CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

December 8, 2011

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas and Mr. HOYER changed their vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 470. An act to further allocate and expand the availability of hydroelectric power generated at Hoover Dam, and for other purposes.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3538

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) be removed as a cosponsor from H.R. 3538.

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

There was no objection.

PRAY FOR VICTIMS OF VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTING

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

Mr. GRIFFTH of Virginia. I ask every one here and across the Nation to pray for those individuals at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, who are currently dealing with the shootings that took place there today and the two people who, regrettably, have passed away.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, before yielding to the majority leader to inquire about the schedule for the week to come, let me say I join with the gentleman from Virginia, and I know certainly Mr. CAVAO, who also represents Virginia, but the entire country as
well. We don’t know the facts yet. We don’t know exactly what’s happened. But the information I have is that two people may well have lost their lives at this point in time. We certainly want to send our deepest sympathies to Virginia Tech and to the families that are affected by this incident and hope sincerely that there is no further loss of life.

On that issue, let me yield to the majority leader, who I know will want to say something about the day.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Democratic whip, for yielding.

I too want to join the gentleman in expressing our sorrow and extending our thoughts and prayers to those in the Hokie Nation in Blacksburg who, unfortunately, have endured more pain today, reminiscent of the pain that so many have felt in that fine university in the past. Hopefully, things can look up. I know that there are reports that law enforcement was involved. We also want to extend our thanks to law enforcement in that community as well as everywhere else in this country—certainly in this Capitol—for what individuals of the Capitol Police and other police forces across the country do for us every single day.

Again, we express our sorrow to those who are mourning the loss of life and extend our thoughts to President Steger at Virginia Tech and to that community.

I do thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the House will meet at noon for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

At this point, the House is scheduled to be in session for the remainder of the week, with a weekend session possible. Per our usual weekly schedule, I would expect morning hour on most days to begin at 10 a.m. and legislative business to start by noon. However, because we may be our last full week in session prior to the end of the year, the daily convening times may fluctuate to accommodate our year-end business.

I can assure Members, however, that we do not expect votes on Tuesday, December 13, prior to 1 p.m. That is as far as Tuesday, December 13 is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, our legislative business next week will include a number of suspensions of the rules. These will be announced by the close of business tomorrow. In addition, we expect to consider a conference report on the remaining appropriations bills for FY12 as well as a conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act. I want to thank both Chairman Hal, Rogers and Chairman BUCK McKEON for their incredibly hard work throughout the year.

Finally, we anticipate a vote on a year-end package of expiring laws that will include three pieces of legislation, particularly the unemployment insurance and the payroll tax extension, which we believe are critical before we end this year. So we’re pleased to see that legislation moving forward. But I will tell my friend that I would be pleased to participate in discussions with him so we can see that that bill will in fact pass and, hopefully, pass in a bipartisan fashion.

I want to tell the gentleman that I’m a little bit concerned, and I want to ask him whether this principle will be followed. I think we will last week, but it bears repeating. Speaker BOEHNER said:

“We will end the practice of packaging unpopular bills with must-pass legislation to circumvent the will of the American people. Instead, we will advance major legislation one issue at a time.”

That was in the Republican Pledge as well, and the Speaker has reiterated that at the beginning of this session.

I am concerned that the Republican Study Committee Chairman JIM JORDAN of Ohio is quoted in The Washington Post as saying the following:

“The fact the President doesn’t like it will never stop us from voting on the Keystone pipeline provision.”

I am concerned that the President doesn’t like it. I would like it even more . . . said of the GOP leadership proposal as he left Thursday morning’s closed-door meeting.”

I will say to my friend that we are at the end of the session. We are hopeful, as I have said—and as we have demonstrated on the two CBs and the debt extension and on the minibus appropriation bill that we passed—that we are prepared to respond in a bipartisan fashion to assist in passing must-pass legislation and hope very much that we don’t put that provision in that. The President has clearly announced that he will veto a bill that has the Keystone pipeline.

I will say, as my friend clearly knows, there is bipartisan concern—as a matter of fact, the Governor of Nebraska, a Republican, and the Republican legislature, which although nominally nonpartisan, as the gentleman knows, is two-thirds Republican, one-third Democrat, have all voted to delay this project because of their concern about the aquifer and the impact that the Keystone pipeline, as currently-plotted, will have in reference to the aquifer, so that there is a bipartisan concern.

As the gentleman knows, as a result of Nebraska’s passing legislation which said they wanted to do a study on the aquifer and alternative siting of the Keystone pipeline course, that that study would take them 5 to 6 to 7 months, as a result, the President indicated they would give time to the Nebraska Governor and the Nebraska Legislature—again, Republican organs—to look at that, has given them
additional time and said he won’t act until the beginning of 2013.

