The SPEAKER pro tempore. This concludes the call of the Private Calendar.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1214, MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ACT OF 2002

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 605 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 605

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (S. 1214) to amend the Merchant Marine Act, 1936, to establish a program to ensure greater security for United States seaports, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it was my hope, I had actually assigned this rule for management to my colleague from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), and I have his prepared statement here, and I will go through his prepared statement, Mr. Speaker. I love Florida, and it is a great spot. My family actually has a home there, but I am a Californian; so I am just offering that as a bit of a warning as I proceed with the statement of the gentleman from Florida's (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

During the consideration of the resolution, all time yielded will be for the purpose of debate only.

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 605 is a standard rule waiving all points of order against the conference report to accompany the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 and against its consideration.

The underlying legislation is yet another integral part of our coordinated effort to provide the most effective and comprehensive homeland security plan possible. We are working to protect our citizens at home and abroad, we are working to protect our vital infrastructure, both physical and electronic, and we are working to improve our economic security. Today we will vote to protect our Nation's ports.

Our maritime industry, including hundreds of ports nationwide, contributes $742 billion to the gross domestic product each year. The State of Florida has some of the largest ports in the country, and I should say I represent the Los Angeles area, which has the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which are even larger than the ones in Florida I should add. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) represents the Port of Miami and Port Everglades. Thousands of passenger and container ships pass through these ports every year. Industries from retail sales to the airline industries are effected by the business that is done at these ports in both my State and in the State of Florida and around the country.

We must ensure that these ports are not only safeguarded from being used as a point of entry for dangerous elements, but also to protect them from an attack that could be devastating to our economy. The Port of Miami's impact on Miami-Dade County is estimated at more than $8 billion and 45,000 jobs. In fiscal year 2001, the volume of cargo moving through the Port of Miami exceeded 8.2 million tons. Port Everglades' volume of business is equally impressive. In 2001, Port Everglades was host to over 3 million cruise passengers.

Our Nation's ports are significant partners in the U.S. economy and we must employ every conceivable option to protect them. This conference report will work to this end by requiring the Coast Guard to conduct vulnerability assessments of our ports, authorizing grants to help with port security upgrades around the country, and by assessing the security systems of certain foreign ports that do business with the United States.

Additionally, this legislation authorizes $6 billion for the Coast Guard in fiscal year 2003, including $550 million in additional resources to address longstanding budget shortfalls. The Coast Guard is charged with the tremendous duty of protecting our 95,000 miles of coastline. This legislation very appropriately addresses this reality.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the ranking minority member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), as well as the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO), for their work on this very important issue. This is truly a bipartisan piece of legislation. In fact, every member of the conference committee has signed the report.

The conference report and the fair rule providing for its consideration deserve our support, and I would urge my colleagues to do this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield control of the balance of my time to the gentleman from Miami (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), who has arrived, and I know that he could have commented on Florida in a much better way than I, but I struggled to get through representation of his State if only on a temporary basis.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida will control the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Committee on Rules for yielding me time and I thank my colleague and neighbor from Florida for his comments.

Mr. Speaker, this important legislation helps ensure the security of our Nation's ports by establishing a comprehensive national antiterrorism system to reduce the vulnerability of ports and waterways against a terrorist attack and a transportation security incident. Additionally, the conference report authorizes funding for these new antiterrorism fighting provisions as well as the planning and implementation of security plans and response efforts at all of our Nation's ports.

It authorizes additional funding to the Coast Guard which is much needed, and it establishes a nationwide security ID program for all U.S. ports. Perhaps most importantly, the report outlines the responsibilities of various Federal agencies, local law enforcement, and private companies in the day-to-day security operations of ports in the case of any unforeseen event.

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Following September 11, as a member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and Committee on Rules, I was and remain an outspoken critic of the lack of coordination between Federal agencies in times of crises. I am happy to see that the conference had the foresight and wherewithal to provide guidance to the many agencies affected by increased port security. Perhaps our airports and the Transportation Security Administration could learn a few things from this report.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that I find myself managing this rule with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART). I think the gentleman would agree that there is no region in the country that is home to three major international ports in such close proximity as South Florida. And the rest of Florida, if we take into consideration the Tampa Bay area, the Pensacola Bay area, Jacksonville and Port Canaveral, then Florida obviously is critical when it comes to port security.

Further, there are no ports that have done more security improvements in the last 18 months than Port Everglades, the Port of Palm Beach and the Port of Miami, all three of which are located in the counties the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) and I represent.

While the underlying report is good, it would be irresponsible of me to continue without noting two of the major flaws I believe still exist in the legislation.

