The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion to reconsider was laid on the table. The Clerk read the title of the bill.

Mr. RUSH changed his vote from "yea" to "nay." So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Paul) to give the Senate's consent to the House for the addition of the words "and Public Act 96–1520 (Senate Bill 3342), Agency by Senate Bill 758, Laws of Missouri (64 Stat. 568) shall apply to the amendment of the powers conferred on the Bi-State Development Agency by the legislation providing that the Bi-State Agency until such power has been conferred upon the Bi-State Agency by the legislative or other instruments in writing provided they are given to the amendment of the powers conferred upon the Bi-State Agency by the Legislation providing that the Bi-State Agency may not in the same extent as if such amendment was conferred under this joint resolution to the compact and approved by an Act of Congress; Whereas such States previously enacted legislation providing that the Bi-State Agency had the power to issue notes, bonds, or other obligations in which condition was the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repeal this act in Congress assembled, the right to alter, amend, or repea
In 1949, Missouri and Illinois formed a compact to create the Bi-State Development Agency. The agency’s mission is to facilitate and coordinate economic and infrastructure development in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Among other projects, the agency runs the Gateway Arch and the Missouri-Illinois Memorial Park. The project also involves building elevated walkways across the river to Illinois.

Senate Joint Resolution 22 gives congressional approval to this amendment, the Missouri-Illinois Inter-state Compact. The Senate approved the amendment on September 21. The suspension version of Senate Joint Resolution 22 contains one amendment, to correct a minor drafting error regarding the effective date. With this amendment, Senate Joint Resolution 22 will be effective upon the date of enactment.

In conclusion, I’m pleased to see this feature of our federalist system at work. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution and look forward to its swift passage. With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the full committee and the chairman and ranking member of the subcommittee for their leadership and for moving this critical resolution.

I’m proud to have introduced the House version of this joint resolution, and it accomplishes two very good things: S.J. Res. 22 approves an important amendment to a compact between two States.

As was mentioned before, in 1949, Missouri and Illinois entered into an agreement to foster “regional economic development through excellence in transportation.” The compact created the Bi-State Development Agency. Congress approved it, and has approved several amendments over the last 6 decades.

The agency, now known as “Metro,” operates the St. Louis Metropolitan region’s public transportation system. It has more than 2,400 employees and carries over 55 million passengers each year.

This resolution approves a small but crucial change to the Bi-State Compact. Both State legislatures have passed it, and both Governors have signed it. This is a necessary and good amendment, and there is no negative impact to the Nation or to States. As such, Congress should approve it.

This resolution also enables the Congress to fulfill one of its constitutional duties. And I agree with my good friend, Mr. Gohmert, that Congress should not overstep its authority. While we do not always agree on the limits of that power, we agree on this resolution and on the constitutional authority for it.

As Article I, section 10, clause 3 of the Constitution says that “No State shall, without the consent of Congress . . . enter into an agreement or compact with another State.”

The Framers of the Constitution required that Congress would have to approve these agreements to protect the interests and rights of the other States. This also protects the rights of the citizens within the States that are party to the compact by providing Federal oversight.

This clause was a compromise. There were those who wanted to give the Federal Government greater power over the States, including the authority to...
regulate to negate State laws. Others felt very strongly that this would be overly nationalist and broad.

The Constitutional Convention, rather than giving the Federal Government complete control over everything, or nothing, compromised. They compromised to ensure the good of the Nation. They granted the Federal Government blanket authority over some areas. They also limited the Federal Government’s authority in others. And they required congressional approval for agreements between the States.

This compromise, one of many that formed our great country, demonstrates that two opposing sides, who each feel passionately about their point of view, can come together and compromise for the good of the Nation. They each put aside their well-intentioned and strongly held belief that they were completely correct, and that the other side was completely wrong, and found a way to work out the differences. They put aside something they held dear in order to achieve a higher good: That was the creation of a strong Nation, a Nation that would endure.

Madam Speaker, there is a lesson here, a 224-year old lesson for us who serve in this House.

Once again, I thank the chairman and ranking member.

Mr. GOMERT. I have no requests for time, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE H8171

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as she may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Houston, Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), a senior member of the committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to applaud the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOMERT), the ranking member, and my colleague from Missouri, and to echo the comments of Mr. CONTERS on his father, but more specifically, on work that he has done. As a member of the delegation, we can always count on Missouri to test the Constitution and to ask the United States to do what is right.

I am rising to support this compact. Frankly, I want to really embrace it because it is maybe one aspect of legislation, Madam Speaker, that we are actually bipartisan and supporting it without hesitation.

I, frankly, believe that the Federal Government should not overreach as it relates to compacts that have been between States. But I do think that regulation is key and crucial to give States extra leverage.

So let me congratulate Mr. CLAY. And I look forward to supporting this legislation.

I will add, as well, that when I think of bonds, I think of opportunities for building, using resources to restore. And by the very nature of that, Madam Speaker, we’re talking about creating jobs.

So I add another applause to this particular legislation coming out of the Judiciary Committee because, for once, among many bills that we have been debating from the Judiciary Committee, this bill might enhance opportunities for jobs. I think of bonds. I think of utilization of funds from bonds as they mature. And this is a good thing.

I’m glad to see that in the course of the time that we’ve spent, maybe over the last 3 weeks, when we could have actually engaged in reasonable debate on how we raise the payroll tax, how do we extend the payroll tax cut, and how do we find the money for our deficit benefits, we have not been able to do that.

