estimate on a bill over there, to a bill here, have been anywhere from a low of $20 billion to a high of $60 billion over 10 years. I know a number of Republicans have been working on that as well. Some of them have reached out to Democrats this week, saying, We hope we can find a way to pay for this.

Does the gentleman have any knowledge of whether or not that GI bill, expanded GI benefits, is being actively discussed as part of the bill?

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I will tell the gentleman that very definitely it's being discussed. We believe this is a cost of war. We have over 4,000 families who have lost husbands, wives, brothers and sisters. We have over 30,000 severely injured. Obviously, the GI bill for those who came home from World War II and Korea had very good benefits that were helpful to them. Unfortunately, particularly with respect to our Guard and Reserve, that is not the case.

JIM WEBB, the former Secretary of the Navy, now the Senator from Virginia, as you know, has introduced a bill. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN on this side has also introduced a bill. Others have introduced legislation trying to make sure that the veterans who are coming home from Iraq that have been deployed for long periods of time, have had their lives very substantially disrupted, their families' lives disrupted, fighting for their country, that this is a cost of war.

We are trying to address this, and the gentleman is correct, there is discussion about, as a cost of war, having this proceed to the President perhaps on the supplemental. That is under discussion. That decision has not been made. But it's certainly very high on our priority list to take care of these veterans that have come home and give them the kind of benefits that we think they are due as great patriots who have sacrificed for our country.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that information. I know Senator MCCAIN on the other side of the building also has come up with a proposal in this area. He introduced legislation in this area. So it's widely discussed. I think something can be done. Whether or not the supplemental is the place or not, I don't know. I do believe that whatever we do should become permanently part of the benefits that veterans should anticipate being able to have in the future and not have any kind of a temporary aspect to it.

The other question I had of my friend are just about the conferences that I haven't asked about in a couple of weeks. There are really three of them I am wondering about, and that would be the conference on the farm bill, the conference on the higher education bill, or the budget itself.

I would yield.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think the good news is that certainly on the farm bill, Mr. PETERSON indicates that progress is being made. As you know, we extended it to May 2 to give the conference committee a little more time.

They have been working at it very diligently. It's difficult. There were substantial differences, not so much partisan differences, but substantial differences between the two Houses. The Democrats and Republicans, frankly, on both sides of the issues.

We believe that progress is being made. I am hopeful that we can, in the next week, have a conference report on the farm bill on the floor. I am hopeful. I am not predicting that, but I am hopeful.

As to the budget, I think progress is being made there as well. There are some thorny issues. We are very committed to PAYGO. You mentioned PAYGO as it relates to the GI bill. We are committed to PAYGO. I was very pleased to hear that some of your members want to make sure that the veterans bill is paid for. The war costs, which we believe the veterans benefit are a part of, are not paid for, as you know, in the President's proposal.

But with respect to the third conference, the higher education bill, let me see if I have a note here. We are also making progress, it says, on the higher education conference. But it is likely, according to the chairman, that we will need a short-term extension next week because apparently they are not sure that they will get it finished by next week. So we may need an extension. If so, we will bring one to the floor. I presume that will be in agreement with both the ranking member and the chairman.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for that. Of course we did a 1-week extension on the farm bill again today. We have done several extensions now. I hope we get to a point where we have a bill on the floor or have some ongoing policy that farmers can rely on, even if that is an extension of the bill we have, but some ongoing policy really does matter, and I hope we get there.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I would just say we are in agreement.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO DECLARE A RECESS ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2008, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING IN JOINT MEETING HIS EXCELLENCY BERTIE AHERN, PRIME MINISTER OF IRELAND

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it may be in order at any time on Wednesday, April 30, 2008, for the Speaker to declare a recess, subject to the call of the Chair, for the purpose of receiving in joint meeting His Excellency Bertie Ahern, Prime Minister of Ireland.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2008, TO TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2008

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns tomorrow, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday next for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS FOR EXPENSES OF SELECT COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER HOUSE RESOLUTION 611

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for the immediate consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 1148) providing additional amounts for the expenses of the select committee established under House Resolution 611.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1148

Resolved,

SECTION 1. EXPENSES OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

(a) PAYMENT OF EXPENSES.—In addition to the amounts authorized under House Resolution 723, as agreed to October 10, 2007, there shall be paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives not more than $150,000 for the expenses of the select committee established under House Resolution 611, as agreed to August, 3, 2007 (hereafter referred to as the ''select committee'').

(b) VOUCHERS.—Payments under this resolution shall be made on vouchers authorized by the select committee, signed by the chairman of such committee, and approved in the manner directed by the Committee on House Administration.

(c) REGULATIONS.—Amounts made available under this resolution shall be expended in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Committee on House Administration.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM DEPUTY DISTRICT DIRECTOR, THE HONORABLE SUSAN A. DAVIS, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from Jessica Poole, Deputy