TITLE XII—EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS PROTECTION ACT

DALE LONG EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDERS PROTECTION ACT

H—/S1201,1211,1212,1213

House bill

No similar provision.

Senate bill

Section 1201 provides liability protection for volunteer pilots that fly for public benefit, including transportation at no cost to financially needy medical patients for medical treatment, evaluation and diagnosis; flights for humanitarian and charitable purposes; and other flights of compassion.

Section 1211 provides a title for the subtitle, the ''Volunteer Pilot Protection Act of 2011.''

Section 1212 states findings of Congress on the necessity of protections for pilots who volunteer their services.

Section 1213 allows pilots who operate volunteer flights for most charitable institutions to receive reimbursement form those institutions for some operations costs including fuel.

Conference Substitute

No provision.

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, no provision in this conference report or joint explanatory statement includes a congressional earmark, limited tax benefit, or limited tariff benefit.

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

JOHN L. MICA,
THOMAS E. PETRI,
JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr.,
SAM GRAVES,
BILL SHUSTER,
JEAN SCHMIDT,
CHIP CRAVAACK,
NICK J. RAHALL II,
PETER A. DEFAZIO,
JERRY F. COSTELLO,
LEONARD L. BOSWELL,
RUSS CARNAHAN,

From the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for consideration of sections 102, 105, 201, 202, 204, 208, 209, 212, 220, 321, 324, 326, 812, title X, and title XIII of the House bill and sections 102, 103, 106, 216, 301, 302, 309, 320, 327, title VI, and section 732 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

RALPH M. HALL,
STEVEN M. PALAZZO,
EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON,

From the Committee on Ways and Means, for consideration of title XI of the House bill and titles VIII and XI of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

DAVE CAMP,
PATRICK J. TIBERI,
SANDER M. LEVIN,

Managers on the Part of the House.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV,
BARBARA BOXER,
BILL NELSON,
MARIA CANTWELL,
KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,
JOHNNY ISAKSON,

From the Committee on Finance:

MAX BAUCUS.

Managers on the Part of the Senate.

□ 1230

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

TO EXTEND THE PAY LIMITATION FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3835) to extend the pay limitation for Members of Congress and Federal employees.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3835

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF PAY LIMITATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 147 of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (Public Law 111–242; 5 U.S.C. 5303 note), as added by section 1(a) of the Continuing Appropriations and Surface Transportation Extensions Act, 2011 (Public Law 111–322; 124 Stat. 3518), is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1), by striking ''December 31, 2012'' and inserting ''December 31, 2013''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''December 31, 2012'' and inserting ''December 31, 2013''.

(b) APPLICATION TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH.—

(1) MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—The extension of the pay limit for Federal employees through December 31, 2013, as established pursuant to the amendments made by subsection (a), shall apply to Members of Congress in accordance with section 601(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 31).

(2) OTHER LEGISLATIVE BRANCH EMPLOYEES.—

(A) LIMIT IN PAY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no cost of living adjustment required by statute with respect to a legislative branch employee which (but for this subparagraph) would otherwise take effect during the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, 2013, shall be made.

(B) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ''legislative branch employee'' means—

(i) an employee of the Federal Government whose pay is disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) an employee of any office of the legislative branch who is not described in clause (i).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I ask unanimous consent that the Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3835, to extend the pay limitation for Members of Congress and Federal employees. Our Federal employees provide an essential work function for the Federal Government. They're good people. They do good work. And they do good work so long as it's essential government functions. We appreciate their service, and believe Federal employees should be compensated fairly.

Yet, current Federal salaries and benefits are not in line with the marketplace when compared to the private workforce. Federal civilian workers receive generous benefits, pay, and job security. In fact, there is a four times greater chance of losing your job in the private sector than there is with the Federal workforce.

Our Federal workforce performs essential functions. We appreciate their service, and believe Federal employees should be compensated fully.

On Monday, the Congressional Budget Office released a study which found that total compensation for Federal employees was 16 percent greater than for private sector workers. When they looked at the benefits of hardworking taxpayers, they take home 72 percent less in benefits than their government counterparts.

To top it off, these hardworking private sector taxpayers, with a high school diploma or some college, make 32 to 36 percent less than Federal employees with the same education level. Those who work the hardest to pay taxes are the ones bearing the burden of a bloated Federal government.

The contrast between the Federal Government and private sector is troubling. With 13 million Americans unemployed, why would we allow automatic raises to occur for a group of workers whose average compensation exceeds $100,000, and for the Members of Congress, whose compensation is $174,000?

The reality is that the Federal Government has no incentive or no obligation to reduce salaries in order to be competitive to stay in business. We simply raise taxes, or we go into more debt. And our government continues to borrow. Just yesterday, for example, the CBO released a report that our Federal budget deficit will top another $1 trillion for a fourth straight year in a row. This is unprecedented. It is unsustainable.

The President's fiscal commission, a bipartisan commission, the Simpson-Bowles Commission, a commission which not only the President but this Congress should consider, has recommended a 3-year freeze on civilian payroll and Member pay. In its report, the Commissioners reminded us that ''in time of budget shortfalls, all levels of government must trim back.'' Following this advice, the President, to

his credit, did recommend, and this Congress did freeze Federal employee pay through 2012. This measure alone saved the Federal Government $60 billion.

As Americans continue to sacrifice, we must lead by example. H.R. 3835 continues the temporary freeze on across-the-board annual salary adjustments for Federal civilian workers.

Federal employees will continue to receive salary increases under the step program. Now, this has been going on, even despite the Federal pay freeze, a step increase, 3 percent every year. 99.9 percent of all Federal employees eligible for a step increase received it. Where else can a pay freeze equal a 3 percent increase a year but in Washington, DC?

Office of Personnel Management Director Berry said that there should be no place in the Federal Government for non-performers to hide. This chart proves that we continue to fund government at a rate well in excess of that given to the private sector.

If we want to look for ways to cut, maybe we should look in some of the Federal office buildings, because 6 out of every 1,000 employees do not receive a 3 percent increase, despite a pay freeze. These step increases which continue under this bill, if passed, will result in a $1,303 average annual salary increase per Federal employee.

The bill before us today builds on the President's fiscal commission. It follows the President's request to freeze Federal pay for Federal employees. It is consistent with the House resolution, and mirrors the provisions of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011 passed by this House last December.

Opponents of this bill will argue that Federal employees have already done more with less for the last 2 years. They will claim that supporters of this bill view Federal employees as a cost to cut, and that we want to cut the budget on the backs of Federal employees. I disagree with that.

We have been fortunate, very fortunate throughout the years to have a very good Federal workforce, to have talented and hardworking individuals who have chosen public service. However, our appreciation for their service does not bring a mandate to pay them above market rates, with little regard to their individual performance.

