Members as soon as we have the paperwork so they can look at the bill and be informed as to how to vote on it.

□ 1415

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, we would hope that would give Members no less than 48 hours to review the bill, have the staffs review it, so we know what is in it. Because, as I said, we have not had the opportunity to be included in the conference.

On the Medicare prescription drug, the gentleman mentioned the Medicare bill in response to my question. Can he tell me the status of the Medicare conference, and can he tell me whether or not he expects that bill to be on the floor prior to the November 7 target date for adjournment?

Mr. DELAY. A lot of people are working very hard to try to get that very complicated piece of legislation put together. The chairman of the conference continues to work with the various parties interested in reaching a compromise by the end of this session.

There have been several bipartisan, informal meetings since last week. I expect that there will be a few more before the end of this week. Hopefully, these meetings will produce a draft product that all the members of the conference can review at the next formal conference meeting. I would anticipate that that would start happening, probably next week or so.

We really think it is important to improve and strengthen Medicare and provide the kind of health care that seniors need before we adjourn in this session. A lot of people are working very hard to accomplish that.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Leader, I keep harping on this because I think it is important to make the point. Our folks are not included in whatever discussions are going on. As a result, we have no idea as to whether or not we think, in fact, Medicare is being strengthened or whether it is being weakened, whether prescription drugs are being made available to seniors, whether they are affordable, accessible, guaranteed, all of which we think is very important. We think this needs to be a voluntary program. I think we agree on that.

But as a result of not being included, we do not know, and we think it is not good for the process that whatever meetings are going on are not what we believe to be conferences of conferees because conferees are not being included. The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), specifically, have not been included, and they are chief conferees, as the gentleman knows. The gentleman from Texas is a conferee himself, as I understand. We would hope that if, in fact, they are going to bring this bill to the floor, and if, in fact, a real conference is to be scheduled that it be done soon and that all of the conferees be included to discuss the parameters of a bill which can pass both House and Senate and be sent to the President.

Of the appropriation bills the gentleman mentioned, does he know which ones are most likely to be on the floor next week?

Mr. DELAY. A lot of people are working, conferees are working and have been working very hard. I anticipate all four that are eligible in conference, right now, could very well come to the floor sometime next week when they are finished, the Labor-HHS bill, the Interior bill, the Energy and Water bill and the Military Construction bill. These are very close to being settled. At least that is what I am being informed. I think those four bills could very well be voted on by next week.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, again on the Labor-Health bill, I am a conferee and I have not been either invited to nor have I attended any conferences on that bill. So if it is reported next week, I am not sure when the conferees are going to meet and consider it. But it is, again, indicative of the fact that on our side, we do not get notice of, or we are not being included in, conferences. That is not, we believe, the way the process ought to work.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield, I just want to correct the gentleman, in that the gentleman has been invited to any formal conferences that have been held and I am sure that to finish the work of the conference, formal conferences will be held on these bills so that Members can look at them and make determinations as to whether they will support them or not. If the gentleman is not being invited to formal conferences, let me know, and I will make sure that he gets the invitation.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, and I will notify the gentleman that I am not being noticed. My conclusion is different than his, however. My conclusion is that I would be invited if they were having them. I do not think they are having them, but I may be in error, Mr. Leader. If the gentleman will check on that and let us know whether or not, in his terms, a formal conference has been held or is scheduled to be held on the Labor-Health bill, it will be news to me. But I would appreciate that information, and I appreciate the gentleman's offer.

Madam Speaker, last week the gentleman and I had a discussion about these conferences. On the Labor-Health bill, we are very concerned about the Labor-Health bill's funding as the gentleman knows. In the No Child Left Behind, the President was very strong on the No Child Left Behind. We believe in that bill, that that is short about $8 billion. Does the gentleman have any information as to whether or not such sums may be added to the Labor-Health bill to fully fund the No Child Left Behind Act?

