be made available to them for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, last year, after some effort to get an amendment to the floor, 406 of my colleagues voted to pass something called Medicare subvention, which would allow 65-year-old military retirees to use the base hospital and for Medicare to reimburse that base hospital so that there was no cost to the DOD for providing health care to our Nation's military retirees. Our military retirees, like every other American, pay Medicare taxes. This would allow them to take those Medicare taxes to the doctor of their choice.

Unfortunately, the other body, after we passed that by such a large vote, chose not to include that in the final version of the defense authorization bill. They took our language that said ''you must do it'' and said ''you may do it.'' Unfortunately, events have shown that neither HCFA, which is Medicare, nor the DOD could reach an agreement on the compensation.

So now, because the Committee on Rules said we would have to waive the budget rule, we cannot take care of our Nation's military retirees. I guess the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) and I would be the only two guys in this room to know that there is a song by the Isley Brothers called ''Harvest for the World.'' The rhetorical question is why do those who pay the price come home with the least? Mr. Speaker, if these Americans have paid the price, then why are they coming home with the least?

We are told that for hundreds of millions of dollars, we cannot reimburse the base hospitals with their own Medicare money. Mr. Speaker, 31 times this year, the Committee on Rules has seen fit to waive the budget rules; but almost always, it was for someone who had a big PAC, folks who made big contributions. Well, military retirees do not have big PACs; and they do not make big contributions, not the least donation-wise. What they have done is contributed their lives to our Nation, and we are not even willing to see to it that we can keep the promise to them.

So I am going to oppose this rule, and I would ask my fellow colleagues to oppose it.

I would also like to point out that one more budget tightening that is going on has to do with concurrent receipt. Federal employees who are disabled on the workplace are allowed to draw their disability and their retirement pay. Once again, the only Americans who are singled out to get one or the other are our Nation's military retirees. As the President just pointed out, we are going to have casualties in this war against terrorism; and if those casualties happen to have been someone who served our Nation for 20 years or more, and if they become disabled as a result of their military service, they will get their disability; but it will be deducted from their retirement pay.

Mr. Speaker, I want my colleagues, the Committee on Rules, I want the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) of the Committee on Ways and Means, I want somebody to come to this floor and tell me that that is fair. Just last week we bailed out the airlines, and I voted for it, and some of the people we bailed out make $20 million and $30 million a year to run those companies, and they have not run them very well. We have seen to it that the wealthiest 5 percent of all Americans got more than their fair share of 1 trillion, 200 billion dollars worth of tax breaks; but we cannot take care of folks who have been disabled serving their country, and we cannot honor the promise of lifetime health care to our Nation's military retirees.

I want the Speaker of the House, I want the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), I want someone to come forward and just tell me if they think that is fair, because if we are willing to do it behind the cloak of secrecy, if we are willing to get the folks on the Committee on Rules to do our dirty work for us, then please do not have the nerve 2 months from now to go to Veterans' Day celebrations, and when that military retiree comes to you and says, you know what, they will not let me in the base hospital, and when that disabled veteran comes to you, and says, you know what, I can get my military pay or disability pay, but I have earned both of them, and I cannot get both, you can look that guy in the eye and say, well, I was not aware of that, and maybe he will forget about it a year from November, or you can tell him the truth: yes, I knew you had a problem, but we were trying to move that bill along, so we just ignored you one more time.

Just last week we found $18 billion to bail out the airlines. The week before that we allocated $40 billion additional defense funds, but not one of those pennies is allocated to solve either one of these problems. Does somebody want to tell me that is right? This defense bill is more famous for what it does not do. It does not balance the budget. As of the end of August, even before the tragedy on September 11, our Nation was $31 billion in the red, again. It does not build ships. At the rate we are going, we are losing 15 ships a year, that is the impact, and headed towards a 200 ship fleet. I say to my colleagues, not the 400-ship fleet of just a few years ago and not the 600-ship fleet of the Reagan years. So someone tell me where the heck all the money goes and why we cannot set better priorities.

So for a lot of reasons, on behalf of my 405 colleagues who supported Medicare subvention last year, and who only asked for a fair up and down vote on that issue so that we can fulfill the promise to our Nation's military retirees, I ask my colleagues to oppose this rule.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional speakers. I urge adoption of the rule, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 57 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1747

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCHUGH) at 5 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 25, 2001.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 25, 2001 at 4:41 p.m.

That the Senate PASSED without amendment H.J. Res. 65.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk of the House.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2002

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 246 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2586.

□ 1748

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2586) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2002 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2002, and for other purposes, with Mrs. BIGGERT in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Thursday, September 20, 2001, proceedings pursuant to the order of the House of