

huge organizations, but to small businesses. It is focused on unlocking credit for small businesses. You and I have absolute agreement on that. We need to do that. You talk to your small businesses; all of us do.

I had a meeting with my Chamber of Commerce, and we probably had a hundred small businesses in the auditorium at that point in time. You are absolutely right, they are having real trouble getting credit. I talked to a county commissioner who has a small business in Calvert County. Normally he could go into his bank and get a loan on a handshake for \$30,000 or \$40,000 to expand his business. This time he was looking for \$40,000. He has dealt with this bank for 35 years, and they said, I don't know whether they said Mr. Clark or Mr. Commissioner, but they said, yes, but fill out the form. And it took him 30 days. Now he got it, but he has done business with that small bank for that period of time. So we share that view.

By the end of the month, the Treasury Department will start making direct purchases of up to \$15 billion in securities backed by SBA loans to get the credit market for small businesses moving again.

In addition, in the Recovery Act, we eliminated, as I am sure the gentleman knows, all SBA-backed fees on SBA-backed loans, again to try to facilitate small businesses getting credit.

And it raises from 85 to 90 percent the proportion of loans that the Small Business Administration will guarantee.

Lastly, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has endorsed these steps to unlock the credit markets for small businesses.

So we are very pleased at the definitive action that we have taken to further the interest you and I share of making sure that small businesses can make it in this extraordinarily bad time which we believe previous policies have caused and which we have inherited.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman. Mr. Speaker, how I would respond to that is let's take a step back and look at sort of the events that transpired that led up to the need for today's vote on the AIG bonus payments, okay. I think that the events if we follow them teach us a lesson.

The stimulus bill that included a provision prohibiting the government from disallowing the bonus payments was in that 1,100-page bill. I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, no one in this House read the bill in its entirety. Nor did the public have its right to know realized. I think that ought to give us the sense that we need to be much more deliberative and open about this process.

These ideas, Mr. Speaker, that the gentleman is proposing to help small business, most of which we probably do agree on, but, frankly, the better way to ensure success and a positive result is to have an open process where we all

have the ability to offer our ideas, that the ideas and the policies are not just handed down from the majority leader or the Speaker's office and imposed upon the will of the people of this country.

So I would just reiterate to the gentleman that if we can see our way forward to allow the minority the ability to offer up real, positive alternatives if we disagree, it would all behoove us to work in that fashion. We can end up avoiding the type of result that came from the rushed way that so-called stimulus bill passed this house.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, before the gentleman yields back, I just want to make an observation.

I understand what the gentleman said, but the gentleman will recall, of course, that your party had a substitute that it offered that lost on a bipartisan vote, as you recall. So the gentleman did have the opportunity, his party had the opportunity, to offer a substitute which a significant number in his party did not agree with and certainly an overwhelming majority of our party did not agree with, in part because we perceived it as creating far fewer jobs. There is a difference of opinion on that, I understand that, but our perception was that it created about a third of the jobs or saved about a third of the jobs that our bill did.

But that aside, putting aside that disagreement on the figures, the fact is there is no disagreement that you had a substitute. You offered it, and it was defeated.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman. How I would just respond before I yield back my time is that there was a stronger bipartisan vote in favor of our substitute than there was in support of the actual bill that passed. I think that we can take that as a signal that this House ought to be open, ventilated, and available for debate.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentleman.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009

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

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may be permitted to extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 76.

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

There was no objection.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 146. An act to establish a battlefield acquisition grant program for the acquisition and protection of nationally significant battlefields and associated sites of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and for other purposes.

REPUBLICANS WANT TAXPAYER DOLLARS BACK

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats today chose to introduce an unconstitutional joke of a bill in order to clean up the AIG mess Democrats alone created. It was a Democrat spending bill, Democrat language, and only Democrat votes that authorized AIG to hand out bonuses. Democrats wrote the bill alone, secretly, and yet they act surprised.

Republicans have offered a bipartisan solution to get 100 percent of the taxpayers' dollars back, not 90 percent like our Democrat colleagues seek. The American people deserve to have all of that bonus money back, money authorized and spent by Democrat leadership.

The American taxpayers are justly outraged that their tax dollars are lining the pockets of AIG executives. Republicans have a solution to fix this problem, but Democrats don't want to talk about it. Democrats don't want to talk about the mistakes that they have made. American taxpayers deserve better.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

VETERAN HEALTH CARE

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, approximately 150,000 veterans live in Nebraska, many of whom live in my Third District. I am grateful for their sacrifice and certainly honored to represent them here in the United States House of Representatives.

I rise today to expression extreme disappointment, but also some gratitude for a policy that was made and then rescinded. I am grateful it was rescinded because it would cause a great burden for our veterans who have served us so admirably with sacrifice when they would have to go through the private sector health insurance rather than the VA.

Mr. Speaker, I rise again to express my gratitude because our veterans deserve better than that. They shouldn't be burdened with such a bureaucratic

process. They need a streamlined process so they can experience their health care in a more effective manner.

□ 1530

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I oppose a policy proposal by the Obama administration that would break with our country's obligation to its veterans. As we know, our veterans have sacrificed to protect our way of life and deserve the promises that we made to them being kept.

Yesterday, I joined my fellow Republican members of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and House Republican leaders in sending communications to President Obama in strong opposition to an ill-conceived plan. The administration's plan would bill veterans' private insurance for care related to service-connected injuries. It would permit the Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA, to ignore its core responsibility "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan." Our country has a binding obligation to provide this care, particularly to those who have become disabled as a result of their service.