In its March 2011 report to the President, the Pay Agent—and let's go over who the Pay Agent is. The Pay Agent makes up the Secretary of Labor and the Directors of the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management, all appointed by the President, all approved by a Democratic-controlled Senate. This is what they say. They express serious concern about a process that requires a single percentage adjustment in the pay of all white collar civilian Federal employees in each locality area. Adding to their comments: We believe the underlying model and methodology for estimating pay gaps should be reexamined to ensure that the private sector and Federal sector pay comparisons are as accurate as possible.

There is a reason why the Federal pay law has never been implemented as originally enacted. It is based on an outdated, one-size-fits-all model. In testimony before the Federal Workforce Subcommittee, Director Berry agreed that the Federal pay system could use a reexamination, and it ''does not reflect the complexity of the world we live in.''

Study after study has shown that, when compared to the private sector, the Federal Government, on average, pays more than required to recruit and retain a skilled workforce. Paying across-the-board wages that are higher than market rate with no measure of individual performance means less money available to meet the salary required of highly skilled workers such as scientists and professionals, as this graph accurately demonstrates.

We need to bring these high-level professionals in the Federal Government in parity with the others, and this bill will allow us to do that. It shows where we are out of whack from the private sector.

Madam Speaker, I ask Members and Federal employees to share in the sacrifice necessary to help millions of Americans suffering under the Obama economy, and urge support of H.R. 3835.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I stand in strong opposition to this legislation, but I want to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

□ 1240

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I listened to the gentleman's comments. The gentleman is new to the Congress and probably doesn't have the background in terms of how this developed as to how we pay Federal employees.

As the sponsor of the Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act in 1990, signed by George Bush who worked with President Bush's OMB and OPM on this legislation, obviously one of the things we did was to say if the private sector doesn't get an increase, the public sector won't get an increase. We keyed the increases to the economic cost index, which is all to say that we need to tighten our belts when the private sector tightens their belts.

Which is why, as I think I caught the gentleman's reference, that over the last 2 years, Federal employees have in fact received cuts to existing law which will result in a $60 billion savings. I think the gentleman said that, but it bears repeating. It's not as if the Federal employees haven't tightened their belts. They have. In point of fact, the pay council to which he referred believes on average that Federal employees are in fact behind, not ahead.

Now, I'm aware of the CBO report that was just issued. Mr. CUMMINGS has responded to that. Clearly, what they said is there is a disparity. Those on the lower end of the scale are doing better. Those on the upper end of the scale aren't doing so well. None of them are getting paid as much as the gentleman is who made this speech or that I'm getting. None of them are making as much as we are.

Now, what we have here is a very clever political effort to have Members vote either for their pay or against their pay being adjusted by a cost-of-living adjustment.

I'm going to vote against this bill. I am for bringing a bill to this floor which will freeze our salaries, and I would hope that a unanimous consent to do so would not be objected to on your side of the aisle. I've been for that for the last 2 years, and I have worked in a bipartisan way over the years not to demagogue Members and have Members get cost-of-living adjustment. The sponsor of this bill, as a matter of fact, is quoted as saying how much difficulty he's having supporting his family on his salary.

Now, the fact of the matter is we ought to put a bill on this floor and freeze our salaries. Federal employees have already contributed $60 billion of benefits to which they otherwise would have been entitled because we, for the last 2 years, with my support, have frozen their salaries at the cost-of-living adjustment.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would hope that the bill that is sponsored by Mr. VAN HOLLEN, that there would not be an objection to a unanimous consent request to bring that bill to the floor so that Members could express that, yes, we're prepared to tighten our belts one more notch.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. HOYER. But what we should not do is pretend that we're going to balance the budget by undermining middle class workers, middle class workers who work for, in my opinion, the finest country on Earth and who give excellent service, extraordinary service to the people of this country, and who, per capita, are fewer than they were 20 years ago per capita.

The fact of the matter is that we ought to have a bill, we ought to pass Mr. VAN HOLLEN's bill, we ought to take the politics out of this.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentleman an additional 10 seconds.

Mr. HOYER. Then I tell my friends what we ought to do is we ought to pass a big deal. We ought to pass a $4 trillion to $5 trillion to $6 trillion big deal to get the fiscal house of the United States of America in order. It ought to include all things on the table including Federal employee pay and benefits, including the military pay and benefits and expenditures, and domestic expenditures, as well as entitlements. I've said that. That's what we

ought to do. We ought not to piecemeal it as this bill reflects.

I hope that we'll support Mr. VAN HOLLEN's bill.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. I yield 3 minutes to my colleague from the great State of North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. DUFFY for introducing this bill.

As a consistent opponent of automatic pay increases for Members of Congress, I am pleased to support the bill before us today which would extend the pay freeze for Federal employees and Members of Congress for another year through December 31, 2013.

With the record-shattering budget deficits racked up under the Obama administration, immediate action is needed to restrain runaway government increases and do no more harm to hardworking American taxpayers.

President Obama's liberal Democrat enablers in Congress attempt to ignore the true solution by suggesting endless tax increases, which never have and never will represent the long-term solution to our budget problem.

Excessive pay is part and parcel of a Federal Government that's too large and over budget. While the Federal Government will never be subject to market forces the way the private sector is, fundamental reform of the Federal compensation system is needed.

The simple truth also is that Federal employees are more highly unionized than their counterparts in the private sector. According to a CBO report issued last month: ''The Federal Government and the private sector also differ in the extent to which their workers are represented by unions, which can influence employees' compensation. About 21 percent of Federal workers are members of unions, compared to only 8 percent of private sector workers.''

As a result, the Federal Government pays comparatively higher compensation and provides more generous benefits and job security than private employers.

It's offensive to those unemployed Americans struggling to find a job to see unionized Federal employees continue to enjoy comparatively high compensation which is used to pay dues to government unions which spend heavily to elect politicians who promise them concessions.

According to the Heritage Foundation: ''Government unions were the top political spenders outside the two major parties in the 2010 election cycle.''

That's why I'm pleased Mr. DUFFY is offering H.R. 3835, which is a modest bill estimated to save taxpayers $26.2 billion. This bill also freezes the pay of Members of Congress, which so many taxpayers believe is important in demonstrating our shared commitment to reining in the spiraling Federal ledger. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

I stand in strong opposition to this bill. Federal workers, Madam Speaker, are literally the backbone of our government. They support our troops on the battlefield, and they take care of our veterans when they return home. They protect our borders, safeguard our food supply, ensure that seniors receive their Social Security checks, and hunt down terrorists like Osama bin Laden. They carry out each and every Federal program, service, and initiative Congress has created.