I ask the gentleman, does he believe that provision—I understand what Mr. Jordan says. It may be a nice political gesture, but I would hope that that would not be the kind of provision that would be included in the legislation, whether it’s individual bills or a comprehensive bill, including those three items that hopefully we can pass in a bipartisan fashion.

I yield the point. Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I understand the point he is trying to make.

Mr. HOYER. If I may, I thought I did make the point.

Mr. CANTOR. Well, you may have made the point.

Maybe, Mr. Speaker, what I’m trying to say is that I disagree with the gentleman, that if the provisions dealing with the Keystone oil pipeline are not included in legislation that is must pass, that we would not join together and do what was done in the past, and that is demonstrate a strong bipartisan vote in support of that project. Because, as the gentleman knows, organized labor in this country is very supportive of that bill, of that provision. It means immediate jobs. The President continues to say he is for creating jobs, doing all we can to get America back to work. This is a provision that allows for that.

I understand the point he is trying to make. Mr. Speaker, in response to the gentleman’s concerns about Nebraska and the issues raised by its Governor as well as its State legislature, I believe and am told that there have been many discussions in which an alternative route has been determined, and there is agreement on that to allow for the proceeding of the construction of the pipeline.

Again, knowing that there is strong bipartisan support for the project, knowing that labor is in support of it, knowing that it puts people back to work immediately, it would seem to me that this is a consistent provision to go along with making sure that we deal with the unemployment situation in this country through an extension of the UI provisions—with, hopefully, some reforms—as well as the extension of the payroll tax holiday.

As the gentleman knows, our side is concerned. We don’t want taxes to go up one penny, especially in an economy like this. But again, I hope the gentleman can consider joining us in terms of helping promote an environment for job creation.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comment.

I will say this, though, it seems inconsistent, when the President of the United States yesterday said he would veto such a provision, that we would include it in legislation that is must pass.

By the way, the unemployment insurance, economists tell us, will provide for 100 times as many jobs; so, therefore, we’re for that. Some 500,000 jobs may be affected by extending the unemployment insurance.

In addition to that, I tell my friend, the President has offered a jobs bill. I know that you’re concerned about jobs. The pipeline bill, in and of itself, is about 6,000 to 10,000 jobs in the lifetime of that pipeline. The jobs bill, economists tell us, is 1 million jobs, or 200 times as many jobs. Notwithstanding that, very frankly, that has been languishing since September and not brought to this floor.

So it seems to me that if we are really interested—and I think you are—in extending unemployment insurance and providing for a continued tax cut for middle-income Americans and for providing for the payment of doctors who are serving Medicare patients, that we not include in that bill an item that apparently is popular on your side just because the President doesn’t like it, according to Mr. Jordan.

I ask the gentleman, does he believe that bill has 220 co-sponsors and is a bipartisan sponsor-ship. It simply says that Members should not use insider information to trade with, information the general public may not have about legislation that may or may not be reported or passed to the floor. And I understand that was pulled. I think that was unfortunate.

Can the gentleman tell me what the status of that piece of legislation is? Mr. CANTOR. Sure, absolutely.

First of all, the issue of insider trading is something that we abhor as well, do not tolerate, and believe that all Members of Congress should fall under the same laws that apply to anyone, and want to make sure that is the case, if it is not.

And transparency is the key because the public needs to know what their Members are doing. We intend to take this issue, make sure that concerns that have been raised by Members on both sides of the aisle are being vetted. This is an issue of extreme import for the confidence of the public towards this institution. We intend to do so in a deliberate manner.

There were issues raised again by Members on both sides of the aisle about this bill not being brought up in a vetted way. There are many other chairmen who have jurisdiction in this matter who need to be involved in this with a full vetting, and we intend to do this. And I hope the gentleman will work with us in doing so.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.
As he knows, Congressman Walz has been working hard on this, and I know that he will be very inclined to work with you and with the committees of jurisdiction; and I will certainly be able to work with you as well on this issue because, as I say, Congressman Walz has worked very hard on this.

I think all of us agree, as you just indicated, that no Member of Congress ought to be using insider information to trade in the stock market to disadvantage, obviously, others who are trading in an open market. So thank the gentleman for his comments, look forward to working with him and, again, in closing, hope that we can reach bipartisan agreement on so many major pieces of legislation that we need to pass prior to leaving this.

I will tell the gentleman I hope his side agrees, my side will not want to adjourn, nor will it support adjournment, until such time as we act on the unemployment insurance and the middle class tax cuts.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. tomorrow, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday, December 12, 2011, for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

It adjourns tomorrow, December 8, 2011, for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

EXTEND THE MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUT

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Nevada's middle class families. Because of the economic downturn, thousands of Nevadans are struggling to find a job, pay their rent, and put food on their families' tables. They cannot afford a tax increase.

