

offer an amendment, he can no longer claim to support one thing, but then say that he was blocked in his effort to make a change in the law. In addition, with more floor votes and more clear issues, Members will be forced to take clear positions with their votes. That is exactly what the American people want: fewer excuses and more elected officials who actually stand for something."

That quote, Madam Speaker, was made by the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Rules, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). I agree with that quote.

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), my friend, seems confused as to why we are having this debate. He has asked for the amendment resolution to be read over and over, so let me try to clear something up. The reason why we are having this debate today is because we believe that this House is becoming a place where trivial issues get debated passionately, and important ones, not at all. The fact that what they are asking for is an additional day to debate essentially non-consequential, trivial issues bothers us because we are constantly being told by the majority that we do not have enough time to make everybody's amendments in order. We do not have enough time to allow this House to deliberate. We do not have enough time to make sure that the democratic process works, and that all Members, Democrats and Republicans, have an opportunity to have their constituents' voices be heard on this House floor. So that is why we are having this debate.

We are having it in a particularly passionate way today because of what went on earlier this morning in the Committee on Rules. The prescription drug bill, perhaps one of the most important pieces of legislation that we will deal with, an issue that impacts 40 million of our senior citizens in this country, this bill was brought to the Committee on Rules in the middle of the night, and virtually every amendment and all of the substitutes except one were ruled out of order, were denied. So these people will not have an opportunity to be heard on the floor today.

□ 1145

I mean, we are stunned. We are shocked. We are appalled that on a bill this important that they are rushing it to the floor under an extremely restrictive process, limiting debate so that we are not going to have much of a debate here on this House floor.

In the other body they have been debating it for 2 weeks, over 70 amendments, and they are still debating it; but here in the people's House, we are supposed to represent the people. We are supposed to be the body of government closest to the people. We are being told that we have to do it in a matter of a few hours, let us do it quickly, no amendments and get out of here. That is not the way to do it.

This is too important; and for some of us who worry that they are trying to privatize and weaken Medicare, it is appalling that we do not have an opportunity to have amendments on this floor to protect Medicare, to make sure that it does not wither on the vine, to make sure that it is there for future generations.

That is what is at stake here. That is what we are talking about is so important.

I want to close by making an appeal to some of my Republican colleagues who routinely come before the Committee on Rules and, like many Democrats, get routinely shut out of the process. Many of them were there last night, early this morning, at 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 in the morning trying to get their amendments made in order, very thoughtful amendments. They were shut out of the process. I want to speak to them just for one second and urge them to join with us in voting against this resolution. Send a message to your leadership that everybody in this Congress deserves respect and everybody should be heard, that the constituents that I represent are as important as the constituents that you represent, are as important as the constituents that are represented by the Speaker of the House and the majority leader of this Chamber.

So this is an important vote, and the debate we are having today is very relevant and very relevant to the topic at hand. So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote "no" on this. We are spending too much time naming post offices and not enough time debating the issues that real people care about. So I urge a "no" vote.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the remainder of my time.

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

I do not agree with my Massachusetts colleague who said it is dumbing down democracy to do suspensions and not have amendments. To get to a conclusion at many times is good for the process, good for the country.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Res. 297 which provides for the Speaker the option to entertain motions to suspend the rules on Wednesdays during the remainder of the One Hundred Eighth Congress. Functionally, this proposal hinders the legislative business of the House. Furthermore, by implication, this bill appears to be nothing more than another attempt by the Majority to diminish the opportunity of the Minority to debate more substantive issues on this floor.

The purpose for allocating time for these items is to expedite their adoption and entry into the records because they are not controversial. To slow down the legislative calendar with three days, instead of two, of non-controversial items is patently wasteful. Passing legislation to commemorate great citizens and to instill widely-held moral values is quite important but should yield to the simple principle of prioritization. An appropriations bill for projects queued by the Department of Homeland Security to protect our Nation's critical in-

frastructure and bioterrorism readiness clearly deserve's priority over non-substantive matters. We have a moral duty not to take lightly the lives of our children and grandchildren. Quite frankly, this bill appears to be somewhat of a mockery to our democratic process.

In the years leading up to the election of 1994, the Republican Party in the House of Representatives complained loudly and vociferously that the then-Democratic majority ruled the House with an autocratic iron fist. The Members of the Rules Committee heard this complaint on a daily basis. Democrats were accused of stifling debate and gagging the House.

After eight and a half years of a Republican-controlled House, the Democratic Members of the Rules Committee can report that the House of Representatives is less democratic and more autocratic than ever before. Instead of reforming the House, the Republican majority has taken filibuster and gagging the House to new heights. The Democratic Members of the Rules Committee, as do the other Members of the Democratic Caucus, believe that the Republican majority has, in the years since it took control of this institution, made a concerted effort to shut down debate and stifle the deserving advocates of this legislative institution. We believe this effort by the Republican leadership goes against the public interest and the pledges made by a host of Republican Members in the years leading up to the 1994 election. Furthermore, the "substance" of this bill, if you will, completely obliterates legitimate legislative order.

