAM asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I realize that as we wind down this session, Congress, Members are still attempting to move last-minute suspensions and items of importance for their district.

This resolution, Madam Speaker, is a rule that provides for consideration of House Joint Resolution 102, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2007. This rule provides for 1 hour of debate in the House, equally divided and controlled by the majority and minority chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of orders against consideration of the joint resolution and provides for one motion to recommit.

I want to commend both Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member OBEY and the entire House Appropriations Com-

mittee for sticking to the timetable that they laid out at the beginning of this legislative session. In an impressive display of bipartisanship and great labor, the House passed 10 of the 11 appropriations bills prior to the July 4 district work period this year. Since July the Senate has returned to us the defense and homeland security appropriations bills, each of which has been signed by our President. Only the military quality of life appropriations bill has been passed by the Senate and is being conferenced. The remaining seven remain floundering in the Senate.

The House of Representatives, Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member OBEY, and this body, have done their work. We must institute the continuing resolution in order to allow the government to continue functioning through February 15, 2007. This allows the new Congress ample time to organize and consider the outstanding appropriations bills. The rule allows consideration of this imperative continuing resolution funding measure.

While disappointed that we must resort to a CR, I am pleased that the appropriators have ensured that we have a clean bill without extraneous projects or funds and we have avoided the temptation often driven by the other body to package bills together in an omnibus.

Throughout the appropriations process, the committee has shown its commitment to the budget resolution and to fiscal accountability. The committee has funded programs and activities at the lowest of the House-passed level, the Senate-passed level, or the fiscal year 2006 rate. For agencies for which the Senate has not passed the bill, the funding rate is at the lower of the House-passed level or the fiscal 2006 current rate. For agencies for which neither the House nor the Senate have passed the bill, the funding rate is at the current 2006 number.

And in order to ensure quality health care for our veterans, we have included substantial additional transfer authority for Veterans Administration medical care. As the entire Federal Government is facing a plateaued budget, the CR includes a provision that prohibits the automatic implementation of the cost of living adjustment for Members of Congress also until February 16.

Again, I want to congratulate Chairman LEWIS and Ranking Member OBEY on their hard work. I urge Members to support the rule and the underlying continuing resolution so that we can finish the appropriations process and move down the road toward meeting the needs of this country.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the bill before us represents one of the last chances that the majority has to leave its mark on

the 109th Congress, and yet again we are ending this session like we began it, rushing to pass a rule on a bill without having taken enough time to get either one right.

Along with the broken process used to pass this legislation, what is in this bill is a perfect representation of what is wrong with the way business has been done under this majority. It is a clear example of why we need a new direction in Washington, why we need a new philosophy of government to take root here in the people's House.

This continuing resolution will automatically fund government programs at their current levels through February 15 of next year. It is the third continuing resolution Congress has passed since the current fiscal year began on October 1. We are in the second week of December, and the majority has approved only two of the 11 bills that were needed this year. In fact, by the time this resolution expires in February, the Federal Government would have been on autopilot for more than one-third of the 2007 fiscal year. The nine spending bills that the 109th Congress will leave unfinished when it adjourns this week cover over \$460 billion in Federal spending, 460 billion. That is almost half a trillion that the leaders of the Congress have decided to send out the door without any policymaking or oversight.

Madam Speaker, the majority didn't do its job. As representatives, we are sent here to be good stewards of the taxpayer dollars that the Federal Government spends. It is one of our most important responsibilities. Voters do not expect us to abdicate that responsibility or any other responsibility, for that matter. What they expect is that we will take on the challenges confronting our Nation, challenges which have for years awaited a leadership with the vision and commitment needed to address them.

Madam Speaker, my fellow Democrats and I understand what the American people expect of us. Democrats believe that running this House correctly is a matter of pride. We believe it is a matter of having a fundamental respect for both the institution in which we serve and for the citizens who gave us the privilege to serve here.

And that is why when the 110th Congress opens next month, Democrats will actually face the unanswered challenges confronting us with a new promise and address them in a new way. The House will no longer avoid asking tough questions or fail to live up to its most basic duties. Democrats are going to show the American people a Congress with a new set of priorities and a new set of how best to do the people's business.

They are going to see a Congress committed to getting our deficits under control and passing critical bills like unfinished budgets before us on time. They will see a Congress focused on rewarding millions of hardworking

Americans with an increase in the minimum wage and on promoting education and employment opportunities to help save the backbone of our economy: the middle class.

Americans are going to see a Congress committed to the high standards of ethical conduct and procedural fairness so that corruption will no longer find refuge within these Halls.