However, Washington gridlock is threatening just that, a massive tax increase on middle class families. Why? Because some Washington Republicans refuse to support special tax breaks for Wall Street millionaires in order to pay for a middle class tax cut for 1.2 million Nevadans. That's just not right.

So my message today is this: no holiday vacation for Congress without extending the middle class tax cut. We cannot go home while Nevada families are hurting and desperate for this extension of their payroll tax cuts.

However, that's going to require Washington Republicans to stop protecting Wall Street millionaires and start putting Nevada's families first. The only fair way to achieve this is to roll back special tax breaks for Wall Street millionaires, not slash Medicare benefits, not lose the health care of thousands of people.

It's time to stop putting Wall Street first and before Main Street. Washington ought not go on vacation until we take care of this problem.

CHINA ORGAN HARVESTING

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, an article in last Monday's Weekly Standard reveals the systematic execution and harvesting of organs in China's prisons. The article provides first-hand accounts of the targeted elimination of religious prisoners, prisoners of conscience, and political opponents of the regime. Minorities, including Falun Gong, Uyghurs, House Christians, and Tibetans, are subjected to organ harvesting by organ transplant surgeries—some being performed while the victims are still alive, numbering in the tens of thousands.

Furthermore, foreign companies are already making investments to benefit off the back of the organ transplant market. Pharmaceutical companies like Roche and Isotecnika Pharma have been involved in clinical drug testing of transplant patients. A British firm, TFP Ryder Healthcare, is proposing a facility that would include an organ transplant center.

Before they follow suit, U.S. companies must understand the unethical climate that exists in China. Our State Department and the U.N. must treat these actions as an abuse of China's international agreements and human rights of their own people.


THE XINJIANG PROCEDURE

(By Ethan Gutmann)

To figure out what is taking place today in a closed society such as northwest China, sometimes you have to go back a decade, sometimes more.

One clue might be found on a hilltop near southern Guangzhou, on a partly cloudy autumn day in 1991. A small medical team and a young doctor starting a practice in internal medicine had driven up from Sun Yat-sen Medical University in a van modified for surgery. Pulling in on bulldozed earth, they found a small fleet of similar vehicles—clean, white, with smoked glass windows and prominent red crosses on the side. The police had ordered the medical team to stay inside for their safety. Indeed, the view from the side window of lines of ditches—some filled in, others freshly dug—suggested that the hilltop had served as a killing ground for several years.

Thirty-six scheduled executions would translate into 72 kidneys and organs divided among the regional hospitals. Every van contained surgeons who could work fast; 15–30 minutes to extract. Drive back to the hospital. Take a break. Nothing fancy or experimental; execution would probably ruin the heart.

With the acceleration of Chinese medical expertise over the last decade, organs once considered scraps no longer went to waste. It wasn't public knowledge exactly, but Chinese medical schools taught that many otherwise wicked criminals volunteered their organs as a final pittance.

Right after the first shots the van door was thrust open and two men with white surgical coats thrown over their uniforms carried a body in, the head and feet still twitching slightly. The young doctor thought that the wound was on the right side of the chest as he had expected. When body #3 was laid down, he went to work.

Among Han Chinese. While the other retail organs in the van were slated for the profitable foreigner market, the doctor had seen the paperwork indicating this kidney came from a 90-year-old Chinese man. Without the transplant, that man would die. With it, the same man would rise miraculous from his hospital bed and go on to have a normal life for 25 years or so. By 2016, given all the anti-tissue-rejection drug advances in China, they could theoretically replace the liver, lungs, or heart—maybe buy that man another 10 to 15 years.

Body #3 had no special characteristics save an angry purple line on the neck. The doctor recognized the forensics. The police would twist a wire around a prisoner's throat to prevent him from speaking up in court. The doctor thought it through methodically. Maybe the police didn't want this prisoner to talk because he had been a dangerous killer, a thug, or mentally unstable. After all, the Chinese way was a daily sausage grinder, executing hardcore criminals on a massive scale. Yes, the young doctor knew the harvesting was wrong. Whatever crime had been committed, it would be nice if the prisoner's body were allowed to rest forever. Yet was his surgical task that different from an obstetrician's? To do so would remind international medical authorities of an issue they would rather avoid—not China's soaring execution rate or the exploitation of criminals' bodies. To do so would remind international medical authorities of an issue they would rather avoid—not China's soaring execution rate or the exploitation of criminals' bodies. An issue they would rather avoid.

As he knows, Congressman Walz has worked very hard on this. Behind closed doors, the Uighurs call their experiences in China's northwest corner (bordering on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia) East Turkistan. The Uighurs are ethnically Turkic, not East Asian. They are not afraid embarrassing China, for he was born on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia) East Turkistan. The Uighurs are ethnically Turkic, not East Asian. They are not afraid embarrassing China, for he was born