Speaker's table the Senate bill (S. 1328) to amend the commencement dates of certain temporary Federal judgeships and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

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

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I do so to yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. MOORHEAD] to explain his request.

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, this is a companion Senate bill. This action will enable the bill to go to the President.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 1328

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

SECTION 1. COMMENCEMENT DATE OF TEMPORARY JUDGESHIPS.

Section 203(c) of the Judicial Improvements Act of 1990 (Public Law 101–650; 104 Stat. 5101; 28 U.S.C. 133 note) is amended by striking out the last sentence and inserting in lieu thereof ''The first vacancy in the office of district judge in each of the judicial districts named in this subsection, except the western district of Michigan, occurring 5 years or more after the confirmation date of the judge named to fill a temporary judgeship created by this Act, shall not be filled. The first vacancy in the office of district judge in the western district of Michigan, occurring after December 1, 1995, shall not be filled.''.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

A similar House bill (H.R. 2361) was laid on the table.

□ 1500

CONCURRING IN SENATE AMENDMENT TO HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 122, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 1966

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to take from the Speaker's table the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 122) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, and to consider in the House a motion offered by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations to dispose of the Senate amendment, that the Senate amendment and motion shall be considered as read, that the motion shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and the ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their designees, and that the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to final adoption without intervening motion.

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

There was no objection.

POSTPONING ELECTRONIC VOTE ON HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 122

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that if a recorded vote is ordered, or yeas and nays are ordered, or a vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV, on the question of adopting the motion that the House concur in the Senate amendment to House Joint Resolution 122, then the Chair may postpone further proceedings on that question until a later time or place in the legislative schedule of the current legislative day, any may resume such proceedings as though postponed pursuant to clause 5(b)(1) of rule I.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House, I call up the joint resolution (H. J. Res. 122), making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, and I offer a motion.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the Senate amendment.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

SENATE AMENDMENT:

Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert:

That the following sums are hereby appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, and out of applicable corporate or other revenues, receipts, and funds, for the several departments, agencies, corporations, and other organizational units of Government for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 101. (a) Such amounts as may be necessary under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995 for continuing projects or activities including the costs of direct loans and loan guarantees (not otherwise specifically provided for in this joint resolution) which were conducted in the fiscal year 1995 and for which appropriations, funds, or other authority would be available in the following appropriations Acts:

The Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996, notwithstanding section 15 of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, section 701 of the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, section 313 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103–236), and section 53 of the Arms Control and Disarmament Act;

Provided, That whenever the amount which would be made available or the authority which would be granted in these Acts is greater than that which would be available or granted under current operations, the pertinent project or activity shall be continued at a rate for operations not exceeding the current rate.

(b) Whenever the amount which would be made available or the authority which would be granted under an Act listed in this section as passed by the House as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, is different from that which would be available or granted under such Act as passed by the Senate as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, the pertinent project or activity shall be continued at a rate for operations not exceeding the current rate or the rate permitted by the action of the House or the Senate, whichever is lower, under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995: Provided, That where an item is not included in either version or where an item is included in only one version of the Act as passed by both Houses as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, the pertinent project or activity shall not be continued except as provided for in section 111 or 112 under the appropriation, fund, or authority granted by the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995 and under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995.

(c) Whenever an Act listed in this section has been passed by only the House or only the Senate as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, the pertinent project or activity shall be continued under the appropriation, fund, or authority granted by the one House at a rate for operations not exceeding the current rate or the rate permitted by the action of the one House, whichever is lower, and under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995: Provided, That where an item is funded in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995 and not included in the version passed by the one House as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, the pertinent project or activity shall not be continued except as provided for in section 111 or 112 under the appropriation, fund, or authority granted by the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995 and under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995.

SEC. 102. No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 for the Department of Defense shall be used for new production of items not funded for production in fiscal year 1995 or prior years, for the increase in production rates above those sustained with fiscal year 1995 funds, or to initiate, resume, or continue any project, activity, operation, or organization which are defined as any project, subproject, activity, budget activity, program element, and subprogram within a program element and for investment items are further defined as a P–1 line item in a budget activity within an appropriation account and an R–1 line item which includes a program element and subprogram element within an appropriation account, for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during the fiscal year 1995: Provided, That no appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 for the Department of Defense shall be used to initiate multi-year procurements utilizing advance procurement funding for economic order quantity procurement unless specifically appropriated later.

SEC. 103. Appropriations made by section 101 shall be available to the extent and in the manner which would be provided by the pertinent appropriations Act.

SEC. 104. No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 shall be used to initiate or resume any project or activity for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during the fiscal year 1995.

SEC. 105. No provision which is included in an appropriations Act enumerated in section 101 but which was not included in the applicable appropriations Act for fiscal year 1995 and which by its terms is applicable to more than one appropriation, fund, or authority shall be applicable to any appropriation, fund, or authority provided in this joint resolution.

SEC. 106. Unless otherwise provided for in this joint resolution or in the applicable appropriations Act, appropriations and funds made available and authority granted pursuant to this joint resolution shall be available until (a) enactment into law of an appropriation for any project or activity provided for in this joint resolution, or (b) the enactment into law of the applicable appropriations Act by both Houses without any provision for such project or activity, or (c) December 15, 1995, whichever first occurs.

SEC. 107. Appropriations made and authority granted pursuant to this joint resolution shall cover all obligations or expenditures incurred for any program, project, or activity during the period for which funds or authority for such project or activity are available under this joint resolution.

SEC. 108. Expenditures made pursuant to this joint resolution shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever a bill in which such applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization is contained is enacted into law.

SEC. 109. No provision in the appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1996 referred to in section 101 of this joint resolution that makes the availability of any appropriation provided therein dependent upon the enactment of additional authorizing or other legislation shall be effective before the date set forth in section 106(c) of this joint resolution.

SEC. 110. Appropriations and funds made available by or authority granted pursuant to this joint resolution may be used without regard to the time limitations for submission and approval of apportionments set forth in section 1513 of title 31, United States Code, but nothing herein shall be construed to waive any other provision of law governing the apportionment of funds.

SEC. 111. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, whenever an Act listed in section 101 as passed by both the House and Senate as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, does not include funding for an ongoing project or activity for which there is a budget request, or whenever an Act listed in section 101 has been passed by only the House or only the Senate as of the date of enactment of this joint resolution, and an item funded in fiscal year 1995 is not included in the version passed by the one House, or whenever the rate for operations for an ongoing project or activity provided by section 101 for which there is a budget request would result in the project or activity being significantly reduced, the pertinent project or activity may be continued under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act for the fiscal year 1995 by increasing the rate for operations provided by section 101 to a rate for operations not to exceed one that provides the minimal level that would enable existing activities to continue. No new contracts or grants shall be awarded in excess of an amount that bears the same ratio to the rate for operations provided by this section as the number of days covered by this resolution bears to 366. For the purposes of the Act, the minimal level means a rate for operations that is reduced from the current rate by 25 percent.

SEC. 112. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, whenever the rate for operations for any continuing project or activity provided by section 101 or section 111 for which there is a budget request would result in a furlough of Government employees, that rate for operations may be increased to the minimum level that would enable the furlough to be avoided. No new contracts or grants shall be awarded in excess of an amount that bears the same ratio to the rate for operations provided by this section as the number of days covered by this resolution bears to 366.

SEC. 113. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except sections 106, 111, and 112, for those programs that had high initial rates of operation of complete distribution of funding at the beginning of the fiscal year in fiscal year 1995 because of distributions of funding of States, foreign countries, grantees, or others, similar distributions of funds for fiscal year 1996 shall not be made and no grants shall be awarded for such programs funded by this resolution that would impinge on final funding prerogatives.