Despite the critical nature of the services that Federal workers provide, the majority believes that their pay should be frozen for yet another year, that their retirement benefits should be slashed, and that the size of the Federal workforce should be reduced sharply, even though it is smaller now than it was under Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Federal workers have already made tremendous sacrifices to address our Nation's budget deficits. The 2-year pay freeze to which they are currently subject will save taxpayers $60 billion. Further, Federal workers face the possibility of layoffs and furloughs in coming years as automatic spending reductions mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011 reduce agency budgets for salaries.

The only workable solution to our country's budget deficit is a balanced one that includes shared sacrifice, including from the wealthiest among us. To date, however, our Republican majority has yet to bring before this House a single bill that will require millionaires and billionaires to contribute more toward deficit reduction. Instead, they are preoccupied with taking money out of the pockets of middle class public servants.

For these reasons, last week I led 17 Members in sending a letter to conferees working on extending the payroll tax cut urging them to reject any and all measures that would disproportionately harm Federal workers. I will continue to oppose any measure that would further cut Federal employee pay or benefits.

Madam Speaker, I'm disappointed but not surprised given the way the majority has run the House that we are now considering this bill under regular order. Instead, the majority introduced a bill on Friday in a pro forma session and is now rushing it to the House floor before any action by appropriate committees can be taken.

□ 1250

I am also disappointed that this measure was placed on the suspension calendar, thereby blocking any amendments to the underlying legislation. Finally, I am disappointed that this bill unfairly links the pay of Federal employees to the pay of Members of Congress.

I strongly support Mr. VAN HOLLEN's bill. The merits of pay increases for Federal workers should be debated separately from our consideration of the pay of Members of Congress. In short, this bill appears to be a disingenuous and disrespectful attack against Federal workers and the regular order of the House.

For these reasons, I strongly urge Members to oppose the bill, and I call on the House leadership to allow us to consider legislation through regular order that does not punish Federal workers in order to score political points.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. I yield 5 minutes to the sponsor of this bill, my distinguished colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY).

Mr. DUFFY. I appreciate the gentleman from Florida for yielding.

I think it is important that we review the history of Federal employee pay freezes. In the last Congress, this came up under a Democrat-controlled House, a Democrat-controlled Senate, and a Democrat President. They voted for a 2-year payroll freeze for Federal employees. They rightly excluded our military, and I think everyone in this House agrees that our military should get a pay increase. But who they wrongly failed to include in the pay freeze were Members of Congress. They didn't include Members of Congress, but every other Federal worker they did include.

So now, today, I've brought a bill to the floor to extend the pay freeze for one more year. My bill is the exact same bill as the Democrats' bill from 2 years ago. The only difference is that I've carved in Members of Congress. Every Member in this House will have his pay frozen just like every other Federal worker's. That is the right thing to do. That's what should have been done 2 years ago but was not done.

I was here to listen to the gentleman from Maryland, the former majority leader, who is outraged that he doesn't have an opportunity to singly vote for a pay freeze for Members of Congress. Yet, as the majority leader, he had the opportunity to include Members of Congress in his bill. Republicans didn't have a say. It was a Democrat House, a Democrat Senate, a Democrat President, and Members of Congress were not included. Now to come here today and to be outraged and say that the Republicans are disingenuous because we have carved in Members of Congress doesn't hold water.

I think it is important to also look at the facts behind Federal employees as they are compared to the private sector. The Congressional Budget Office came out and said that Federal employees make 16 percent more on average than those in the private sector. At this point, what my friends across the aisle have come to the House floor to say is, in a very difficult economy, we want the private sector, which is really the American taxpayer—the ones who have been forced to make concessions with regard to pay, the ones who have been asked to work less hours to keep their jobs—my friends across the aisle

come to the House floor and say, what we want these American taxpayers to do is to not get a pay raise themselves, but to pay for a pay increase for Federal workers who already make 16 percent more than they do.

That doesn't make sense. I hear a lot of conversation from my friends across the aisle about fairness and parity. Well, I think you should start to use the term ''fairness'' today. There should be parity between the private sector and the public sector.

I come from central and northern Wisconsin, and we have a large manufacturing sector in the community in my district. Time and time again, there are rules, there are regulations, there is red tape, and there are taxes that attack our way of life that come from this town of Washington, that attack the way of life in Wisconsin. We bring it up. We talk about it. We complain about it. And guess what? My friends across the aisle turn a deaf ear to our complaints. But today we're going to do a 1-year extension of a Federal employee pay freeze, and they are outraged by that. They are listening, they are advocating, they are arguing for more Federal pay.

Come on. Use fairness today. Use the argument of parity today. This was your bill. This is a 1-year extension.

The final point: The President's debt commission, Simpson-Bowles, said we should have a 3-year freeze on Federal pay. That's what my bill does. I don't want the argument to be that my friends across the aisle don't really care about the Federal employee pay freeze and that they only care about their own pay freeze, because that is the only difference. The only difference in my bill is that I've included Members of Congress.

This makes sense. Let's come together. The American people are sick of the partisan bickering. They would expect that there are issues on the left and that there are issues on the right that this House could and should fight about, but I think they're sick of commonsense issues that come down in the middle that we should agree on. Let's get together. Let's pass this bill. Let's freeze Federal employees' salaries for one more year.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I think the record should be clear that every year that the Congress has frozen Federal employee pay, we have also frozen congressional pay. What we have not done is try to hold Federal employee pay hostage to what we do on congressional pay. We should also be very clear that all of us on the Democratic side support freezing congressional pay in the year 2013.

Indeed, Mr. CUMMINGS and I, Mr. HOYER and others have introduced legislation to do just that. It's H.R. 3858. The Democratic leadership asked that we be able to bring that up on the suspension calendar today, and we were denied that opportunity.

So I now ask unanimous consent that, after we complete debate on this bill, we add to today's suspension calendar H.R. 3858 so that we can vote as a body on freezing congressional pay.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded on page 752 of the House Rules and Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the gentleman's request unless it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. This illustrates the point exactly.

As I said, Madam Speaker, we have been denied that opportunity by the Republican leadership, so I want to just be clear.

We were denied the opportunity today to have an up-or-down vote on freezing congressional pay. That's what we should do, and the refusal to allow us to do that demonstrates that what we're really seeing is an effort to use congressional pay as a political weapon to punish all Federal employees: to prevent any COLAs—cost-of-living adjustments—for Federal employees. Otherwise we would be able to bring up that bill separately.

Now, what we're seeing again is an effort to single out Federal employees as scapegoats for the economic problems that they had nothing to do with—they had nothing to do with the meltdown on Wall Street; they had nothing to do with the policies of the previous administration that helped bring our economy to this position. Yet what we're seeing today is what we're seeing in States, where we have Governors in Wisconsin, where we have Governors in Ohio, where we have other, mostly Republican, Governors scapegoating public servants in their States and singling them out as if they were the problem.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Federal employees have already seen a 2-year freeze, which saved $60 billion, and Federal employees are willing to do their share. What we should not do is single them out. Now, the President has asked for a one-half percent cost-of-living adjustment. That still is short of the 1.7 percent cost-of-living that they will face.