Mr. DELAY. The gentleman knows that we have a strong disagreement as to whether the No Child Left Behind has been fully funded or not. From my perspective, it has been fully funded. I know the gentleman, and I think every Democrat voted against the bill because they wanted more funding. We have that disagreement. As far as what the conference is ultimately going to have, I am not advised. I could not tell the gentleman today if there has been any agreement on whether we are going to give more money than fully funding the No Child Left Behind.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, the last question, the gentleman will be happy to hear. The House voted by a pretty good number to instruct the conferees on the issue of overtime pay, a substantial number of votes from his side and most of the votes from our side, if not all, all but two. Can the leader tell me whether or not he believes that instruction is being implemented by the conference?

Mr. DELAY. As the gentleman knows, motions to instruct are not binding. Many times it is just an expression of how you feel that day. The House voted on that issue, put it in the bill, and it is in the House bill. It is a very controversial issue between the House and the Senate. It is one of the issues that the conference committee is struggling with. As far as I know, they have not come to any resolution on how to handle that issue as of yet.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Leader, I look forward to hearing from the gentleman as to where these conferences are occurring because I assure the gentleman that I will be enthusiastic about participating and raising this issue and other issues when we find out where that elusive conference is occurring.

I thank the leader for his information.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 6, ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2003

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. MARKEY moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 6 be instructed to insist upon the provisions contained in—

(1) section 14011 of the House bill relating to secure transfer of nuclear materials;

(2) section 14012(d) of the House bill relating to nuclear facility threats, directing the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to issue regulations, including changes to the design basis threat, to ensure that nuclear facilities licensed by Commission address the threat of a terrorist attack against such facilities; and

(3) section 14013 of the House bill requiring the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, before entering into any agreement of indemnification with respect to a utilization facility under section 170 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, to consult with the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security (or any successor official) with respect to that facility concerning whether the location of the facility and the design of that type of facility ensures that the facility provides for the

adequate protection of public health and safety if subject to a terrorist attack, and that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission also consult with the Secretary of Homeland Security before issuing a license or a license renewal for a sensitive nuclear facility concerning the emergency evacuation plan for the communities living near the sensitive nuclear facility.

Mr. MARKEY (during the reading). Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

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

I am offering this motion today to address one of the most inexplicable and indefensible decisions made by the House and Senate Republican energy conferees in their closed-door meetings. I am talking about the decision that has apparently been made by the Republican majority to weaken critical nuclear security provisions Democrats had earlier attached to the energy bill, H.R. 6, in order to better secure our Nation's 103 currently operating civilian nuclear power plants from the threat of terrorist attack.

Remember less than 2 years ago, President Bush told the Nation in his State of the Union address, quote, our discoveries in Afghanistan confirmed our worst fears and showed us the true scope of the task ahead. We have seen the depths of our enemies' hatred in videos where they laugh about the loss of innocent life and the depth of their hatred is equaled by the madness of the destruction they design. We have found diagrams of American nuclear power plants and public water facilities, detailed instructions for making chemical weapons, surveillance maps of American cities and thorough descriptions of landmarks in America and throughout the world.

So we know that nuclear power plants are at the very top of al Qaeda's list of potential targets in the United States. Despite this fact, the Republican conferees have apparently decided to weaken the nuclear security language in the energy bill. My motion covers three of the major weakening changes that have been made in the nuclear antiterrorism provisions in the energy bill.

The first part of my motion addresses the decision by the House Republican conferees to eliminate the requirement for a mandatory Nuclear Regulatory Commission rulemaking to upgrade nuclear security regulations. Section 14012 of the House bill entitled Nuclear Facility Threats requires the NRC to issue regulations, including changes to the design basis threat, to ensure that licensees addressed the threats of a terrorist attack against a nuclear power plant in the United States. Under the provision, these new rules are required to be issued not later than 270 days after the submission of a detailed report by the President assessing the nature of the terrorist threat to the nuclear facilities in the United States or a year after enactment.

The Republican conferees have now weakened this provision so that it no longer mandates a new NRC rulemaking, but instead merely authorizes the NRC to make such revisions to the design basis threats promulgated before the date of enactment of this section as the commission deems appropriate, based on the summary and classification report. There is no deadline. There is no requirement for any formal Nuclear Regulatory Commission rulemaking. This language guts the entire section and appears to allow the NRC to deem the interim orders that it has already adopted since the September 11 attacks to be sufficient and take no further action.