SEC. 114. This joint resolution shall be implemented so that only the most limited funding action of that permitted in the resolution shall be taken in order to provide for continuation of projects and activities.

SEC. 115. The provisions of Section 132 of the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 1988, Public Law 100–202, shall not apply for this joint resolution. Included in the apportionment for the Federal Payment to the District of Columbia shall be an additional $16,575,016 above the amount otherwise made available by this joint resolution, for reimbursement to the United States of funds loaned for certain capital improvement projects pursuant to Public Law 81–533, as amended; Public Law 83–364, as amended; Public Law 85–451, as amended; and Public Law 86–515, as amended, including interest as required thereby.

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, the authority and conditions for the application of appropriations for the Office of Technology Assessment as contained in the conference report on the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1996, House Report 104–212, shall be followed when applying the funding made available by this joint resolution.

SEC. 117. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, any distribution of funding under the Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research account in the Department of Education may be made up to an amount that bears the same ratio to the rate for operation for this account provided by this joint resolution as the number of days covered by this resolution bears to 366.

SEC. 118. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, the authorities provided under subsection (a) of section 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103–236) shall remain in effect during the period of this joint resolution, notwithstanding paragraph (3) of said subsection.

SEC. 119. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, the amount made available to the Securities and Exchange Commission, under the heading Salaries and Expenses, shall include, in addition to direct appropriations, the amount it collects under the fee rate and offsetting collection authority contained in Public Law 103–352, which fee rate and offsetting collection authority shall remain in effect during the period of this joint resolution.

SEC. 120. Until enactment of legislation providing funding for the entire fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies, funds available for necessary expenses of the Bureau of Mines are for continuing limited health and safety and related research, materials partnerships, and minerals information activities; for mineral assessments in Alaska; and for terminating all other activities of the Bureau of Mines.

SEC. 121. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, funds for the Environmental Protection Agency shall be made available in the appropriation accounts which are provided in H.R. 2099 as reported on September 13, 1995.

SEC. 122. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, the rate for operations for projects and activities that would be funded under the heading ''International Organization and Conferences, Contributions to International Organizations'' in the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996, shall be the amount provided by the provisions of sections 101, 111, and 112 multiplied by the ratio of the number of days covered by this resolution to 366.

SEC. 123. Notwithstanding any other provision of this joint resolution, except section 106, the rate for operations of the following projects or activities shall be only the minimum necessary to accomplish orderly termination:

Administrative Conference of the United States;

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (except that activities to carry out the provisions of Public Law 104–4 may Continue);

Interstate Commerce Commission;

Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation;

Land and Water Conservation Fund, State Assistance; and

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Rural Abandoned Mine Program.

SEC. 124. COMPENSATION AND RATIFICATION OF AUTHORITY.

(a) Any Federal employees furloughed as a result of a lapse in appropriations, if any, after midnight November 13, 1995, until, the enactment of this Act shall be compensated at their standard rate of compensation for the period during which there was a lapse in appropriations.

(b) All obligations incurred in anticipation of the appropriations made and authority granted by this Act for the purposes of maintaining the essential level of activity to protect life and property and bring about orderly termination of government functions are hereby ratified and approved if otherwise in accord with the provisions of this Act.

TITLE II

***SEC.** 201. WAIVER OF REQUIREMENT FOR PARCHMENT PRINTING*

(a) WAIVER.—The provisions of sections 106 and 107 of title 1, United States Code, are waived with respect to the printing (on parchment or otherwise) of the enrollment of any of the following measures of the first session of the One Hundred Fourth Congress presented to the President after the enactment of this joint resolution:

(1) A continuing resolution.

(2) A debt limit extension measure.

(3) A reconciliation bill.

(b) CERTIFICATION BY COMMITTEE ON HOUSE OVERSIGHT.—The enrollment of a measure to which subsection (a) applies shall be in such form as the Committee on House Oversight of the House of Representatives certifies to be a true enrollment.

***SEC** 202. DFINITIONS.*

As used in this joint resolution:

(1) CONTINUING RESOLUTION.—The term ''continuing resolution'' means a bill or joint resolution that includes provisions making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 1996.

(2) DEBT LIMIT EXTENSION MEASURE.—The term ''debt limit extension measure'' means a bill or joint resolution that includes provisions increasing or waiving (for a temporary period or otherwise) the public debt limit under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code.

(3) RECONCILIATION BILL.—The term ''reconciliation bill'' means a bill that is a reconciliation bill within the meaning of section 310 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

SEC. 203. COMMITMENT TO A SEVEN YEAR BALANCED BUDGET.

(a) The President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the 104th

Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than fiscal year 2002 as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office, and the President and the Congress agree that the balanced budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment. Further, the balanced budget shall adopt tax policies to help working families and to stimulate future economic growth.

(b) The balanced budget agreement shall be estimated by the Congressional Budget Office based on its most recent current economic and technical assumptions, following a through consultation and review with the Office of Management and Budget, and other government and private experts.

MOTION OFFERED BY MR. LIVINGSTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the motion. The text of the motion is as follows:

Mr. LIVINGSTON moves that the House concur in the amendment of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON] and the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] each will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognize the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Joint Resolution 122, and that I might include tabular and extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. LIVINGSTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, the Senate amendment before us now to the House Joint Resolution 122 represents the compromise agreement and, as I would call it, a contract between the Congress and the administration worked out with the joint leadership of Congress and the President and his administration to keep the Government operating through December 15.

Last night the House concurred with the Senate amendment to House Joint Resolution 123, which was a clean continuing resolution to keep the Government operating throughout this day. That action cleared that joint resolution for the President and which he signed later last night. Today we are considering the Senate amendment to House Joint Resolution 122 that would keep the Government operating through December 15.

Mr. Speaker, much has already been said about the language included in the Senate amendment on the 7-year balanced budget plan. It has been characterized with a lot of different twists, and I would just say that there is a clear 7-year balanced budget commitment in this continuing resolution. It is tough, it is real, and the House fully, or the leadership of this House fully intends to follow through with it, according, I might add, to the scoring procedure of the Congressional Budget Office.

The other changes to this continuing resolution that the Senate amendment would make are as follows:

It changes the termination date to December 15; it changes the minimum level rate to 75 percent of the fiscal year 1995 levels for those programs that are terminated in either House or Senate bills, those appropriation bills which have not already been enacted into law; it includes the compromise 7-year balanced budget language that I had mentioned earlier, binding the Congress and the President to work on a glidepath towards a balanced budget by the year 2002; it includes provisions for nonessential Government workers to be paid during the time of a shutdown, or the shutdown that just transpired; and it makes a technical correction to the District of Columbia funding rate to enable payment on guaranteed loans which will have no effect on the final District funding level.

The bottom line is very clear, Mr. Speaker. This continuing resolution sets in strong cement the agreement that was reached yesterday to put the United States on the path to a balanced budget in 7 years as scored by the Congressional Budget Office. Anything less could ultimately lead to another shutdown after the term of this continuing resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this continuing resolution will be applicable to 7 of our 13 regular bills, since 6 have already been enacted into law. The defense bill is also on the President's desk, and I certainly hope that he will sign it. In fact, I urge him to do so for any number of reasons, but most particularly he is now working on a peace agreement with the Bosnians; and, obviously, this House is already on record with respect to its wishes on that peace agreement that we not put troops on the ground. But even if he wanted to put troops on the ground, they should be paid, and he can effect that by simply signing the defense appropriations bill that is on his desk.