So it's time that we stop saying to those folks who are out there every day helping keep our food safe, helping track down Osama bin Laden, other people who help protect our borders, and do other things that we're going to single them out for unfair treatment as part of the budget. Let's take it up as part of the full budget and not single them out the way we're doing here.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 1, 2012.

Hon. ERIC I. CANTOR,
Majority Leader,
House of Representatives.

REPRESENTATIVE CANTOR: We are writing to request that the bill, H.R. 3858 to extend the pay freeze on Members of Congress, be placed on the suspension calendar. Federal employees have seen no cost-of-living adjustment for two years and will lose $60 billion in income over 10 years.

We believe that members should have the opportunity to vote to freeze the pay of members of Congress without cutting pay for all Federal employees.

Sincerely,

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,
Member of Congress.
NANCY PELOSI,
Member of Congress.
STENY H. HOYER,
Member of Congress.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for bringing forward this important bill.

I want to refer to some facts here because we do have some good, hard-working Federal employees. Make no mistake about it: They're just as patriotic, if not more, than everybody else in our country. They work hard, and they deserve just compensation. But the compensation trajectory on which we're going forward in this country, Madam Speaker, is neither sustainable nor fair.

I was hoping that when the majority leader was addressing us that he would yield to the question, because one of the stats he threw out is that none of these people are earning as much as Members of Congress. Yet I would point out, for instance, that at the end of 2009 in the Department of Transportation, there was one person earning a salary of $170,000.

□ 1300

And yet 18 months later, there were 1,690 employees in the Department of Transportation earning at least $170,000 in compensation.

I would also point out that since President Barack Obama took office, until now, there are an additional 144,700 civilian Federal employees. These are new people added to the payroll, more than 144,000 new people on the payroll.

In 2010, more than 50 percent of all General Schedule employees received a step increase or a promotion, hardly a pay freeze that President Obama would have led us to believe was happening. Also for 2010, 62.9 percent of all General Schedule employees received an award or bonus. Now, in these dire economic times and people trying to tighten their belts in the private sector, I think it's stunning that close to 63 percent of our General Schedule employees, Federal employees, got an award or a bonus.

Now, this new CBO study that came out this week right here, the average Federal benefits that exceeded the private sector levels by 48 percent, the

benefits that are being given to the Federal employees exceed the private sector by 48 percent, according to the CBO. And the total average Federal compensation is 16 percent when you weigh that in with the other base pay, 16 percent above the private sector. Now, you can find an isolated case where maybe somebody is being undercompensated, but you can find a whole lot more people that are being overcompensated.

Now, most people, if you ask in your mind, how many Federal employees out there are earning at least $100,000 in their base pay, Madam Speaker, that number is in excess of 450,000 people on our Federal payroll who are earning in excess of $100,000.

In fact, if you go back and look at the payroll, the total Federal payroll for the Federal Government, in 2008 it was roughly $400 billion; in 2011 it's projected to be $452 billion. You should also look at one of the more stunning numbers that I saw, Madam Speaker, and that is from 2010 to 2011, there were 16,000 Federal employees that moved up to having at least a base pay of $100,000.

So to suggest that there has been some sort of pay freeze in place, I would argue, is wholeheartedly incorrect. It is a matter of fairness and balance.

I appreciate Mr. DUFFY for his fine work in bringing this bill forward because we should limit the pay of Members of Congress. We should also do so for the Federal civilian workforce.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the other side constantly brings up the CBO report. The much better report is the Bureau of Labor Statistics report. They have more experience at this, and they show that Federal employees were paid 26 percent less than private sector employees.

I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, Washington is the headquarters of the Congress. It is not the headquarters of Federal employees. Eighty-five percent of them live in other cities and in towns and suburbs.

Let's all agree that deficit reduction is a priority, and that it is appropriate to lead from the top. Nor should Federal employees be exempt from this leadership by example. But it starts at the top, not at the bottom of the Federal workforce.

These Federal employees live under often greatly differing costs of living, depending on where they live in the country. It is up to us to lead by example, not Federal employees, although they should not be exempt from this leadership role.

However, it is an unfair ruse to compare the most-favored Federal employees, Members of Congress, with the least favored, Federal employees across the board. Some are paid a great deal, some are paid very little, some come from high-cost areas of the country, some come from low-cost areas of the country.

Most of our constituents will understand who we were voting for and who we were voting against.

Democrats have a long history of respecting civil servants. Republicans have spent years deriding them in good times and bad. They know full well also that Congress would not dare take a raise now, and they know that Federal employees should not become, as they apparently have, the proverbial piggy bank for all-purpose deficit reduction.

We have had two freezes that were almost automatic on Federal employees. That's the very reason why this bill should be sent to committee to determine what is fair now in the third year after $60 billion in cuts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. NORTON. Precisely because there have been two almost automatic freezes with no hearings, it is time to send this bill to the committee to determine what is fair for Federal employees. Have they contributed enough or, using my standard, leadership by example, should they contribute more? If you want to lead by example, Members of Congress should stand up and ask for a freeze for themselves, by themselves, like men and women.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, at this time I have no further speakers, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, may I ask how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 7½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Florida has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH).

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3835, which would extend the current-year pay freeze for Federal workers for an additional year through 2013. This will be the third year of a pay freeze.

Similar to most of my colleagues who have spoken here today, I do support a freeze for Congress. I have voted six times to freeze Congress' pay.

While my good friend from Utah does point out that there are some high-end, high-salaried Federal employees, you have to remember that we have surgeons at the VA, very competent doctors at the VA that serve our veterans. We have scientists at NIH. We have very, very good attorneys at the SEC prosecuting very complex fraud cases. To attract those individuals, we do need to attract very competent and highly skilled individuals, and that's where those higher salaries are aggregated.

But we should be reminded that the vast majority of our Federal employees are middle-income earners. Oddly enough, we could have addressed this if this bill had gone through committee, through regular order. This bill has come to the floor without going through committee. It has not been subject to amendment.

We could have come up with a bill that said, okay, we are going to freeze the pay of high-income Federal employees. We didn't do that.

So you've got people out there making $30,000, $40,000 a year, secretaries and other staff, that their pay has been frozen for. If this goes through, it will be 3 years. So we could have done a better job if this bill had gone through the regular order and gone through committee.

I'm also concerned about the rationale behind this legislation. Similar to many of my colleagues today, while I support the freeze on congressional pay, we see a lot of legislation coming up in this Congress that attacks Federal employees, and I think this is one more example of that.

I totally oppose it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentleman.