This new language reflects what the NRC and the nuclear industry have always wanted, no action by Congress to require them to do anything more than that which they have already done on nuclear security. But is that the position that this body, which has twice voted to mandate Nuclear Regulatory Commission nuclear security rulemaking, really wants to take?

You might say, perhaps the NRC has already addressed the problem in its secret orders. No, it has not. The NRC orders are classified and were prepared following closed-door consultations with the nuclear industry and no opportunity for public comment. I have read the NRC orders very carefully. And while I cannot discuss them in a public forum due to their security classification, I can tell this House that the NRC's orders are inadequate in several respects and fail to address the kind of threats that we now must be prepared for in a post-September 11 environment. I would suggest to the Members that if they took the time to read these orders and to consult with anyone with any real expertise on security matters, they would share my concern that the NRC has failed to do enough to beef up security at our Nation's nuclear facilities.

□ 1430

But despite the President's warnings, the Republican energy conferees have now decided not to even require the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to undertake a rulemaking to tighten up security at these sensitive facilities.

The second part of my motion addresses the Republican conferees' decision to weaken the House-passed requirements for full consultation with Homeland Security regarding nuclear security risks. Section 14013 of the House bill, ''Unreasonable Risk Consultation,'' requires the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to consult with the Department of Homeland Security concerning whether the location of a new nuclear power plant or its design provides for adequate protection of public health and safety if subject to a terrorist attack before Price-Anderson liability indemnification is provided to the plant.

This provision originated as an amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) to last year's Price-Anderson bill, which this year was attached to the base text of H.R. 6. It also requires the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to consult with the Department of Homeland Security before issuing or renewing a license to operate a new or existing nuclear power plant to determine the adequacy of the emergency evacuation plan for communities around the plant. This provision originated as an amendment that I authored. We have also been informed that they are preparing to eliminate the requirement for consultation prior to a relicensing of an existing power plant, although the Republican conferees have yet to share this new language with us in this bill.

The Republican conferees have now de-linked the Waxman amendment's consultation requirement from Price-Anderson's liability indemnification and eliminated the Markey amendment's requirement for consultation regarding adequacy of emergency evacuation plans. We have also been informed that they are preparing to eliminate the requirement for consultation prior to a relicensing of an existing power plant, although the Republican conferees have yet to share this new language with the Democrats.

The elimination of the Waxman amendment's linkage between NRC consultation with Homeland Security and Price-Anderson indemnification takes all of the teeth out of the Waxman provision. Instead of mandating a consultation aimed at determining whether the design or location of a nuclear facility poses an unreasonable risk before giving the owner government-subsidized insurance, we are now merely calling for such consultation to take place.

Moreover, tying consultation to the initial licensing of a plant, and not recovering relicensing of the 103 currently-operating nuclear power plants, greatly narrows the application of the amendment since no new nuclear power plant has been successfully ordered since 1973 and no new nuclear power plants are likely to be ordered for decades, if ever. If this change is made, there would be no mandatory consultation by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission with the Department of Homeland Security for any of the existing nuclear power plants in this country, not for Seabrook, not for Pilgrim, not for Indian Point, not for Diablo Canyon, for none.

Finally, eliminating the specific requirement for consultation regarding

the adequacy of emergency evacuation plans in the event of a successful terrorist attack on a nuclear power plant means that we are failing to do what is needed to ensure that citizens living near plants such as the Indian Point reactor right outside of New York City are fully protected against the threat of a terrorist attack.

And third and finally, my amendment addresses the decision to weaken nuclear materials transportation requirements: section 14011 of the House-passed bill, requiring the NRC to establish a system to better ensure the security of nuclear materials transferred to, from, or within the United States. This provision originated as an amendment I authored that has now passed the House twice in H.R. 6 in this Congress and as part of Price-Anderson reauthorization last year.

The latest Republican conference report draft, in contrast, limits the NRC's regulations to the security of imports or exports of nuclear materials, failing to cover the transportation of these materials within our own country. This limitation is inexplicable in light of the fact that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission told Congress in 2002 that there are 2 million radioactive sources in the United States and that each year there are on average 300 reports of lost or stolen or abandoned radioactive materials.