Mr. Speaker, we should be able to get to the foreign operations appropriations bill as well as the Interior bill and the VA–HUD bill, which we anticipate getting to him shortly. Commerce, Justice, and the District of Columbia bills are in conference and we should complete them very quickly. That leaves only the Labor-HHS bill, which, unfortunately, is still pending in the Senate, and we certainly hope they dispose of it as soon as possible.

We are getting our work done, Mr. Speaker, and we need to complete it so that this will be the last continuing resolution. There are big issues in these bills that are outstanding, but we will need to address them and to negotiate them out so that our work will be complete and so that we can continue with the implementation of the balanced budget within 7 years, as scored by the Congressional Budget Office, that we began last spring.

Mr. Speaker, this continuing resolution represents the beginning of the negotiations to get this country's finances back in order and to ensure a future for our children and our grandchildren. It gets the Government back to work while we do that. I urge all Members to vote to concur in the Senate amendment and to pass this continuing resolution once again.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be here under these conditions today because this ends a fight which, in my view, never should have taken place in the first place. At the time that this fight started Congress had passed only two of its appropriations bills, military construction and agriculture. During the time that the fight ensued, two more were passed and signed by the President, and the President indicated just this weekend he would sign two more, which the Congress has now sent down to him.

We still have a long way to go for the Congress to finish its appropriations business, but at the time this fight ensued, over 90 percent of the appropriations required for the next fiscal year had not yet been passed by the Congress. Therefore, we had to pass a continuing resolution to keep Government open while the rest of the bills completed their way through the Congress.

The Speaker, as we now all know, tried to use that need in order to require the President to walk away from deeply held principles and beliefs. First, the continuing resolution which was passed by this House required the President to accept the idea of a doubling of Medicare premiums. The President said no. Then the Speaker told the press that the continuing resolution was made more confrontational because he had wanted to receive more attention than the President's plane to the Middle East for Mr. Rabin's funeral. That Government shutdown that ensured cost the taxpayers half a billion dollars. I guess we could say that is the most expensive plane ride in Government history.

Thank God that is now all behind us and the Government is again open, and this bill will keep it open until December 15. This continuing resolution will allow the real negotiations to now begin.

Next week, Mr. Speaker, the Government will remain open while we debate the real issues. The language in the continuing resolution reads that it will ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment, and that we will adopt tax policies to help working families.

I think that makes clear that the issue has never been whether the budget would be balanced. The issue has been whether or not the budget would be balanced in a way that unites society by being fair rather than in a way that divides society by being unfair.

I think this language makes it clear that we on this side of the aisle, and the President, will insist that Medicare be strengthened, not crippled; that the safety net for children will not be shredded when they need a doctor; that education and environment will not be crippled; that taxes on working people with modest incomes will not be raised in order to provide tax cuts for the well-off and the wealthy.

This debate, Mr. Speaker, has never been about accounting. This debate has been about values. We simply do not want just a balanced budget. In addition to a balanced budget, we also want a balanced society and we want a balanced economy.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that fairness is not an ornament. We believe it is a core value, and that is why I am delighted that the resolution before us today finally, properly, recognizes those core values. We will, as we move into negotiations on the budget bill to come, insist that those values be respected on behalf of all of the people we represent.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I want to commend him.

As the author of the balanced budget language that was first included in the debt limit bill, and then in modified form in the continuing appropriations resolution, I want to comment our congressional leadership for holding firm to the mandate that the President and Congress enact a 7-year balanced budget bill this year.

My original language in the debt limit bill, read that—

With the enactment of this Act the President and the Congress commit to enacting legislation in calendar year 1995 to achieve a balanced budget, as scored by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, not later than the fiscal year 2002.

In the continuing resolution initially passed by the House and Senate, the language was modified to read that the President and Congressional ''shall enact legislation in the 104th Congress to achieve a unified balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002 as scored by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.''

The language before us today, as agreed to by the President and the congressional leadership yesterday, reads: ''The President and the Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than fiscal year 2002 as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office * * *''

There is additional language in the latest version requiring CBO consultation with OMB and others. And there is new language providing that a balance budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, provide adequate funding for specified matters, and adopt tax policies to help working families and stimulate future economic growth.

I don't know of anyone who disagrees with those additional stipulations of what a balanced budget should do and will do. The important thing, though is that we will now have signed into law a contract between the President and Congress to enact legislation this year that will give the American people a balanced budget by fiscal year 2002. What a Christmas present.

Let me tell Members this is one tremendous giant step in the right direction. I am a little concerned with what I am seeing on CNN and some of the television and radio programs this morning, as if there is some kind of wiggle room here. Let me tell my colleagues, there is no wiggle room. This is a 7-year binding Balanced Budget Act.

When I look at my good friend, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY], and how he put emphasis on the agreement, let me read it to Members real fast. ''The President and this Congress shall,'' not maybe, shall ''legislate in the first session of the 104th Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002.''

There is no wiggle room there, ladies and gentlemen. We will do it within the 7 years as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office. There is no wiggle room there. No smoke and mirrors. We will do it with realistic figures.

□ 1515

And then it goes on to say that the President and the Congress agree that the balanced budget must protect future generations and ensure Medicare solvency. That means do not let it go bankrupt, and we are not going to let it go bankrupt. Reform welfare. That does not mean wiggle room to increase welfare benefits. That means reform this system that is a total failure. Also, provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans and the environment. That means provide adequate funding for all of those things within the 7 years. No wiggle room.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to do what we did in 1985, when we passed Gramm-Rudman with no cuts in the first years, only in the later years, and then we never got around to it.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the President and this Congress, there is no wiggle room here. I say to the President, ''Mr. President, this is a binding contract, morally. You must present to us a 7-year balanced budget, the same as we are going to you.''

Mr. Speaker, let us compare apples to apples. Let the press look at it and let us stand on the merits of the two proposals. That is what this does. It is binding and meaningful, and I urge my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. SABO], ranking Democrat on the Committee on the Budget.

(Mr. SABO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, we end this foolishness that we have been in for the last several days, and we get the Government running again. We get the debate focused again on how we go about balancing the Federal budget.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of priorities do we deal with? How do we bring the deficit down? Let me speak to that issue briefly.

Mr. Speaker, I was one of a number of Democrats who supported an alternative budget that did balance the budget in 7 years. We balanced in 7 years, but we did it in a fashion, reforming health care, Medicaid and Medicare in a fashion that did not penalize poor elderly; that did not drive millions of people out of health care or, as an alternative, substantially increase the costs to State and local government; we reformed welfare in a way that was disciplined and tough and workable, in contrast to Republican plans that would drive literally a million or more kids into poverty.

Mr. Speaker, we did it in a fashion that enabled the Federal Government still to have the capacity to deal with education, the environment, and a variety of other programs that we fund on an annual basis.

I look now at the program that my Republican friends bring and at their priorities, and what I discover to my amazement is that while they have a program that does, I think a lot of bad things to our society, they also increase the deficit for the next 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that. This Republican program, which does drastic cuts to health care in this country, which would drive a million or more kids into poverty, which cripples our ability to fund education, the environment and other programs, increases the deficit for the next 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my Republican colleagues are listening. Let me give the numbers. We have had reduced deficits for the last 3 years. Under the Republican agreement, it goes up in 1996. For some reason, that seems to happen in all plans. But then, again, it goes up for the second year, 1997. In comparison to our coalition budget, the Federal deficit in 1997 would be $28 billion higher. Not lower; $28 billion higher.

Let me give my colleagues the numbers. Under the coalition budget, $160.4 billion. Under the Republican conference agreement, $189.1 billion. Why is the deficit under their plan $28 billion greater in 1997? A tax cut.

