malady that is suffered by that individual. We are talking about brain shunts, heart valves, pacemakers, artificial hearts, knee implants, hip; we know the whole list of new and wondrous devices that have been developed over the last several years and which now become almost routine in the lifesaving capacity in which they find themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we have run into a serious problem which we have tried to address both in the last Congress, and now we are going to attempt again to do so. We came across a situation which is very serious. A supplier of materials to a company, let us say, that makes brain shunts, the supplier sends a little piece of wood, sells a little piece of wood to this brain shunt company. I am just doing a hypothetical. The brain shunt company takes this little piece of wood that is innocuous and neutral in its application and uses it as a component part of the brain shunt.

Now, something once in a while may go wrong with the brain shunt and the person who is hurt by it, if it happens that way, will sue not just the doctor, not just the hospital, not just the device-maker, not just the scientist who developed this brain shunt, but also the supplier way back here in the chain of events who supplied a little piece of material that had nothing to do with whether or not the medical device worked. In other words, this company was supplying this wood to thousands of different companies for thousands of different things; it is just that innocuous, neutral item of material.

So now what do we have? We have this scenario whereby a multimillion dollar suit is launched against this supplier back here of the wood particle, the little bitty part that went into this medical device. What has that caused? These companies have to defend these suits and they spend millions of dollars defending them, and in every single case they have been absolved from liability because all they supplied was a neutral piece of material.

However, Mr. Speaker, the cost of doing business with these medical devices, the cost of litigation, lawyers' fees, court fees and costs and so forth, has caused these companies to make a policy decision not to deliver, not to sell these materials any longer to these people who develop these medical devices. That is a tragedy. That means that new medical devices and the continued use of the ones that have been so miraculous thus far, like the brain shunt and the pacemaker and all of those things, are running short of the capacity to meet the demand and the need of the American people.

So last term I introduced a bill, the counterpart is over in the Senate, and we have done so again this year, to allow the material suppliers out here in the world, suppliers that have nothing to do with the ultimate injury if any occurs, to be absolved in the early part of a suit from the possibility of multimillion dollar lawsuits, and thus give them incentive to continue to supply these materials to the medical device companies.

What happened last year, we passed such a bill, we passed a products liability bill that contained some other features of the same type, and the President vetoed it. We were stunned because we had received signals from the White House that indeed he was going to sign this bill, that he is in favor of those kinds of concepts, yet he vetoed it. We were not able to muster enough votes then to override the veto, so we have to try again this session.

What startled me about the veto, Mr. Speaker and Members, was this: that when the President signed the welfare bill, he said there is a lot wrong with it, and he went on to outline how many things were wrong with the welfare bill, but he said there are enough good things in it that I am going to sign it and we will fix it later, or words to that effect. But on this lifesaving measure that we presented, which if he found flaws in it he could easily have said, I will sign it and we will take care of what I think is wrong with it later, but he failed to do that and vetoed the whole concept.

We are going to try again to convince the President with massive public opinion and understanding of this issue, and we hope to prevail.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.)

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. GOODLATTE] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

May Your mighty hand, O gracious God, protect us all the day long and may Your providence lead us in the way of justice and peace. We place before you, O God, all the concerns of our hearts and all the petitions that move our souls, asking that You would bless us when we need blessing, that You would forgive us when we need forgiving, that You would strengthen us when we are weak and that You would open our eyes to the wonders of life and love. With gratefulness we accept the tasks of this day, and earnestly pray that we will be good custodians of the responsibilities that are before us. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. TRAFICANT] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. TRAFICANT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FOR SPEAKER TO ENTERTAIN MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that on tomorrow, Wednesday, April 9, 1997, the Speaker be authorized to entertain motions to suspend the rules and agree to the following bills:

H.R. 240, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1997; and H.R. 757, the American Samoa Development Act of 1997.

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

Mr. MILLER of California. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the right to object because I think that the schedule that once again the House is witnessing this week, in light of some very important problems that are pressing for the Nation and for this institution, first and foremost being campaign finance reform and, second, obviously for the people we represent, the health care coverage for children, I object to that request.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman yield?

Mr. MILLER of California. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I would just point out that we have on the schedule this week of a very, very important bill that deals with the Federal funding of assisted suicides, of which I am unalterably opposed to any kind of Federal funds being spent for that purpose. This bill has dual jurisdiction with the Committee on Ways and Means. The Committee on Ways and Means had understood that this bill would be coming up on the suspension calendar and not under a special rule that we would bring to the House. Consequently, we have been negotiating with the minority, with Minority Leader Gephardt, about bringing the bill up on suspension. We wanted to do that on Thursday. That is the reason for this request today to take up this very important measure.

But if the gentleman insists on objecting, so be it.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I insist on my objection.