This is another in a series of legislative attacks that have targeted our Federal workers throughout the 112th Congress. It will further erode employee morale and diminish the Federal Government's ability to attract the best and brightest to perform the important jobs that we need to perform. Our dedicated civil servants play a vital role in such critical areas as law enforcement, national defense, public health, and the delivery of services to America's veterans, elderly, and the disabled. They should not bear a disproportionate burden when it comes to addressing our Nation's budget problems.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing any further efforts to balance the Nation's budget on the backs of our hardworking Federal employees by voting ''no'' on H.R. 3835.

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Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Madam Speaker, earlier it was referenced that there was another study showing that the compensation was 26 percent lower than the private sector. I would point out that that did not include compensation for benefits. Certainly when you look at someone's total compensation plan, you have to look at the benefits they are achieving.

I would also point out that in the CBO study on pages 10 and 11, the total compensation is actually more askew for the lower-educated people. People who earned high school diplomas or less are getting 36 percent more than they would in the private sector. It's actually the higher end, people with

professional degrees or doctorates who are actually being undercompensated, at least according to this study. And they only account for about 7 percent of our workforce.

So if you look at the bulk of our workforce, some roughly 93 percent, you're going to see a double digit percentage increase versus the private sector.

This is not an attack on our Federal workforce. Be grateful that you have a job. What we have to understand is that it's the taxpayers' money, and we have to be frugal with it.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. Madam Speaker, I thank my very good friend, the distinguished ranking member of the committee, for yielding me this time to rise in strong opposition to an extension of the current pay freeze for Federal employees.

This legislation is a cynical attempt to tap into misguided resentment fostered by the far right against the Federal Government and the 2 million men and women who serve our Nation as civil servants.

Of those 2 million, let me point out to my colleagues that nearly two out of three civil servants work for the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Justice. In other words, two out of three Federal employees work in jobs related to our national security at home and abroad or caring for our veterans. Every one of those employees now seems to be the target of this body's misguided anger, and that's just wrong.

Most of our Federal employees work for the Defense Department to enhance our security. Employees at the Department of Homeland Security work to ensure that nuclear materials aren't smuggled into our country by those who want to do us catastrophic harm. The Federal Bureau of Investigation works to investigate and prosecute cybercriminals that steal billions of dollars of intellectual property from our defense and civilian industrial base every year. This body claims to care about preventing nuclear terrorism and halting cyber crime, yet we want to punish those charged with carrying out that mission.

Last year, a constituent of mine was awarded a ''Sammie'' from the Partnership for Public Service for his work at the VA helping to address veterans struggling with the human toll of warfare. My constituent has devoted 30 years of his career building a national network of small, community-based centers where veterans traumatized by combat obtain counseling, job assistance, medical referrals, and other services. The Partnership rewarded him last year, but today the House wants to forfeit his pay raise for a third consecutive year.

This bill is the product of an ideologically extreme group of people who got elected by insisting that our government is broken. And now that they're elected, they want to try to prove that is the case. It's not the case. We ought to be proud of our government and reject this bill.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

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

As I listen to the debate and as I listen to the other side—and I do want to associate myself with the words of my colleague, Mr. MORAN, and the others who have spoken—over and over again we hear on the one side of the mouth coming from our Republican colleagues that they love our Federal employees so much and they do such a great job, but on the other hand they say they want to freeze their pay.

One of the things that I have found so interesting, and we've heard the argument over and over, is when it came to taxes with regard to the millionaires and billionaires, they didn't want to tax them one penny more, not one dime. But yet, the person who works here in this building, the ones that work at Social Security and other places, the ones that Mr. MORAN just talked about, the ones who are protecting the homeland, they say to them: We want to make sure we freeze your pay. There's something awfully wrong with that picture.

I believe very strongly that we all should share in the benefits, and we should share in the sacrifice, too. They didn't ask for one dime, not a dime more from the millionaires and the folks that are making all of the money. But yet still you've got people in the Federal system, according to the CBO report, if you want to go there, and that CBO report says those people with a master's degree or above, they are making 23 percent less. What about them? What about the people who day after day sacrifice and could possibly be making a lot more money in the private sector, what about them? Some of them, by the way, are on our staffs.

So I would just urge—and again, it's been implied that we on this side have a problem with a pay freeze for our Members of Congress. We don't have a problem with that. I will go on the record saying that. And these issues should be divided.

With that, Madam Speaker, I urge Members to vote against this very bad bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I'm new here. I'm one of those freshmen. I'm one of those freshmen who's been told you don't know how Washington works. I'm one of those freshmen who's been told you need to get in line, that's been told you need to get in line.

Well, if successive 4 years of trillion-dollar deficits is the way Washington works, then I don't want it working that way. You see, I wasn't sent here to learn how Washington works; I was sent here to change the way Washington works.

And when we have a President proposing a military budget that cuts our military back to pre-World War II levels, and yet we continue to increase our Federal payroll while private sector payroll employment goes down, there's something wrong with the way Washington works.

Washington is broken, and I submit to you that we need to lead by example. We have done so already by reducing our MRAs, our Members' accounts, by 11 percent. We've done so already by reducing our committee budgets. But we need to go further if we're going to lead by example, because you see, leadership is not a title. Leadership is an act. And I submit to you, Madam Speaker, that today we lead by example, and I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 3835, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, once again the Republican leadership is attacking America's 2.3 million civilian Federal employees. In a brazen act of political opportunism, Speaker BOEHNER is using the public's well-founded dissatisfaction with Congress to bludgeon public servants. H.R. 3835, which we will vote on under suspension of the rules on Wednesday, will freeze pay for Members of Congress . . . and Federal employees.

Two million of the 2.3 million Federal employees—which is 86%—do NOT live in the Washington, DC metropolitan region. They live in what has been referred to fondly as the ''real America.'' The region with the highest percentage (37 percent) of Federal employees is the South, home of such venerable institutions as the Oak Ridge research lab, Red Stone Arsenal, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The majority of Federal employees work on defense and homeland security. They guard our borders, protect the safety of airline travel, fight forest fires, and track down online child predators. Would it be unreasonable to point out that passage of this bill could aid and abet terrorists, cross-border gun runners, and child pornographers?

We can all anticipate the anonymous PAC-funded television ads that will run against those of us who oppose this ignominious legislation: ''Call and ask why Congressman X voted to raise his own pay.'' The other consequences of this bill, should it pass, are far worse. Freezing pay of a workforce that already receives 26 percent less than the private sector, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, will further degrade critical public services and weaken an already fragile economy.

Federal employees' pay has been frozen for the last two years. While private sector pay has grown, Federal pay has stagnated. By denigrating public service and dismantling Federal pay and benefits, we are crippling our ability to recruit and retain the next generation of top tier public servants. The victims of this assault on public employees are our constituents—the public we are supposed to serve—who rely on services provided by Federal employees every day in every American community.

I respectfully request that we maintain whatever shreds of dignity this institution has left and reject H.R. 3835.

Mr. WAXMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this latest attack on Federal workers.