So, we not only are cutting at vital American programs to pay for the Republican tax cut, we discover we are also borrowing the money to pay for it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look anxiously forward to the potential to do what the

ranking member of our Committee on Appropriations spoke of, to deal with a balanced budget that is fair and equitable, but also doing it in a fashion that actually reduces the deficit in the immediate future.

What I would ask Members to do is vote for this bill. Let us get the Government operating again. Then let us go on to do the real tough negotiations that need to be done so we can get a humane budget that actually brings the Federal budget in balance.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS].

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I believe this has been an unnecessary crisis that, frankly, should have been resolved with the passage of a clean continuing resolution on October 1, 6 weeks ago. But for the sake of hundreds of thousands of Federal workers, and the veterans and the seniors and the millions of citizens they serve, I am grateful this resolution will pass today.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I commend the President and the Democratic Members of Congress, and the Republican leadership and Members in this House for developing a plan that does put people and our Government back to work today.

Mr. Speaker, I do not support everything in this new resolution, but I would like to point out, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, one important reason why this resolution is preferable to the continuing resolution we have lived under for the last 6 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, under that resolution, sponsored and pushed by the Republican leadership in this House, VA health care has been cut by $3.2 million a day each day for the last 6 weeks, compared to the President's budget request.

That is $3.2 million a day. VA health care system cuts in a system that is desperately struggling to provide adequate care for those men and women who have served our Nation in uniform.

It is my opinion that if the majority party had not been supporting huge tax breaks for those making over $200,000 a year, these veterans health care cuts would not have been necessary; $140 million over 6 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, although I believe this continuing resolution falls short in some areas, it is far better than the first continuing resolution that I believe was unfair to our Nation's veterans and to our veterans health care system. For these reasons, I support and urge the passage of this continuing resolution today.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH].

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, last week as we were leaving to head home, the freshmen in the House met with the freshmen in the Senate and passed the baton on the Balanced Budget Act with two key criteria. First, that we balance the budget in 7 years; and, second, that we use honest numbers in reaching those budget projections.

Mr. Speaker, I was delighted late last night and early this morning when I saw that Speaker GINGRICH, Leader DOLE, and the President had agreed to a continuing resolution that incorporated those very goals and committed in writing to be the watchword as we move forward in these budget negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, I would say, though, that the key here is that we all recognize 7 years is 7 years. We are putting in writing a commitment to the American people that we will balance the budget in 7 years; not 8, not 9, not 10 years, but 7 years, so that they can take it to the bank and tell their children and their children's children that we have done our job and balanced the budget.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a goal. This is not an objective. This is a solid commitment put in writing in a contract between the House, the Senate, and the President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we all signed the Contract With America, and as freshmen that has been our watchword to keep our word in fulfilling our promises to the American voters. This contract is exactly the same, and we will take it with exactly the same degree of seriousness. It is a sacred agreement to balance the budget in 7 years and promise to future generations that that is what we, indeed, will undertake this fall in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that if the President does not agree with that, I think, Mr. Speaker, that he should decide maybe to take back the words and not sign this bill, because we need to be honest with the American people. If he signs it, he should view it as a sacred agreement to balance the budget in 7 years.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO].

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, this continuing resolution is a victory for the American people. For the first time, the Republicans have agreed with the President to protect Medicare, education, and the environment.

Additionally, while seniors and families were the winners in this agreement, Speaker GINGRICH has said that the crown jewel of the Republican contract, the $245 billion tax break for the rich, is on the table for the long-term budget negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is a winner not only because it gets the Government back to work. This agreement is a winner because it sets the right ground rules for the coming negotiations on a long-term budget. No cuts in Medicare, education, or the environment. No increase on taxes for working middle-class families to pay for tax breaks for the rich.

That is important, because the budget debate is not some heartless discussion about formulas, numbers and budget scoring. It is about the lives of the American people and protecting what is important to them. We need to balance the budget in a way that protects health care for our seniors, educational opportunity for our youngsters, and cleans up our environment.

This Thanksgiving, as American families give thanks for the blessings of this past year, let Congress work to give the American people something to be thankful for in the coming years: A balanced budget based on the values that we all share.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho [Mr. CRAPO].

(Mr. CRAPO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. Speaker, I think that a very important compromise was reached and that it should be a big Christmas present for the American people. Nevertheless, I think it should be very clear what agreement was reached and where we are now as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, immediately after the agreement, it seemed that there were very different discussions or representations to the American people about what was agreed to. In fact, that prompted a letter from the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], the majority leader of the House of Representatives, to Mr. Leon Panetta, the chief of staff of the White House, to clarify what we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I will put the letter from the gentleman from Texas in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to clarify that the agreement which was reached was an agreement that does require us to balance the budget in 7 years. It was an agreement that does require that we all operate off the same sheet. In other words, that we all use the same numbers and the same projections as we discuss balancing the budget, that being the CBO projections.

Mr. Speaker, it has been probably been said many times, but it needs to be said again, that as recently as 1993 when the President gave his first message to Congress, he talked about how CBO is the most honest and correct scorekeeper for our budgets and that the numbers we are now using are the numbers developed by the CBO as they were subject to the management of the Democratic Party at the time the numbers were developed.

We must all talk off of the same sheet. We must all use the same numbers and we must all realize that the act that we are creating today, and the law that the President will sign, will commit this Nation to a balanced budget in 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, that is a tremendous change in the dynamic of the debate in Washington. To this point, we have been debating about whether we cut

too deep into this or that program, or whether it was a cut at all. Everyone has been claiming that they wanted to do it in the context of balancing the Federal budget.

□ 1530

Now we have parameters put to that debate. Now while Members talk about balancing the budget, they are going to have to use the right numbers.

Mr. Speaker, we can move on to discuss the proper priorities for this country and move us to the prosperity that will come from a true balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter to which I referred:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 20, 1995.

Hon. LEON PANETTA,
Chief of Staff, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR LEON, I was dismayed by your comments this morning regarding the carefully crafted agreement reached between the Administration and congressional leaders. To the untrained eye, it might appear as though the Clinton Administration is already preparing to break its commitment to a seven year balanced budget.

On the Today Show this morning, you said, ''If we can work out an agreement that protects those priorities, we can do it in seven years or eight years.''

That is inconsistent with the language you and the President personally committed to yesterday, which reads: ''The President and Congress shall enact legislation in the first session of the One Hundred and Fourth Congress to achieve a balanced budget not later than fiscal year 2002 as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office, and the President and the Congress agree that the balanced budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans and the environment. . . .''

In addition, a White House spokesman said this morning that a ''seven-year timetable for the balanced budget is an important goal, it's an important objective.'' Remember, we flatly rejected your suggestion that we commit to a ''goal'' of balancing the budget in seven years in favor of an explicit commitment to a balanced budget in seven years.

Words have meaning, Leon. Seven years is seven years, not ''seven years or eight years.'' A commitment to balance the budget in seven years is more than just a ''goal'' of seven years. Past congresses and presidents have embraced the ''goal'' of a balanced budget countless times, and all we have to show for it is nearly five trillion dollars in debt.

You also said this morning, ''I don't think the American people ought to read a lot into what was agreed to last night. I think the important thing was that we put America back to work.'' I believe most Americans think the important thing was that their Congress and their President have made an explicit commitment to balance the budget for the first time in a generation, not that federal bureaucrats got to go back to work today.

The American people now have their hopes up for an honest balanced budget in seven years. If the President intends to break this commitment, he shouldn't make it. If the President intends to sign the bill he agreed to last night only for short-term polling gains but with no intention of abiding by it, it would be better for him to veto the bill.

Sincerely,

DICK ARMEY,
Majority Leader.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI].