It is wrong to shift this responsibility to private insurers—which actually the veterans will pay for in premiums—and to our disabled veterans themselves. Additionally, billing veterans' private insurance could result in higher premiums for the veterans to cover the cost of treating the service-connected injuries. Some disabled veterans may expend their insurance benefits on treatment of service-connected conditions, leaving no benefits for their family. This policy may also discourage employers from hiring disabled veterans.

I encourage, in the strongest possible terms, the administration to shelve this proposal permanently. While we must look for ways to save taxpayer dollars and tackle our runaway budget deficit, we should not ask those who have already sacrificed so much to pay the bill.

We must never forget that our country has a responsibility to its veterans.

Congress should honor this obligation by providing the funding necessary for the VA to maintain health care services to our men and women who have served us in uniform.

PUBLICATION OF THE RULES OF THE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, 111TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of House Rule XI, I hereby submit the Rules of Procedure of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the 111th Congress, as adopted by the Committee on February 12, 2009.

RULES OF PROCEDURE, FOR THE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 111TH CONGRESS

1. MEETING DAY

Regular Meeting Day for the Full Committee. The regular meeting day of the Committee for the transaction of Committee business shall be the first Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise directed by the Chair.

2. NOTICE FOR MEETINGS

(a) Generally. In the case of any meeting of the Committee, the Chief Clerk of the Committee shall provide reasonable notice to every member of the Committee. Such notice shall provide the time and place of the meeting.

(b) Definition. For purposes of this rule, "reasonable notice" means:

(1) Written notification;

(2) Delivered by facsimile transmission, regular mail, or electronic mail that is:

(A) Delivered no less than 24 hours prior to the event for which notice is being given, if the event is to be held in Washington, D.C.; or

(B) Delivered no less than 48 hours prior to the event for which notice is being given, if the event is to be held outside Washington, D.C.

(c) Exception. In extraordinary circumstances only, the Chair may, after consulting with the Ranking Minority Member, call a meeting of the Committee without providing notice, as defined in subparagraph (b), to members of the Committee.

3. PREPARATIONS FOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(a) Generally. Designated Committee Staff, as directed by the Chair, shall brief members of the Committee at a time sufficiently prior to any Committee meeting in order to:

(1) Assist Committee members in preparation for such meeting; and

(2) Determine which matters members wish considered during any meeting.

(b) Briefing Materials.

(1) Such a briefing shall, at the request of a member, include a list of all pertinent papers, and such other materials, that have been obtained by the Committee that bear on matters to be considered at the meeting; and

(2) The Staff Director shall also recommend to the Chair any testimony, papers, or other materials to be presented to the Committee at the meeting of the Committee.

4. OPEN MEETINGS

(a) Generally. Pursuant to House Rule XI, but subject to the limitations of subsections (b) and (c), Committee meetings held for the transaction of business and Committee hearings shall be open to the public.

(b) Meetings. Any meeting or portion thereof, for the transaction of business, including the markup of legislation, or any hearing or portion thereof, shall be closed to the public, if the Committee determines by record vote in open session, with a majority of the Committee present, that disclosure of the matters to be discussed may:

(1) Endanger national security;

(2) Compromise sensitive law enforcement information;

(3) Tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person; or

(4) Otherwise violate any law or Rule of the House.

(c) Hearings. The Committee may vote to close a Committee hearing pursuant to clause 11(d)(2) of House Rule X, regardless of whether a majority is present, so long as at least two members of the Committee are present, one of whom is a member of the Minority and votes upon the motion.

(d) Briefings. Committee briefings shall be closed to the public.

5. QUORUM

(a) Hearings. For purposes of taking testimony, or receiving evidence, a quorum shall consist of two Committee members, at least one of whom is a member of the Majority.

(b) Other Committee Proceedings. For purposes of the transaction of all other Committee business, other than the consideration of a motion to close a hearing as described in rule 4(c), a quorum shall consist of a majority of members.

6. PROCEDURES FOR AMENDMENTS AND VOTES

(a) Amendments. When a bill or resolution is being considered by the Committee, members shall provide the Chief Clerk in a timely manner with a sufficient number of written copies of any amendment offered, so as to enable each member present to receive a copy thereof prior to taking action. A point of order may be made against any amendment not reduced to writing. A copy of each such amendment shall be maintained in the public records of the Committee.

(b) Reporting Record Votes. Whenever the Committee reports any measure or matter by record vote, the report of the Committee upon such measure or matter shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of, and the votes cast in opposition to, such measure or matter.

(c) Postponement of Further Proceedings. In accordance with clause 2(h) of House Rule XI, the Chair is authorized to postpone further proceedings when a record vote is ordered on the question of approving a measure or matter or adopting an amendment. The Chair may resume proceedings on a postponed request at any time after reasonable notice. When proceedings resume on a postponed question, notwithstanding any intervening order for the previous question, an underlying proposition shall remain subject to further debate or amendment to the same extent as when the question was postponed.

(d) Availability of Record Votes on Committee Website. In addition to any other requirement of the Rules of the House, the Chair shall make the record votes on any measure or matter on which a record vote is taken, other than a motion to close a Committee hearing, briefing, or meeting, available on the Committee's website not later than 2 business days after such vote is taken. Such record shall include an unclassified description of the amendment, motion, order, or other proposition, the name of each member voting in favor of, and each member voting in opposition to, such amendment, motion, order, or proposition, and the names of those members of the Committee present but not voting.

7. SUBCOMMITTEES

(a) Generally.