H.R. 3835 is not a balanced proposal.

Federal employees have already been asked to make significant sacrifices to help reduce our debt. So far, they have contributed $60 billion through a two-year pay freeze and they face the prospect of furloughs and layoffs in the coming years as the Budget Control Act's automatic cuts reduce agency budgets. Despite this, House Republicans continue to push for expanded concessions in compensation and benefits.

H.R. 3835 would require Federal workers to forego an additional $26 billion in pay over the next decade even though Federal employees actually earn less than their private sector counterparts when factors such as skill and education level are taken into account.

H.R. 3835 is not a serious attempt to address the budget deficit. The $26 billion it would raise over 10 years would cover only 2 percent of the projected budget deficit for FY 2012 alone. True deficit reduction will need to be balanced and sacrifice will need to be shared.

H.R. 3835 is also misguided policy.

The Federal government should not be an employer of last resort. Our citizens depend on our ability to recruit the most qualified individuals to treat our wounded veterans, inspect our food, oversee nuclear power plants, protect us from terrorism, and provide a broad range of other critical services. While H.R. 3835 would get us almost nowhere in tackling our long term debt, and shield the wealthiest individuals and corporations from making any kind of contribution, it would have a devastating long-term effect on the quality of government services and operations.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation.

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3835. This bill is yet another example of the Republican majority's desire to play political games instead of promoting commonsense legislative solutions to our Nation's problems.

Madam Speaker, I believe this is exactly the wrong time to raise salaries for me and my colleagues in Congress. We shouldn't get it. But I do not believe that millions of hard-working Federal employees should be punished. They already gave $5 billion with their salary freeze over the past two years.

One of my top priorities in Congress is protecting the rights of middle class families, which includes many millions of Federal workers. I have the utmost respect for the hard work and public service that Federal civilian employees perform each and every day, and I believe they deserve to be compensated fairly. Federal workers are not overpaid. Comparison studies show that for the educational level and job category, they are paid less than others. In fact, Federal workers with a professional or doctorate degree earn 23 percent less, on average, than their private sector counterparts. In order to attract the most talented men and women to Federal service, it is imperative that we offer competitive salaries and benefits. This legislation sends the wrong message to the millions of men and women who serve the American people. It tells them that we may value the work that they do on behalf of the American people, but not enough to compensate them fairly.

Madam Speaker, this bill is a game. It is not a serious attempt to address the deficit or debt. It is ''gotcha'' politics. Pay for Federal workers did not get us into a deficit—two unpaid wars, a prescription drug benefit, and several tax cuts for the rich blew a hole in the budget. But rather than address those root causes, the majority today is blaming hard-working Federal employees.

Madam Speaker, rather than this phony bill, I am a cosponsor of Ranking Member VAN HOLLEN's legislation to extend the pay freeze for Members of Congress through 2013 without affecting the salaries of the men and women of our Federal workforce. Members of Congress should not get a pay increase this year. This is something we all agree on, Mr. Speaker. When the legislation to forego a cost of living pay raise in 2011 came before this body in April 2010, it passed by a vote of 402 to 15. Bring this bill to freeze Members' pay through 2013 to the floor and I will support it. So would most of our colleagues, I believe.

Mr. MARINO. Madam Speaker, it is undeniable that our nation faces dire economic circumstances. This Congress must continue to cut spending and reduce the size and scope of Washington. I strongly support the efforts of House Republicans to make responsible and necessary cuts to the federal workforce. A responsible federal pay freeze is an important part of that equation, particularly for Members of Congress, the President, and political appointees.

However, I rise today to express concerns regarding H.R. 3835 which we are now considering. I believe that the current pay freeze and a continuation of it has a disproportionate impact on employees that face mandatory retirement age, such as many of our law enforcement officers. These employees put their lives at risk every single day to defend our safety and freedom.

I recently toured several federal prisons located in my district and it is unbelievable what these guards go through to ensure that some of the most violent criminals in America remain behind bars. Due to the physical and mental abuse that these guards go through during their careers, it is mandatory that they retire at 57. Unfortunately, the officers currently near the mandatory retirement age will not be able to make up any lost salary by working a few extra years.

Additionally, I am concerned about the effects a continued pay freeze will have on recruitment and retention of federal law enforcement officers. Prison officers already face a long and rigorous hiring process and deplorably low wages. The prospect of not seeing an increase in pay will add yet another barrier to recruiting the best and most fit to guard our prisons and protect our safety.

I will support this legislation because I believe that Members of Congress and political appointees should not see a pay increase and that a responsible pay freeze is needed. I ask the sponsor of this legislation, House and Senate leaders, and the administration to consider the lasting impacts of a pay freeze on the federal law enforcement officers who put their lives at risk every single day to ensure that our families are safe.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today, I voted in favor of extending the pay freeze on Members of Congress. While Members of Congress should not be getting raises during a recession, our federal employees who provide services to our military members and ensure senior citizens receive their checks on time do not deserve to bear the brunt of cost-cutting efforts. The federal employees who daily show up for work in a spirit of service to our country deserve our respect and support.

Federal employees deserve thanks for the work they do, often at lower pay than they could command in the private sector, out of a spirit of service to our country. These federal workers don't deserve to be the pawns in cynical political showdowns. Shared sacrifice is necessary from all Americans as we continue finding ways to balance budget and to preserve critical programs, targeting one group over another out of political spite is not the answer. Federal workers are hard working American and I thank them for their efforts on behalf of the American people.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, tonight the U.S. House of Representatives will vote on a Republican bill that attacks federal employees and aims to balance the budget on the backs of hard-working federal civil servants for political points. Republicans claim this bill freezes the salaries of Members of Congress, but what they fail to mention is that this bill would also freeze the pay of federal employees, including 10,000 civil servants in El Paso.

Federal employees have already made significant sacrifices to help reduce the government's budget deficit. They are now enduring a two-year pay freeze that took effect in January 2011. Federal employees also face the possibility of layoffs and furloughs in coming years as automatic spending reductions mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011 cut federal agency budgets.

Republicans need to stop attacking federal employees. This pointless legislation only serves to distract from the real issue: helping revitalize the economy and create jobs. I will continue to stand with federal employees and their families.

The Republican message is clear to our hard-working federal employees, over 12,000 in El Paso, who secure our border, care for our veterans, and protect our air and water—they would rather freeze the wages of middle class workers than raise taxes on the millionaires and billionaires. I want to reassure all federal employees in El Paso that I will continue to work hard against attacks that jeopardize their livelihood and ability to support their families.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I do not believe that Members of Congress should receive a pay raise, and that is why I am voting for this bill. However, today's bill isn't just a vote on whether or not to freeze salaries for Members of Congress. The second part of this legislation extends the pay freeze for federal employees for a third consecutive year. This gives me serious pause. These issues should not be tied together. There should be one vote on Member salaries and a separate vote on extending the pay freeze for federal employees.