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank our ranking member for yielding time to me and thank him for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to all of the parties to the agreement that brings us here today to vote on this continuing resolution.

I am particularly grateful to President Clinton for holding firm to his commitment to protect Medicare, the environment, and education and to scale back the tax breaks for the wealthiest people in our country. I believe that the reconciliation bill the Republicans are proposing is not balanced at all; indeed, it is imbalanced in terms of its tax unfairness in addition to the priorities which I do not agree with.

For example, in that imbalance a $16-billion tax break will be given to America's corporations while there will be a $32-billion tax increase for America's families to pay for that corporate tax break.

In terms of capital gains, our colleagues are strong supporters of the capital gains cut. The capital gains cut in this bill, in the reconciliation bill is retroactive until January 1, while the much heralded $500 family tax credit is only effective October 1, thereby making it a $125 tax credit. How could it be that the capital gains tax is more important to be retroactive than the family tax credit?

In light of these and other unfair aspects of this bill, including the fact that taxes will go up for working families making under $28,000 a year, it is easy to see why when our Republican colleagues look in the mirror and say, mirror mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all, the mirror cracks, because of the unfairness contained in their reconciliation bill.

The mirror and the American people know that it is not fair to raise taxes on working families in America in order to give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in our country. That is why I am so pleased the CR establishes the framework for debate. What are our priorities. It will be a statement of our values, this budget should be. How we spend our money says what is important to us. Medicare, protect the environment, invest in children and how we pay for it should not be on the backs of the working poor families in our country.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes and 30 seconds to the distinguished gentleman from Arizona [Mr. KOLBE], a member of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations.

(Mr. KOLBE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. HOBSON's introduction mentioned that I am a member of both the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations. That is true. I think that has given me a very interesting perspective on this whole struggle that has been going on here now for so many days and weeks.

I rise in strong support of this continuing resolution which puts Federal workers back to work and, even more importantly, commits the President and Congress to working for a balanced budget in the next 7 years. We could have had this agreement last week. In fact, what we are voting on today is not really any different than what we passed and sent to the President last week. At that time we said we would do just exactly what we are doing now, adopting an agreement for a 7-year balanced budget with no preconditions. But it was not to be for political reasons last week.

Now we are here and that is water over the dam. It is time for us to move forward. What is important about this agreement is that we have an absolute rock-solid commitment to have a balanced budget in 7 years. That is not 9 years. That is not 8 years. That is not 5 years. That is not 10 years. That is 7 years. We have an absolute agreement that that is what we are going to negotiate. And it is not just a goal.

It is not just would-it-not-be-nice. It is not a want to have. It is an absolute. It is in a contract with the American people. It is a contract between the White House and the Congress that we will negotiate to have this balanced budget in the next 7 years. And it will be certified by the organization that the President, in his State of the Union Address in 1993, said that he wanted because it was the more conservative, it was the better of the two organizations; that is, the Congressional Budget Office. So it will be certified and the numbers will be conservative.

If it's so conservative, and it turns out we can do it faster than that, great. If we can have more economic growth, great. But I think it is important for us to understand that all of this is just a preliminary. This is the first round in a 10-round championship boxing match. This is the preliminaries if you will, if we want to use a nicer way to look at it, the preliminaries of lovemaking.

We are engaged in a long marathon, a long struggle. This is only the beginning. Passing this continuing resolution does not get us to the balanced budget. This is just the beginning.

This is simply the beginning of the process that we must go with in order to achieve a balanced budget, a commitment to the American people, to our children, to the next generation. We are telling them that we will not continue borrowing from them. And we know the benefits of that, the benefits of lower interest rates, the benefits of

greater economic growth. Those benefits will be with us, and with them, for decades.

Now is not the time to flinch. We must go forward. We must achieve a balanced budget and that is what the debate in the next several weeks will be all about.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Mr. BENTSEN].

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, this truly is a historic day. My Republican friends have admitted that once and for all Medicare, Medicaid, education, the environment are important. They are no longer intuitive. They are no longer subsequent to a $245 billion tax cut. They have said that everything is on the table, including that $245 billion tax cut.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hard part. The differences are deep. The differences are very, very deep. As one of my colleagues said today, we are only $4 apart on Medicare. But quite frankly, that is simply not the case. We are hundreds of billions of dollars apart on Medicare, hundreds of billions of dollars that affect seniors, doctors, hospitals, medical research, and jobs.

We are hundreds of billions of dollars apart on Medicaid, affecting children, affecting women, and, again, affecting seniors and the hospitals that treat those individuals. We are very far apart on education, and we are very far apart on taxes.

We have two alternatives. We have one that would give tax cuts primarily to those in the upper income spectrum while at the same time raising taxes on the working poor, very much the contrary of where all of us want to go on welfare reform. And others who would stand by the earned income tax credit that says if you are a family and you are trying to make it and you do not want to be on welfare, the Tax Code is going to work for you.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go, but I believe the agreement made yesterday shows the American people that both sides can come together to get to the table and start the hard work that is necessary. We have 75 Members of this body, Democrats and Republicans, myself included, who are willing to work together on a budget. We can do it, Mr. Speaker, and we can do it to be fair to our seniors, to our families, to our children, and to the working people of this country.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER].

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this continuing resolution. Frankly, as we all have to admit, this resolution is basically identical to what the House passed this past week with the votes of Republicans as well as 48 moderate and conservative Democrats who at that time were committed to balancing the budget over 7 years.

As a result of an agreement which was announced yesterday, the President has now given his word that he shares our commitment to balance the budget over 7 years. As we all know, 7 years is not 8 years; 7 years is not 9 years; 7 years is not 10 years. The agreement that we are passing today is a contract that the President has made with the Congress, with the taxpayers that cannot and will not be broken.

We have to remember that this contract is not a goal. It is a contract to produce a balanced budget to eliminate the deficit over 7 years. It is a contract for taxpayers to use honest numbers, not smoke and mirrors but honest numbers.

This last few days, this House of Representatives and the Senate have passed a specific plan to balance the budget over 7 years. This Congress has a plan and a group of moderate and conservative Democrats have a plan. The Democratic leadership does not. And the President has yet to give us his specific plan on how he would balance the budget over 7 years.

The Republican plan to balance the budget and live within our means over the next 7 years accomplishes that goal using honest numbers. So we meet criterion No. 1, which we are passing today.

We also, in our balanced budget act, increase spending for Medicare and save Medicare from bankruptcy by spending over $355 billion more than we are spending today. Considering we are only spending $180 billion this year, that is a lot of money. That is a 50-percent increase in spending on Medicare over 7 years. We are reforming welfare to emphasize work and family responsibility. And we are also giving tax relief to working families.

Congress has a plan. Where is the President's plan? I want to see the specifics of the President's plan to balance the budget over the next 7 years.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH].

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I do not have quite the smile that the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. KASICH] did, but all over America, him lifting his hands and smiling, it is a great victory for the American people.

I think it is a change. It is a revolution. It is where we are going to be heading in this country, is to start cutting spending. I was a little concerned on one of the morning programs when Mr. Panetta said we can do it in 7 or 8 years. I hope the understanding is clear that it is a 7-year contract that we are after, and that is what we hope to achieve in 7 years.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I was confused. The gentleman said cutting spending. Are we slowing the growth or cutting spending?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to talk about that. I would hope some day we could have a true balanced budget and stop borrowing from the trust funds of this country. In fact, that is a real question, has the President and the Secretary of the Treasury legally gone in and borrowed $39 billion of increased spending to have that money available for an increased debt of this country. I think that is something that needs to be examined.