The NRC also reported at that time that in the past 5 years, there have been 1,495 reports of lost, stolen, or abandoned radioactive materials; 835 these have not been found. According to the NRC, a radioactive source as small as 1Curie, if dispersed by a bomb, ''could spread low-level contamination over an area up to several city blocks, possibly resulting in restriction of the area until the area was surveyed and decontaminated.'' But the Republican energy conferees have exempted transfers of these radioactive materials within the country from the new nuclear security requirements. That makes no sense.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this motion today and send a strong message to the House and Senate Republican energy conferees that this body insists on tougher protections against a terrorist attack on our Nation's nuclear facilities; that this body insists on tougher protections against the threat of a radiological dirty bomb; and that this body rejects secret, backroom talks that result in the weakening of critical antiterrorism protections.

I heard the majority leader earlier make reference to the fact that a motion to instruct might just reflect what the Members in this body are feeling that day. That is not what the provisions that we are talking about reflect. They reflect what has happened on this House floor several times with the Members voting for it. In fact, taking it out reflects what, in my opinion, a small number of Members and nuclear industry officials might feel on any particular day. But they do not capture what the consensus was that was reached by House Members and the general public about what must be done to enhance nuclear security.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are not going to oppose the Markey motion to instruct conferees. I have listened to his comments closely and would say that they do reflect the changes as outlined. I would point out that while the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) is absolutely correct that the House has passed twice the issues that he refers to in his comments in the Senate conference with the House last year, Senate conferees, which at that time were a majority of Democrats, voted to strip all the provisions out that he has just alluded to and that the energy bill that we went to conference with with the Senate this year had none of these provisions in; and the provisions that he alluded to in his motion to instruct, section 14011, 14012(d), and 14013, are in the conference report. They have been changed in the ways that he said.

Section 14011 did apply to domestic and international shipments. In the conference report, it does only apply to international; so he is correct on that. 14012(d), the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MARKEY) amendment that has passed the House did say ''shall'' and the conference report will come back with ''may''; so he is correct on that. And section 14013, the Department of Homeland Security as passed by the House did require a consultation before the grant of a Price-Anderson indemnification agreement. And also before the issuance of a license for a new facility, as it is going to come out of conference, it will apply only to those issuances of a new license.

So he is right in his characterization of the changes. So we get down to a situation, is the glass half full or half empty; and since the Senate had none of these provisions last year or this year, as a conferee, I would suggest to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) that the glass is half full as opposed to the glass is half empty. Changes have been made; but we still have the issues in play, not as strong as he would wish them to be, but they are still in the bill, and it will be good public policy to make these changes that he supports. So I would hope that, while we support the motion to instruct conferees, the truth of the matter is that most of the conferring has been done. We expect to have this bill on the floor sometime next week. It is very unlikely we are going to reopen the conference; but certainly if it were to be reopened, we would support the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MARKEY) motion because since the House has already passed what the motion is instructing us to support, we have every reason to continue to support it knowing that it is a bicameral body and that the House does not always get everything it wants when we are negotiating with the Senate.

So I support the motion to instruct and commend my friend for all his good work in this area over many years and pledge that we will continue to work together not just on this conference report but on future bills to make our nuclear facilities the best and the safest in the world.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH).

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

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, as a conferee to the energy bill, I rise in strong support of the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MARKEY) motion to instruct conferees, and I want to commend him for his long history of leadership on the issue of nuclear security, which is the subject of this motion.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to hear the chairman of the subcommittee accept the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MARKEY) motion, but I do want to make two points: point one, that this motion should be accepted because of the substance of the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MARKEY) amendment; and, two, because of the process.

Madam Speaker, on substance, the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. MARKEY) motion is right on the money. The House-passed version of the energy bill contained important language pertaining to nuclear security. This language in H.R. 6 addresses a chronic failure on the part of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to tighten up security at our nuclear power plants around the country. This language passed the House and was marked up in the Committee on Energy and Commerce. It is important that this language remains in the bill as a critical national security plank to protect our citizens from a terrorist attack. The fact that the latest draft of the conference report significantly weakens these security requirements is very disturbing and very perplexing. I know that the ranking member of the committee indicated that there was an acceptance on the part of the Republican conferees to accept this language. However, Madam Speaker, I just want to emphasize the fact that this was not done in a way that we can be proud of here in the House in regards to how this event came about.