I am concerned that the language in this bill pertaining to federal employees' pay has not been considered through the normal process. I'm not arguing that freezing Members' salaries needs a hearing. That's obvious. Freezing our pay doesn't need to be vetted.

Federal employees are the issue. This bill has been rushed to the floor less than a week

after being introduced. No hearings have been held. Only 40 minutes of debate are being allowed. No amendments are permitted.

Has anyone fully considered the impact that a three-year pay freeze will have on the CIA, the NSA, the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Counter Terrorism Center?

Or the impact on the FBI, which has, since 9/11, disrupted scores of terrorist plots against our country?

Or the impact on our military, which is supported by federal employees every day on military bases across the Nation?

Or the impact on VA hospitals across the country, which are treating military veterans from World War II to today?

Or the impact on the Border Patrol?

Or the impact on NASA, its astronauts, engineers and scientists, especially on the nine-year anniversary of the tragic loss of the Columbia crew and a week after the 45th anniversary of the loss of the Apollo 1 crew?

Or the impact on NIH, and other federal researchers, scientists and doctors?

Clearly, federal employees don't just sit behind desks. They are members of our communities who are out in the field, often in harm's way, protecting our Nation. Just here in northern Virginia, residents recently mourned the loss of two federal employees who died in the line of duty—U.S. Park Police Sergeant Michael Andrew Boehm of Burke, and National Park Service Ranger Margaret Anderson, who previously worshipped in Lovettsville.

Their sacrifices remind us that many federal employees are often put in dangerous situations. Since 1992, nearly 3,000 federal employees have paid the ultimate price while serving their country, according to the Office of Personnel Management. The first American killed in Afghanistan, Mike Spann, was a CIA agent and a constituent of mine from Manassas Park. I attended his funeral. Over 100,000 CIA, FBI, DEA agents, and State Department employees have served side-by-side with our military to carry out the War on Terror in locations such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Two years ago, I attended funerals for some of the seven CIA agents who were killed by a suicide bomber at Forward Operating Base Chapman near Khost on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

And we should not forget that the CIA agents who planned and helped execute the raid that killed Osama Bin Laden are federal employees.

Every day, Border Patrol agents and ICE agents are working to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs across our borders. Federal firefighters work to protect federal lands and mitigate the spread of deadly fires. Immediately following the December 2011 shooting at Virginia Tech, some of the first law enforcement officers on the scene were ATF agents. These are but a few examples of the vital jobs performed by federal employees.

Federal employees who are not in harm's way on a daily basis are also dedicated public servants. The medical researchers at the National Institutes of Health working to develop cures for cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and autism are all federal employees. Dr. Francis Collins, the physician who mapped the human genome and serves as director of the NIH, is a federal employee. The National Weather Service meteorologists who track tornadoes and hurricanes, as well as the FDA inspectors working to stop a salmonella outbreak, are federal employees.

It is cheap grace to claim that today's legislation will in any way address our Nation's fiscal obligations. The national debt is over $15 trillion. It is projected to reach $17 trillion next year and $21 trillion in 2021. We have annual deficits of more than $1 trillion. We have unfunded obligations and liabilities of $65 trillion. This bill does not even direct the Congress to use the ''savings'' from today's bill to be used for deficit reduction or any other particular purpose.

I am concerned that this vote is merely an attempt to position the House to use federal employees as a ''pay-for'' to fund the further extension of the payroll ''holiday'' legislation that is currently before a conference committee.

This is wrong. And my vote today to freeze Members' salaries should not be construed in any way to indicate that I would support such a position from the conference committee. Let me be clear, the payroll ''holiday'' should expire on schedule at the end of this month. It does nothing more than steal from the Social Security Trust Fund, which is already going broke. And, according to recent polling reported by The Hill, most Americans haven't noticed any benefit from this ''holiday.''

Social Security is unique because it is paid for through a dedicated tax on workers who will receive future benefits. The money paid today funds benefits for existing retirees, and ensures future benefits. Because you pay now, a future worker will pay your benefits. That is why, until last year, this revenue stream was considered sacrosanct by both political parties.

Social Security is on an unsustainable path. Today's medical breakthroughs were simply not envisioned when the system was created in 1935. For example, in 1950, the average American lived for 68 years and 16 workers supported one retiree. Today, the average life expectancy is 78 and three workers support one retiree. Three and a half million people received Social Security in 1950; 55 million receive it today. Every day since January 1, 2011, over 10,000 baby-boomers turned 65. This trend will continue every day for the next 19 years. Do these numbers sound sustainable to anyone?

The Social Security Actuary has said that by 2036 the trust fund will be unable to pay full benefits. This means that everyone will receive an across-the-board cut of 22 percent, regardless of how much money they paid into the system.

After months of passionately debating the importance of reducing the deficit, the president and Congress are now continuing to advocate for a payroll ''holiday'' that's barely, if at all, improved our economic outlook and further contributes to our crushing debt burden.

And does it make sense that everyone, regardless of income, will get money from this ''stimulus?'' Does anyone think that Warren Buffet changed his buying habits as a result of this temporary suspension? Or did General Electric's CEO, Jeffery Immelt, the head of President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness who recently shipped GE's medical imaging division from Wisconsin to China, benefit from this ''holiday?'' Leadership from both parties have stated that extending this policy is paramount. I regret that time is being spent on a flawed policy instead of tackling the difficult choices to address our nation's unfunded spending obligations.

We all know what needs to be done to address the deficit and debt and that is why I have supported every serious effort to resolve this crisis, including the Bowles-Simpson recommendations, the Ryan Budget, the ''Gang of Six,'' the ''Cut, Cap and Balance'' plan and the Budget Control Act.

I also was among the bipartisan group of 103 members of Congress who urged the supercommittee to ''go big'' and identify $4 trillion in savings. I voted for the Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution, which would have established critical institutional reforms to ensure that the federal government lives within its means. In addition, since 2006, I have introduced my own bipartisan legislation, the SAFE Commission, multiple times.

While none of these solutions were perfect, they all took the necessary steps to rebuild and protect our economy. In order to solve this problem, everything must be on the table for consideration—all entitlement spending, all domestic discretionary spending, including defense spending, and tax reform, particularly changes to make the tax code more simple and fair and to end the practice of tax earmarks and loopholes that cost hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Yet on the floor today, the Congress won't even, at a minimum, commit the savings from this bill towards deficit reduction. There is something fundamentally wrong with this scenario.

I've always had a policy where my staff in Washington, Herndon and Winchester were treated the same as federal employees. They work hard. But when federal employees faced furloughs, so did my staff. And because federal employees work under a pay freeze, my staff is working under a pay freeze. I have always felt that federal employees, and congressional staff, committee and leadership staff, should be treated equally. I feel that the moral choice has always been to treat everyone equally.