But let us look a minute at where we go on taxes. In 1993, spread over 7 years, we had a 1990 tax increase that was about $280 billion. The 1993 tax increase spread over 7 years was $350 billion. The question I think we need to examine very carefully is, should we give part of that tax increase of those past years back in this balanced budget effort that we are proceeding on. I think the answer is yes, if we care about the American families.

We think, we hope the President is going to keep his word on this contract, that we are going to do it, that we are going to do it in 7 years, that we are going to start cutting down the spending of this country and let more of that hard-earned money stay in the pockets of the American taxpayers.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FLANAGAN].

Mr. FLANAGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the CR today. I must make one observation though, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly hope that the President, in working very hard to reach this agreement, and a fine agreement it is, I hope that he will also understand that there is no ''if then'' language in it. There is no ''if but'' language. We are going to get to balance in 7 years, he has agreed to, that we are going to use the Congressional Budget Office numbers and the resolution says that as well. There is no ''if but'' language in there though. We are going to take his priorities into consideration unequivocally, absolutely. There was never a plan to do anything other than that.

But with the President's comments yesterday, I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, that the President will fall back or retrench into a position where if he does not have his way exactly, he will find a way out of this.

□ 1545

This is the business of compromise. We are trying to get to a balanced budget, not to do it exactly one way or the other, and I hope the President is willing to yield on that point. If he is not, if it is such that it has to be his way or not at all, I would hope that he would veto this CR as being very much like the one the other day.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Utah [Mr. ORTON].

(Mr. ORTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr.

OBEY] for yielding this time to me; and, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the continuing resolution, but also let me make clear to my colleagues and to those listening that we are here because, not having anything to do with the debate over a balanced or the budget reconciliation package; we are here because Congress has failed in its responsibility to pass appropriation bills for fiscal year 1996.

Having failed to pass those bills, and having passed one continuing resolution, and still failing to pass those bills, we are now back again, continuing until December 15. I support that continuation because I oppose closing down the Government. However, it would have been much better to have a clean continuing resolution; we do not have that. We have a provision in there dealing with a commitment to a 7-year balanced budget. I support the continuing resolution with this language in it because the balanced budget, which we proposed and I presented here on the floor of the House 2 weeks ago, does in fact get to balance over 7 years with using CBO scoring.

In fact, if my colleagues read the provisions of the commitment to a 7-year balanced budget, it also requires ''that the balanced budget must protect future generations, ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, and provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment.''

In fact, there is one way that we can accomplish the 7-year balanced budget and insure all of those things. It is through the coalition budget which I presented on the floor of the House 2 weeks ago. So, hopefully, we now, on a bipartisan basis, can start moving to that.

Let me just point out one additional factor of concern. It is the tax provisions in the bill. I am not opposed to tax cuts, but I believe we should not be borrowing money from our children's future to make the tax cuts. I hope we can negotiate reasonable tax policy, as this reflects, but if those, if those tax cuts, increase the deficit over the next 2 years, or in fact put us into deficit in years 8, 9, and 10, we will be in a worse position.

So, I urge us to be very careful as we move forward in those provisions.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY], the majority whip.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations for all the fine work he has done in trying to get our business done, and I know there is always at this time of the year people claiming we have to be here in this position because we have not got our business done.

Mr. Speaker, if the President had ever come to the table during this whole year we might be home with our families right now enjoying the holidays. The problem is that finally, finally the President has decided to sign this most historic agreement, and I am just absolutely thrilled that for the first time in recent history the President of the United States and the Congress has agreed to balance the budget and balance the budget in 7 years. This is historic, it is phenomenal, and I am just so excited about it and looking forward to the negotiations over the next few weeks.

But I want to get into the language because, make no mistake about it, unfortunately the national media has not picked up on it yet. What we have here is an agreement, not a goal, not a maybe, an agreement to balance the budget in 7 years using honest numbers, and here is the language, and it does not say we are going to achieve a goal of a balanced budget, or we are going to achieve a maybe balanced budget. The language that will be in law when the President signs it is the 104th Congress is to achieve a balanced budget not later than the fiscal year 2002 as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office. Very real. Very meaningful.

And I want to just touch on the rest of the language because the President seems to be saying he has now saved Medicare, Medicaid and all these other programs he has been fighting for so long on. Mr. Speaker, the language says that, protect future generations to ensure Medicare solvency. We have done that in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. Reform welfare; we have done that in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995. And provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans and the environment; we have done that in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995.

So I think the President, once we pass the Balanced Budget Act of 1995 this afternoon, and we send it, the President ought to sign it. He will get both. He will get the 7-year balanced budget and all the things that are in this language. He ought to sign it, but let me warn my colleagues that, if the President does not believe in this, it will be law when he signs it, and if the President goes to the American people and says, ''Oh, by the way, no, I didn't really mean 7 years, I really meant 8 years,'' as his Chief of Staff has already said, then the President of the United States should not sign this CR. He should not sign it because he is promising the American people a balanced budget, and he is promising—

Mr. Speaker, I just finish with this. The President, when he signs this CR, is promising the American people a balanced budget using honest numbers. There is no equivocation, that is what this CR says, and, if he does not honor that, then he will not only be misleading the American people, but he will be breaking the law.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to something the gentleman just said.

First of all, let me say that yesterday at 1:30, when the President's Chief of Staff came down to meet us in the office of Senator DASHLE, I was very pessimistic that in fact an agreement would be reached. But the two compromised proposals that were developed, which the White House then took to Senator DOMENICI, wound up producing a happy result for everybody, and I think we all ought to be very grateful for that.

But in light of what the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] just said, I want to remind my colleagues that the language says that the balanced budget shall be reached by fiscal year 2002 as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office. That does not mean that the Congressional Budget Office baseline is the one that will be used. And it points out in (b) that that budget agreement shall be estimated by the Congressional Budget Office. That always occurs.

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman from Texas had also better remember, however, that in balancing a budget within 7 years it will be necessary, as the agreement says, to ensure that Medicare, or to ensure Medicare solvency, reform welfare, provide adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment. Now it is clear that we will not be able to do that on a 7-year timeframe and still provide the large unnecessary tax cuts which the majority party wants to give to people who are making a lot more money in this country than are the people whose taxes they want to raise in their reconciliation bill.

So I think we had better remember that this agreement is a balanced agreement which will not just balance the budget, but balance the economy in society along with it.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER].

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I just have to say that whenever two parties sit down to make out an agreement it is a binding agreement, words have meaning and should be, in fact, honored; and I was disappointed that Mr. Panetta, the Chief of Staff, would say this morning the budget could be balanced in 7 or 8 years.

Now is not time to waffle. When this agreement gets sent there, we have to place meaning to those words; and doing it in 7 years, and using CBO scoring, is exactly what must be done.

I listened to some of my colleagues here on the Republican side say, ''Use words such as excited, thrilled, and historic to describe this agreement.''

I have to share with my colleagues that I have somewhat of an ambivalence in my feelings here today because I think the American people, as they view the work we do here, are probably saying, ''So what, we balance our books at home all the time. What's the big deal that Congress is now balancing its books?''

If my colleagues stop to ponder and think about that, they are right. Why

has it taken so long to do this? Many view government as how it personally affects themselves, whether they are a customer of a particular agency or a constituency of particular programs, and they view it, self-interest, in nature. But I submit, if we look at it from the greater perspective, the greatest threat to the American stability in our future as a nation is that of the national debt and our budget deficits. If we open the eyes of our mind to the greater vision, what we have to see is that we must address this, we must also address the budget deficits, and think about this.