First, ports who had planned for or implemented new security measures prior to September 11, 2001, that bring the port into compliance with provisions of S. 1214 should be able to be reimbursed for their expenses. The underlying report does not allow for this to occur.

Case in point, Port Everglades. As one of the largest cruise ships and container ports in the Nation, Port Everglades recognized the need to improve its security long before September 11, 2001. Nearly 2 years ago, the port invested millions of dollars into establishing a new security plan. In fact, in June of 1999, the Presidential Commission on Seaport Crime and Security visited Port Everglades and recognized many of the port's ''best practices'' as examples for ports throughout the country to follow.

Prior to September 11, the Port Everglades security improvement plan was to be implemented over several years. However, in response to September 11, Broward County, Florida, made security at Port Everglades its top priority. The County is committed to spending more than $25 million for security improvements at the port in fiscal year 2003 alone, and the Ports of Palm Beach and Miami have similar investments in progress.

Under the report, Port Everglades will be able to be reimbursed for the security improvements it has made since September 11, as well as those it will make in the following year. However, I am appalled that Port Everglades, as well as the Ports of Palm Beach and Miami, will not be eligible to be reimbursed for the planning and implementation of various security improvements that they made prior to September 11, 2001. South Florida's three major ports and some others around the Nation were ahead of the game and made security improvements 18 months ago that Congress is just now getting around to requiring today.

Specifically, Port Everglades is an example of the intuitive thinking that ports should have been doing a long time ago, and to penalize it for being ahead of the game is just plain wrong.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I have major reservations about the level of funding authorized in the report. Clearly, the amount authorized is not enough to meet the security needs of our Nation's ports. In the next 18 months, South Florida's three international ports will spend more than $60 million on security improvements. Under the 50/50 or 75/25 cost-sharing agreements laid out in the report, Port Everglades, Port Palm Beach and Port of Miami could easily command nearly half of the total amount authorized in this legislation.

Realistically, the $75 million authorized in the report just is not enough to fund security improvements for all U.S. ports. I encourage my colleagues on the Committee on Appropriations to consider this reality when appropriating funds over the next 6 years.

In the end, Mr. Speaker, this rule is typical of one for a conference report, and I will be supporting it. Additionally, I will also be supporting the underlying conference report. I urge my colleagues to do the same, but, as I previously mentioned, the report has flaws and Congress must remain intent on revisiting these issues that are critical to our Nation's security.

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

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for having initiated this discussion today on this very important rule.

I think it is important that we realize that the conference report before us is a very important piece of legislation. I know of few pieces of legislation that have ever been flawless that I have voted on, and so I would simply tell my friend that perhaps this piece of legislation could be improved as well, as any human endeavor, because I have seen some things that are perfectible but very few that are perfect.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman from Florida agree that Port Everglades and Port Miami are deserving of consideration?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Of course.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. And that the funding level, although we have problems in the Nation, may not be enough to cover the ports of the United States?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the gentleman. In the House bill before it went to conference we had a provision for reimbursement for ports for acts taken for security after September 11, and in the Senate there was no such provision. The inclusion of the House provision is something we should commend. We should keep in mind there are important provisions in this legislation which I think make it not only a conference report that we should support but that we should support with pride and enthusiasm.

I thank the conferees and all of the Members who have worked so hard to bring this important piece of legislation forward, specifically the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), as well as the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) for their work on this critical issue of port security. This is a fundamental aspect of national security, of homeland security, to improve the protections for our ports that are obviously so important to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, with that of mind, cognizant of the importance of the underlying legislation and the fairness of this rule, I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. 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.

The motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3210, TERRORISM RISK PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SESSION. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 607 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 607

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3210) to ensure the continued financial capacity of insurers to provide coverage for risks from terrorism. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAN MILLER of Florida). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), 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, the resolution is the standard rule for consideration of conference reports and waives all points of order against consideration of the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, the collective memories of Americans were altered forever. The terrorist attacks resulted in an incalculable loss, both in loss of life and the destruction of buildings and businesses.

While America has begun its recovery and is healing from last September, we must be mindful of the threat that continues to exist. Just yesterday, our intelligence officials indicated that terrorist groups may be planning a new wave of attacks against our homeland. Exposure to terrorism is not only a threat to our national security but is also a threat to the U.S. and the global economy.

There is no doubt that these terrorist attacks have resulted in the most costly, catastrophic loss in the history of property and casualty insurance. However, the ripple effects of the attacks continues to last and will linger on.

The shortage of terrorism insurance has left any number of our hospitals, stadiums, shopping malls, apartments, and office buildings either with astronomical rates for insurance or none at all.

It goes without saying that the attacks have been a real threat not only to our homeland but also to our economic security. The United States Chamber of Commerce estimates that the economy has suffered a loss of