Above all, we should not let today's vote distract us from having the difficult conversations that are necessary to ensure that programs and services are reduced in a manner that responsibly lowers the deficit. There is never a convenient time to make hard decisions, but the longer we put off fixing the problem, the worse the medicine will be and the greater the number of Americans who will be hurt. America is living on borrowed dollars and borrowed time. We must stop leaving piles of debt to our children and grandchildren.

It was disappointing to hear the president deliver a campaign speech from the floor of this House during the State of the Union. It is disappointing that this House is now following his lead.

Federal employees live, work, pay taxes, liaise with contractors and businesses, and spend the money that is driving the private sector growth here in Virginia. We shouldn't use them as offsets for a failed policy that steals from Social Security.

Voting to freeze member pay is the easy thing to do. Let's be sure that today's actions don't distract us from the tough choices ahead. We should let the payroll ''holiday'' expire on schedule. We should put everything on the table—including discretionary spending, tax earmarks and loopholes, defense spending, and entitlements to address our nation's debt. We should be balancing our books to eliminate the need for sequestration. It's time to get to work.

Let's not continue to kick the can down the road as we wait for a better political moment. I stand ready to continue to work with my colleagues to find real, comprehensive reforms to our spending, tax, and entitlement systems to ensure that these programs exist. Our children and grandchildren deserve nothing less.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3835, which would extend the pay limits for federal employees through 2013. Nearly 2 million federal civilian workers stand to be affected by this pay freeze if it is enacted by Congress.

For the last two years, federal employees and their families have suffered the consequences of an across-the-board pay freeze. While the cost of vital goods such as food and gas, medical expenses, and rent continue to rise, H.R. 3835 seeks to prolong that burden on millions of families by extending this pay freeze for another year. Federal employees and their families are no less affected by downward trends in the economy than any others in the workforce, and it is unfair to ask that they continually make these sacrifices when Congress will not even ask the same sacrifice of millionaires, billionaires, and the largest corporations.

These kinds of pay freezes do more than just take precious disposable income away from working families. So many federal workers came to the federal government because they have excellent credentials and are committed to public service. By limiting the amount of money that the federal government can offer to prospective employees, Congress is effectively limiting its own ability to attract and retain highly-educated and highly-skilled workers to carry out important roles such as national security, maintaining critical transportation infrastructure, and caring for our veterans.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3835 is simply another partisan attempt to hold working families hostage for petty political gain. Federal employees have already contributed $60 billion toward reducing the deficit the past two years, and it is time to finally ask the wealthiest businesses and members of society to start paying their fair share. H.R. 3835 is sorely misguided and I will oppose this bill in any way that I can.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROSS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3835.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROSS of Florida. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ADJUSTING EXPENSES OF CERTAIN HOUSE COMMITTEES IN 112TH CONGRESS

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 496) adjusting the amount provided for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Twelfth Congress.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 496

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ADJUSTMENT OF AMOUNTS OF COMMITTEE EXPENSES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS.

(a) AGGREGATE AMOUNT FOR CONGRESS.—Notwithstanding section 1(b) of House Resolution 147, the amount paid out of the applicable accounts of the House of Representatives with respect to the One Hundred Twelfth Congress for the expenses (including the expenses of all staff salaries) of each committee named in such section shall be as follows: Committee on Agriculture, $11,848,132; Committee on Armed Services, $14,900,023; Committee on the Budget, $11,680,246; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $16,158,348; Committee on Energy and Commerce, $21,678,149; Committee on Ethics, $6,218,310; Committee on Financial Services, $16,825,969; Committee on Foreign Affairs, $17,331,982; Committee on Homeland Security, $16,347,050; Committee on House Administration, $10,118,345; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $9,977,660; Committee on the Judiciary, $16,265,122; Committee on Natural Resources, $15,235,867; Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, $20,546,873; Committee on Rules, $6,566,883; Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, $12,671,660; Committee on Small Business, $6,598,427; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $19,195,872; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $7,049,575; and Committee on Ways and Means, $18,975,444.

(b) SECOND SESSION LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding section 3(b) of House Resolution 147, the amount provided for the expenses of each committee named in such section which shall be available for expenses incurred during the period beginning at noon on January 3, 2012, and ending immediately before noon on January 3, 2013 shall be not more than the following: Committee on Agriculture, $5,658,638; Committee on Armed Services, $7,374,759; Committee on the Budget, $5,647,061; Committee on Education and the Workforce, $7,812,094; Committee on Energy and Commerce, $10,697,209; Committee on Ethics, $3,393,775; Committee on Financial Services, $8,384,705; Committee on Foreign Affairs, $8,379,512; Committee on Homeland Security, $7,903,326; Committee on House Administration, $5,169,169; Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, $4,823,910; Committee on the Judiciary, $7,863,716; Committee on Natural Resources, $7,366,101; Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, $9,933,819; Committee on Rules, $3,174,898; Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, $5,986,023; Committee on Small Business, $3,383,536; Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, $9,280,649; Committee on Veterans' Affairs, $3,446,830; and Committee on Ways and Means, $9,174,079.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 496.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 496. This resolution adjusts the amounts provided for the expenses of the select and standing committees of the House of Representatives in the 112th Congress.

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Last November, the Committee on House Administration held a full-day hearing at which we heard from our chairs and ranking members. At that hearing, we discussed how each committee absorbed the 5 percent budget reduction implemented at the beginning of the 112th Congress and how, as we continue to reduce government spending, they will manage additional reductions this year.

Madam Speaker, I know, as a committee chairman myself, that we face the difficult task of doing more with less. Yet I also know that my constituents, all of our constituents, need us to do more with less and to rein in government spending. Families have been required to tighten their belts, and they constantly ask us to do the very same thing. They do not suggest it is easy, because it has not been easy for them. But they ask of us that which they have asked of themselves. Today's economy has forced our constituents to sacrifice and, as I say, tighten their financial belts to make ends meet at home. Congress should not be and will not be immune.

While most committees are taking a 6.4 percent cut in line with the reduced funding levels of the 2012 legislative branch appropriation, certain committees faced with additional oversight responsibilities in 2012 were cut at a smaller percentage in order that they might be able to conduct their work.

Particularly daunting will be the Armed Services' charge of managing the automatic sequestration of $600 billion in defense cuts triggered by the Budget Control Act. And I hasten to add that is in addition to, or on top of, the $400 billion cut that is already being enforced by prior decisions by this Congress and the President.

In addition to Armed Services, the Ethics Committee, tasked with holding Members and staff to the highest ethical standards, has requested and will receive a reprieve from funding reductions.

To help offset these exceptions and match the reduced appropriations, we've identified and reduced authorizations of three committee budgets that we feel are able to absorb a slightly higher reduction in 2012. In addition to