Mr. Speaker, I point that our children and grandchildren deserve better. The first responders on the front line awaiting the necessary funds to staff the ports and the posts against the threat of terrorist attack deserve better. Our brothers in Liberia who have been displaced because of civil and political strife deserve better. The seniors citizens whose ability to obtain prescription drugs in a reasonable fashion deserve better. We, as Member of the House of Representatives are charged to do better.

For the foregoing reasons, I oppose H. Res. 297.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the resolution.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

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#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 48 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1253

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE) at 12 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1, MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2003, AND H.R. 2596, HEALTH SAVINGS AND AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2003

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 299 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 299

*Resolved*, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a voluntary program for prescription drug coverage under the Medicare Program, to modernize the Medicare Program, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as a read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) three hours of debate on the bill equally divided among and controlled by the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means; (2) the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Rangel of New York or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, and shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order on the legislative day of June 26 or June 27, 2003, without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2596) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a deduction to individuals for amounts contributed to health savings security accounts and health savings accounts, to provide for the disposition of unused health benefits in cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 3. (a) In the engrossment of H.R. 1, the Clerk shall await the disposition of H.R. 2596 under section 2.

(b) If H.R. 2596 is passed by the House, the Clerk shall—

(1) add the text of H.R. 2596 as new matter at the end of H.R. 1;

(2) conform the title of H.R. 1 to reflect the addition of the text of H.R. 2596 to the engrossment;

(3) assign appropriate designations to provisions within the engrossment; and

(4) conform provisions for short titles within the engrossment.

(c) Upon the addition of the text of H.R. 2596 to the engrossment of H.R. 1, H.R. 2596 shall be laid on the table.

SEC. 4. During consideration of H.R. 1 and H.R. 2596 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of either bill to a time designated by the Speaker.

SEC. 5. Upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order, any rule of the House to the contrary notwithstanding, to consider concurrent resolutions providing for adjournment of the House and Senate during the month of July.

SEC. 6. The Committee on Appropriations may have until midnight on Thursday, July 3, 2003, to file a report to accompany a bill making appropriations for the Department of defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 299 is a multi-part rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 1, the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003, and H.R. 2596, the Health Savings and Affordability Act of 2003.

This rule provides for consideration of H.R. 1 under a modified closed rule, an appropriate rule for such a delicate, complex, and historic piece of legislation. The rule provides for 3 hours of general debate equally divided between the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of H.R. 1.

After general debate it will be in order to consider an amendment printed in the report accompanying this resolution, if offered, by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) or his designee and debatable for 1 hour. All points of order are waived against the amendment. Finally, the rule permits the minority to offer a motion to recommit to H.R. 1 with or without instructions.

Section 2 of this rule provides for the consideration of H.R. 2596, the Health Savings and Affordability Act of 2003, either today, the legislative day of June 26, or tomorrow, June 27, under a closed rule. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate in the House equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. All points of order against the consideration of H.R. 2596 are waived. Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

□ 1300

I would like to take a moment to clarify for my colleagues that upon passage of both pieces of legislation, the text of H.R. 2596 shall be added as a new matter at the end of H.R. 1. In simple terms, these two bills will become one. However, this bill does not preclude either bill from moving forward independently.

Finally, the remaining sections of this rule provide for some housekeeping provisions and provisions which will allow this body to move forward in the appropriations process.

Mr. Speaker, today is a historic day. For years now, seniors across this country have consistently voiced to Congress the same major concerns: the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs. Their concerns are not perceived; they are very, very real. Each year, a typical senior pays approximately \$1,300 on prescription drugs, filling about 22 prescriptions on average. Today, the House will consider a plan to give all seniors a prescription drug benefit through Medicare.

In passing this bill, as I believe we will do before this day is over, we will renew America's promise to our seniors, reduce the cost of prescription drugs, and revolutionize medicine in the 21st century.

I would like to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman THOMAS) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Chairman TAUZIN) for their exemplary cooperation, their remarkable leadership, and inspiring vision they have provided on this complex, yet very much-needed legislation. I would like to take a moment just to give special thanks to them for working so closely with me on a couple of provisions that will greatly benefit cancer patients and hospitals across the country. Included in this legislation is immediate Medicare coverage for oral anticancer drugs through a demonstration project that will offer extraordinary support to seniors who are fighting cancer. It will enable them to afford the newest life-saving medicines in the comfort of their own homes, rather than be hooked up to chemotherapies by infusions in a hospital or clinical setting.

I also commend the chairmen's interest and support in assisting hospitals who serve a disproportionate number of uninsured and indigent populations. Hospitals across this country, including many of our Nation's children's hospitals, will be better able to serve their patients with over \$3 billion in additional funding. Finally, rural hospitals are finally getting their fair share: \$27.2 billion.

Since 1965, Medicare has provided a guarantee of health care coverage for more than 40 million seniors. Today, our seniors are counting on the stability, longevity, and integrity of this program for their secure retirement. But if we do not act and pass this bill before us today, the future of Medicare will be certain: certain bankruptcy. Our inaction will have sealed the fate