Here is why I have the ambivalence here today. My colleagues can say, ''Oh, we should be thrilled, and excited, and historic,'' but think about this. By 2002 the national debt will accrue from $4.8 trillion to approaching $6.8 trillion. Then it is going to take us up to year 2030 to 2035 to bring the debt into better balance.

Now in this town, talking about 2035, some would say, ''STEVE, have you lost your mind,'' and that is part of the problem with this town, is according to the emotions of the moment, decisions only for the next election cycle; that is the profound difference that has made. So what I will share with America, why it is historic and the profoundness of it, is in fact we are talking about the long-term vision of the country, not some emotion of the moment, not some decision just for the next election.

Pass this.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. BARRETT].

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that we were able to reach an agreement, and I am equally pleased that we are going to be able to work toward a balanced budget in 7 years. In doing so I am happy that my colleagues on the Republican side have dropped a provision in the continuing resolution that will increase Medicare premiums at four times the rate of inflation for our country's seniors.

But I also have to comment on the workings of last week. When the Republicans took control in January, they said they were going to run Congress like a business. They were going to come in here and run this place like a business. Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is a business in this country that would have done what Congress did last week. There is not a business in this country that would send its employees home and say, ''We're mad. You go home, but we're still going to pay you.'' That, my colleagues, is insanity.

Mr. Speaker, I also have to comment on the tax cuts. We are hearing about tax cuts in the next 7 years. I would like tax cuts, everybody would like tax cuts, but each of those 7 years there is a deficit that is going to be running in this country, so for those tax cuts that benefit primarily the wealthier people in this country, that money is going to be borrowed because we are in a deficit situation. The money is going to be borrowed from my children and my grandchildren, and for them to come here and say they care about the children and grandchildren, and then turn around and borrow money from the children and grandchildren to give tax cuts to people who have done very well in this society is not what we should be doing.

Yes, what we should be doing is telling the wealthier people in this country, ''Once we get the books balanced, once we have no longer a deficit, then come back. Then let's talk about a tax cut.'' But to tell the wealthier people in this country we are going to borrow money from our children and grandchildren, and that is exactly what they want to do in order to give a tax cut, is wrong, and we should not do it.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF], a great member of the Committee on Appropriations and chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation.

□ 1600

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution. I do want to say it was the President, though, that sent the employees home, and not the Congress. This essential and nonessential is not accurate.

Third, this is a balanced budget amendment that most Americans, almost every Member, their constituents support.

Fourth, it is 7 years. It is 7 years and no more. It is a promise made and a promise kept.

Fifth, I want to congratulate the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and I want to congratulate the Republican leadership for the effort. I also want to congratulate the gentleman from Ohio [JOHN KASICH], for his work in negotiating this. I was pleased that Federal employees will continue to be paid, in this case, as they have been in the past.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding to me. I have a question for the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. We see Federal employees are now going to be paid for this time period, but Federal contractors who have been out working under procurements that they earn competitively during this time period are not covered. For the work they are doing, the work products for the Federal Government, will they be paid for those efforts?

Mr LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I would respond to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. DAVIS] that all ongoing contracts, no new starts, but all ongoing contracts will be compensated for any work done during the outage last week.

Mr. DAVIS. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, we promised a balanced budget; promises made, promises kept.

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, Congress is now going to apply the laws made for the rest of the country to this Congress of the United States. That did not happen in the last Congress. Gifts from lobbyists we have taken away. We are cutting our legislative budget. I think we are moving in the right direction here. I think that ought to be noted in light of some of the comments from the other side.

Mr. WOLF. To have a balanced budget in 7 years is historic.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds, simply to respond to the last gentleman by saying we did pass such legislation in this House. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it was filibustered in the other body by the now majority leader, Mr. DOLE, as the gentleman knows. I am speaking, of course, about the lobby reforms and about the legislation making us live under the same laws as everyone else. We did both of those by rule after, or we did one by rule after we were prevented from doing it by the Senate, and we passed the other through the House and it was filibustered by the Senate.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ].

Mr. MENENDAZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the continuing resolution. I wanted to come to the floor after listening to some of the debate, because the question has never been for Democrats whether or not to balance the budget; we want to do that. But a budget to be balanced must also be balanced not only in its numbers, but in its application and the way it affects working people in this country.

The fact of the matter is we have heard a lot about one side of this agreement. I, as an attorney, am looking at the language and saying, ''but Congress and the President also agree that the balanced budget must,'' and it goes on to name several things.

One of the things it says, it must ensure Medicare solvency. You do not do that taking $270 billion out of Medicare. That has to be negotiated. You do not ensure future generations in terms of their education when you are cutting back on education. You do not ensure the environment if you gut the essential programs that give us clean drinking water.

So yes, there is an agreement to have 7-year balanced budget, but a budget to be balanced is also a question of priorities, and those priorities include the second part of that agreement that you failed to highlight.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Let us go back to the language. Let us look at what it says. Remember, a majority of the House and a majority of the Senate has already voted a program to balance the budget in 7 years. What this document says is, ''a balanced budget not later than fiscal year 2002.'' One of the reasons people are complaining about the current Congressional Budget Office numbers is they are too conservative. You think a whole lot more money is going to come to the table. This agreement says not later than 2002.

If a lot more money comes to the table, there are going to be a number of people who are going to say,''We are going to do it in 2001 or 2000.'' A majority of the House and Senate has a balanced budget already in 7 years. Do not think that you folks are going to be part of the agreement if you think what you are going to do is have your priorities overtake the majority's priorities.

This agreement is between the President and the Republicans, the majority in the House and Senate. If you want to keep talking about cuts, you are not going to be at the table. If you want to keep it at 7 years, calm your rhetoric just a little bit.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. HORN].

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted someone in the White House has finally taken the advice of the great Senator from Vermont, George Aiken. A quarter of a century ago he said about Vietnam: ''Mr. President, declare victory and come home.'' Mr. President, I am glad you have declared victory by accepting the Republican principles. Now, come home, sit down at the negotiations, and let us get a bipartisan agreement. The budget, and a balanced budget, is your Vietnam. Let us end that.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I think, in light of that previous comment, it is interesting to note that until the Democrats insisted there was no language whatsoever guaranteeing the protection of Medicaid, education, the environment, and so forth, I think those are Democratic principles. I do not know what Republican principles he was talking about, but those are Democratic principles.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, because this continuing resolution supports the principles of helping working Americans, I rise to support it. It protects Medicare, Medicaid, the environment, and education while balancing the budget.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the right to close.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER].

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. EWING]. The gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER] is recognized for 4 minutes and 45 seconds.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this continuing resolution, which is essentially an appropriation, instead of passing all of our appropriation bills. That is why we are here. But for the inability to do that, we would not be here.

We have just seen and America has witnessed a shameful shutdown of the Federal Government. It was not only shameful because it reflected our inability, the President, Republicans, Democrats, all of us together, an inability to get our job done. Now frankly, some have talked about the CR and been angry about the fact that it was the President. In point of fact, the President refused to sign CR's which he thought undercut priorities for Americans that he thought were important: the environment, education, Medicare, the list could go on. In fact, it is included in this CR.

The fact of the matter is whatever the reasons we shut down Government, it cost us money. It could have been avoided. In point of fact, it should have been avoided. I want to rise also, as an aide, to say that I am pleased that the Wolf-Hoyer-Davis-Wynn-Morella-Moran-Gekas language indicating the Federal employees, as they have every time the Congress has failed to do its job and the President has failed to sign a CR, has shut down, that we have repaid, we have paid those folks, and that is good.