So let me just share my assessment of the folk who are needing unemployment benefits. Personal savings have gone. Family savings have gone. They’ve exhausted the 401(k)s and they have tapped every other fungible amount of dollars that they might have, maybe even to the kidde’s saving account that started with 25 cents, leaving many individuals in this harm’s way. And I have to say, Madam Speaker, that when we are desperate, desperate for a job, desperate for assistance, desperate for being able to pay their mortgage, desperate for paying their rent.

Madam Speaker, maybe we should also say, desperate in getting one month’s allotment of food stamps. Maybe we’re not aware that there are 46 million families on food stamps, and most of them wait all the way to the exhaustion of those food stamps; find themselves, before the next opportunity for food stamps, literally drinking water, making tea, and eating crackers. There was an expose on this just recently on one of our cable stations, families waiting until 12 midnight to watch and see if their account has in it the amount of money they needed to enter a grocery store to feed their children.

I don’t believe that we can leave this sacred and august institution without one, providing relief on extending the payroll tax cut, giving $1,000 and $1,500 to the American working class. And clearly, I don’t believe that we can leave without providing for unemployment. Every dollar invested in unemployment insurance yields $1.52 in economic growth, and at least 200,000 jobs will be lost if Republicans block extension of the unemployment insurance.

In fact, frankly, I know that Scrooge would not find a place of comfort in this House.

Mr. GOMERT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TONKO. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOMERT. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO).

Mr. TONKO. I thank the Representative from Michigan for the opportunity to address this measure. I really express concern about the inordinate time that we are spending on measures that allow us to harm the air that we breathe and the water that we drink.

The American people are asking us to set priorities here that focus on job creation. They’re demanding that this body focus on jobs and helping rebuild our economy. Instead, we seek to be spending hours debating regulatory and bureaucratic measures that are flawed and would dramatically undermine the ability of our government to protect the air that we breathe and the water that we drink. Instead, I would suggest that our time be better spent focusing on putting more money in the pockets of American workers, empowering our middle class.

Mr. GOMERT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TONKO. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. GOMERT. I thank the gentleman.
families. A failure to do so would result in job losses, a reduction in economic activity, and higher taxes for many families when they can least afford it.

So my suggestion here is to stop wasting time on less important priorities. We're supposed to be focusing on creating jobs and standing up for our middle class, enabling them to strengthen their purchasing power and to enable our economic recovery to be as vital and strong as possible.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOHMERT. As a closing comment, I have come to know the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY), my friend across the aisle, and hold him in very high regard. I appreciate very much his comments earlier about what this compact means to Illinois and to Missouri. I know Mr. CLAY has been a leading proponent of this happening, and I really very much appreciate his comments. This will not provide jobs across the country, but it solves a problem. It will ease things for those two States so that jobs should be easier.

And I was totally serious when I offered my colleague who was saying that we were wasting our time on this—I know Mr. CLAY and many others have spent a great deal of time on this, and I didn't think the Democrats that were pushing this bill so hard were wasting our time. I think it's a very legitimate use of our time.

Some people like to confuse the term "interstate," as used in the Constitution; and they want the term "interstate" to be expanded, as it has sometimes, to apply to nothing but activity wholly within one State. The Supreme Court has even given some regard to those kinds of arguments, but this is not one of those cases. This is a matter that's been taken up and passed by the Senate, and we should pass it today. It takes on a matter clearly between two States that makes it interstate.

And then it is not the State of Illinois or Missouri coming and begging for the Federal Government to take over a State responsibility. It is two States with different opinions, different concerns, but wanting things to work together for good, coming to a solution; and then the Federal Government, since it is interstate, must recognize that compact. I think it is an appropriate thing to do. I don't think the States are going to push this bill were wasting our time. I think it's an appropriate use of Federal time.

With that, I would urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. NOEM). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, S. J. Res. 22, as amended.

The motion was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING AMERICAN LEGION GUIDANCE TO INDIVIDUAL POSTS

Mr. GOHMERT, Madam Speaker. I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1639) to amend title 36, United States Code, to authorize the American Legion under its Federal charter to provide guidance and leadership to the individual departments and posts of the American Legion, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1639
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL POWER OF AMERICAN LEGION UNDER FEDERAL CHARTER.

Section 21704 of title 36, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (5) through (8) as paragraphs (6) through (9), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph (5):

"(5) provide guidance and leadership to organizations and local chapters established under paragraph (4), but may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations and local chapters;"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S. 1639, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

The American Legion received its Federal charter in 1919 as a patriotic veterans organization. Today, the Legion is America's largest Veterans Service Organization with 2.5 million members. Membership is available to persons who have served in the United States Armed Forces during wartime, including the current war on terrorism, and are honorably discharged or are continuing their service.

S. 1639 amends the Legion's Federal charter as requested. Our colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE), introduced the House version of the bill, H.R. 2369, which the Judiciary Committee approved by voice vote.

I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his work on this legislation and am pleased to see that his bill has a remarkable 432 cosponsors. It's almost unheard of.

So there are things that this Congress needs to be doing, and there are many things that are very important that this Congress does; but this is something that only Congress can do. So if we hear from other speakers who want to talk about a jobs bill, I would encourage them to go talk to the Senate about the 15 to 20 jobs bills that they are down there sitting on. Let's look forward to the day when the President says that this is a do-nothing Congress that he's no longer half right in making that statement. The House is certainly not a do-nothing House. The Senate is sitting on many bills. This is a bill for which the gentleman from Pennsylvania saw a need, so he stepped up and filled that need, and I appreciate his efforts in doing this.