And they are going to see a Congress with the principle needed to truly stand up for our troops in the field by changing our course in Iraq and by rooting out the fraud, waste, and abuse that to this day endanger the very soldiers that we have asked to risk their lives countless times on our behalf.

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Mr. Speaker, the new direction my fellow Democrats and I stand for will show our gratitude to the American people for giving us this opportunity to serve our country, to help our communities, and strengthen our future. It is in the Democratic Party's respect for the fundamental principles of our society that they will see the faith we have in the principles and their timelessness and in their strength.

It is in the challenges we choose to confront and the honest, open and fair means by which we confront them that they will see our dedication to a government of, by, and for the people of the United States.

The American people understand what is at stake in the years ahead. They understand that how we act, both in Washington and toward those at home and abroad, will determine who we are as a Nation. They want a country they can recognize. They want the country they grew up believing in. They want a Congress they can be proud of again. And, Madam Speaker, that is exactly what the Democrats are going to give them.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my Rules Committee colleague, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of this rule. As I was listening to the statements that have gone on, I started thinking to myself, you know, it is the Christmas season. It is a time of optimism. It is a time of reflection. It is a time when we look forward to the new year. And as I do that, as a Member of Congress, as a family member, as a member of my community, as an American citizen, I look forward to what is going to happen after this new year. But what we need to concentrate on today is to make sure that the business of the people continues in a responsible way, and that is what this rule does. It continues the government spending.

I have great regrets that we were unable to get our appropriations bills through, and I hold the other side of the aisle, the other side of the big aisle, responsible for a lot of that. But at the

same time, I think it is important for people across the Nation who are watching this to realize what we are really talking about today, and that is the continuing services, continuing benefits, continuing the work and the funding of the American government.

I think it is also important to note in this particular piece of legislation, because we are very concerned, as a Congress, about our veterans and about our VA health care, that because there could be some possible issues between now and when this expires in February, that we have allotted for the ability to have the transfer within the VA medical costs so that they won't skip a beat, and our veterans will be cared for in the manner to which we would want them to be cared for, in the manner which they deserve.

So I rise today with a heart filled with Christmas spirit, with a positive outlook, not only on this body, but this Nation. And I wish the other side good luck in the years to come, and I look forward to serving this Congress and the next Congress.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time. But let me inquire if my colleague has any more speakers.

Mr. PUTNAM. I thank the lady for her inquiry. I am advised that we have no other Members wishing to speak on the rule.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Then I am prepared to yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, before I yield back the balance of my time I, first and foremost, want to urge my colleagues to adopt the rule and adopt the continuing resolution, and express my highest regards and best wishes to the gentlewoman from New York as she prepares to take the leadership of the Rules Committee. And I wish her all the very best. And I regret that I will not be serving on the committee under her leadership, but certainly wish she and her colleagues all the opportunity and hope and advantages that come with that responsibility.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and 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.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6406, TRADE LAWS MODIFICATION

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1100 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

H. RES. 1100

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in

the House the bill (H.R. 6406) to modify temporarily certain rates of duty and make other technical amendments to the trade laws, to extend certain trade preference programs, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. In the engrossment of the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 6111) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the Tax Court may review claims for equitable innocent spouse relief and to suspend the running on the period of limitations while such claims are pending, the Clerk shall—

(a) add the text of H.R. 6406, as passed by the House, as new matter at the end of such engrossment;

(b) assign appropriate designations to provisions within the engrossment; and

(c) conform provisions for short titles within the engrossment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The gentleman from California is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I have, for the last time for the next 2 years, called up this resolution, and I will say that for the purpose of debate only I will yield the customary 30 minutes to my very good friend from Fort Lauderdale, Mr. HASTINGS, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. And during consideration of this resolution, all time that I will be yielding will be for debate purposes only.

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

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, House Resolution 1100 is a closed rule providing 1 hour of debate in the House, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill, and also provides for one motion to recommit.

The rule also provides that, in the engrossment of the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 6111) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the Tax Court may review claims for equitable innocent spouse relief and to suspend the running on the period of limitations while such claims are pending the Clerk shall, (a) add the text of H.R. 6406, as passed by House, as new matter at the end of such engrossment; (b) assign appropriate designations to provisions within the engrossment; and (c) conform provisions for short titles within the engrossment.

Madam Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1100 and its underlying legislation, H.R. 6406. While it is important to note that this bill is not a free trade agreement, we have structured a closed rule to mirror the standard procedures afforded to free trade agreements for House consideration.

This past Congress I am very proud, with your work, Madam Speaker, and