But we ought to realize, as well, that this is not a debate about commas or dots or even contracts. Yes; it is important that each of us keep our word, but it is, in the final analysis, an argument about the vision for this country and about people, and how people will be affected, how seniors will be affected on Medicare, how students will be affected, and their families, trying to get a college education to compete in world markets; a vision of how we can best defend this Nation and lend credibility to this country's role in maintaining international security.

That is why the President was so concerned about including in the language those references to Medicare and Medicaid, to education, agriculture, the national defense, veterans, and the environment; because in the final analysis, whether we call it a CR or reconciliation, words that most Americans do not understand, they do understand that when they get up in the morning, they are worried their health care and that of their families, they are worried about their childs safety as they go to school, they are worried about their 18- and 19- and 20-year-olds' ability to get a college education. These are things that mean something very real to the American public.

This CR will neither balance the budget nor ensure its balance. What it will say, however, is that we will get the Government back to work. Then we will deal with the reconciliation bill shortly. We will talk about the priorities of the Republican party and the priorities of the Democratic party.

We differ. We differ as to whether there ought to be a tax cut for some of the wealthiest, and yes, some of the not so wealthy in this country at the expense of school lunches, at the expanse of working Americans earning under $28,000 having a tax increase, in effect. That is what we are going to discuss.

The American public, I believe, thinks that is an important debate, because they know in the final analysis it is not about CR's, it is not about reconciliation, it is not about budgets per se, it is about people. It is about a vision of America. That is what the President was talking about. Very frankly, I think it is what all of us are talking about on both sides of the aisle.

It is time to get on with that debate, now that we have overcome the shameful shutdown, the expensive shutdown, the inappropriate shutdown, the unintended shutdown of the Federal Government because we were trying to force the President to retreat from his commitment and his vision. That is a vision we will now debate. I ask for support of this continuing resolution.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT].

(Mr. HASTERT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the balanced budget provisions and the CR, and ask for a yes vote.

Mr. Speaker, the President's men have been making the circuit of the talk shows today trying to tell the American people that the words of this agreement don't mean what they say.

Mr. Speaker, the words are plain and simple. When the President signs this agreement, he is saying without reservation that he will balance the budget in 7 years—not 8, not 9, not 10—he is saying he will do it in 7 years.

Second, when he signs, the President is agreeing that it will be the independent Congressional Budget Office that determines whether or not the numbers are real.

Mr. Speaker, there are other words in this agreement. They restate our commitment to ensuring Medicare solvency, reforming welfare, providing adequate funding for Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment. In addition there are words that restate our commitment to adopt tax policies that help working families and stimulate future economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, these words about our principles and priorities are important, and we will do our best to live up to them. But we need to be very clear that we are not agreeing to let those words be an excuse for not balancing the budget in 7 years with real honest numbers.

Mr. Speaker, nothing in this agreement allows for any excuse. We are saying, in law, that we will balance the budget in 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, when we vote for this measure, we give our word that it will happen. Likewise, by signing this agreement, the President gives his word—no excuses—no reinterpretations—no outs—just a balanced budget with honest numbers in 7 years.

Mr. Speaker, if the President doesn't understand it that way, he should not sign this bill. And if he does sign it, and I hope he will, let's not insult the American people by having any army of the President's spin doctors running all over the country in the next few days telling us it really means something else. Let's stop the political games and get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority has written and passed in this Congress its 7 year balanced budget. We've proved it can be done. After the President signs this agreement into law making his commitment to balancing the budget in 7 years, he should send us a detailed budget of his own so the negotiation can begin.

Mr. Speaker, the time for sound bites is over. It's time for the President to translate his principles into specific budget numbers so the negotiation can seriously begin.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Louisiana, [Mr. LIVINGSTON] has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time. Mr. Speaker, in the little time I have left, let me close this debate by thanking all of the members of both sides for what I thought was a fine debate, and I join with the preceding Speaker, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER], by saying that I, too, am glad that we are putting the Federal workers back to work.

The fact is, though, there is a fundamental difference between the parties that brought us to where we are. I, for one, was a little concerned by the media portrayal which would say, ''A pox on both your houses. It is a temper tantrum by the Congress or by the President or by one party or another. They could not get along.''

The fact is that this debate that we have been having for the last several weeks is a real, a meaningful, a fundamental representation of difference between the approaches, the vision, as the gentleman said, of the two parties. For the last 40 years, the Democrats have controlled the House of Representatives, and, hence, the legislative body of Government.

In those 40 years, they have opted for higher taxes, higher regulations, greater bureaucracy, greater central control, and ultimately, less freedom for the American taxpayer and for the American citizen in general.

The Republican, as the minority party, has opted for more freedom, less taxes, less bureaucracy, less central control, but we have lost the argument until this last year.

As of this last year, we are winning the argument, and yesterday the President of the United States capitulated, yes, capitulated, when he said OK to a 7-year balanced budget, a 7-year balanced budget, scored by the Congressional Budget Office. He has in effect said, ''Okay, Congress. Time out. Let us get back to work. We will do it in 7 years.''

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is critically important that we stay on the glide path to a balanced budget, that we keep this Congress working according to the intent of yesterday's agreement. The business is not done. It is not settled. It is not finished. But if we fulfill the agreement that was made yesterday, our children and our grandchildren will have a fiscally sound country. The people of the United States will have lower interest rates. We will find it easier to finance our homes, to send our children to college, to prepare for retirement. The American people will be better off with less Government, less control, less bureaucracy, less taxation, and less regulation. I urge the adoption and passage of this continuing resolution. I urge the continuation of this Congress towards a balanced budget by the year 2002.

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bipartisan compromise continuing resolution that will fully restore Federal Government operations and commit the President and this Congress to a balanced budget by 2002 using Congressional Budget Office [CBO] numbers.

One year ago we made a promise to our constituents that we would bring fiscal responsibility to the Federal Government.

Today, we are keeping that promise.

This agreement reflects a long awaited realization from the President that we must be serious about putting our fiscal house in order.

Now that the President and Congress appear to be on the same page I am hopeful that we can finally accomplish the task at hand.

Many will try to define the Federal Government shutdown and this compromise in terms of winners and losers. In my opinion, the only winner is the American people and our Nation's children.

With the national debt soaring towards $5 trillion, its good to see that Congress and the President are finally able to summon the political courage to make the difficult choices and balance the budget.

For too many years Congress has made broken promises and half hearted attempts to balance the Federal budget. Time after time these attempts have failed because many have lacked the moral fortitude and dedication required to make the tough decisions.

We cannot continue to mortgage our country's future anymore. I am committed to staying the course for the sake of our children and for America's future.

During the next few weeks, we will negotiate in good faith with the administration in an effort to balance the budget.

The challenge before us is monumental, but I am confident that we will overcome the obstacles and produce a responsible fiscal agreement.

For the past year, I have worked hard to restore an attitude of fiscal fitness in the Congress.

I am pleased that our resolve to have a judicious balanced budget time-line with specific CBO numbers has finally brought everyone under the same tent.

I am looking forward to the negotiations and urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

□ 1615

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). All time has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON].

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I object on the ground that a quorum is not present and make a point of order a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2099, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Mr. QUILLEN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 280 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 280

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany, and the amendment reported from conference in disagreement on, the bill (H.R. 2099) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report and the amendment reported in disagreement shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on a motion that the House insist on its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate numbered 63 to its final adoption without intervening motion except debate pursuant to clause 2(b)(1) of rule XXVII.

Mr. QUILLEN. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, this rule waives all points of order to protect the conference report which provides appropriations for the Departments of Veteran's Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and independent agencies.

I am particularly pleased to see this piece of legislation moving to completion, because this is the bill which provides funding for programs to assist the veterans of this Nation.