Madam Speaker, I just want to say that the second reason to vote for the motion is the lousy process that has infected this entire conference committee. The Republican conferees altered these important nuclear security provisions behind closed doors and without any input from Democratic conferees who sit on the committee of jurisdiction. And it is inexcusable that

the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), myself, and other Democratic members, especially from the Committee on Energy and Commerce, had no opportunity to discuss this important matter with our Republican counterparts.

□ 1445

For this reason alone, and in the name of a rational and deliberative process, I urge the Members of the House to accept this motion to instruct. Let us send a message that this bill is far too important to be discussed behind closed doors, without any input from the minority members of the conference committee.

Madam Speaker, I add that it is really shameful and harmful to the democratic process for the Democratic conferees to not be included in the full deliberations of the conference committee.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, just to reiterate that we do not oppose the motion to instruct, and we support the gist of the gentleman's motion to instruct in terms of the policy. The House has already supported it twice, and the committee supported it twice. We just have to get the other body to support it, which, unfortunately, they have been unwilling to do in its totality.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Members will refrain from characterizing action or inaction of the other body, including urging the Senate to take a specific action.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I said ''the other body.'' What did I say wrong?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will refrain from characterizing the other body.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume in order to conclude this debate.

Madam Speaker, without question, back in 1787 when a deal was being cut on the construction of the Union and the small States demanded that, rather than equal representation for all States, that another body be created in order to represent them, that other body that was created at the time has developed peculiar characteristics that, unfortunately, are manifesting themselves here on the House floor today.

There are many who look back with regret that that deal was ever cut, the grand compromise in the Constitution, allowing for that disproportionate influence, and I see nodding bipartisan agreement on the Republican side on this subject.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MARKEY. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I think that agreement that the gentleman alluded to in the Constitution was one of the biggest mistakes in the Constitution.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman very much. I regret that Texas was not part of the Union at the time. Perhaps they could have exercised some influence in that final decision making.

But the other body, as it likes to be called, and I understand why in many instances, this is a good example of where anonymity is something to be much desired and sought, that the other body here, according to the majority, is calling all the shots in terms of nuclear security, which is a premise which I doubt is actually accurate. I do believe that it was a bicameral Republican decision to take out the nuclear security issues, since we know that the Democrats in the Senate, like the Democrats in the House, are searching the corridors of this building trying to find where the meetings are taking place. We have no idea.

We do know this though, that reports are rampant that the bill, when it comes out on the House floor, is going to be loaded with billions of dollars of subsidies for the nuclear industry. I understand it is that time of the year where the oil, gas, coal and nuclear industries just really think that they deserve billions of dollars in subsidies for each one of their industries from the taxpaying public, even though they are the wealthiest industries in the United States.

But, it seems to me, the least that the nuclear industry should be willing to accept are antiterrorism provisions that are attached to the nuclear gifts which it appears the Republican House and Senate and White House is willing to, and I am sorry I said ''Senate,'' I meant the other body, that they appear willing to confer upon them.

They should accept those additional safety measures, because the public, without question, gave an additional measure of wholehearted support to the President in his campaign to eradicate the threat of Saddam Hussein to the world because of his nuclear mujahideen, because of the contention he was trying to reconstitute his nuclear weapons program.

Here, domestically, we know that nuclear power plants are similarly at the top of the terrorist target list for al Qaeda, and it seems to me the nuclear industry is acting in an irresponsible fashion in not accepting reasonable measures being adopted which guarantee that terrorists cannot be successful in using domestic nuclear materials to terrorize our country.

So I regret that that language has been removed, and at this point I urge an ''aye'' vote on this motion to instruct.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that it is not in order to characterize the actions or inactions of the Senate.

The Chair would clarify for all Members that referring to the Senate as ''the other body'' does not cure such an infraction in debate.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

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

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 1, MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. BROWN of Ohio moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 1 be instructed to reject the provisions of subtitle C of title II of the House bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, my motion instructs the conferees working on the Medicare prescription drug coverage bill to abandon provisions in the House bill that would privatize Medicare by turning it into a private insurance voucher program. The public has asked this Congress and President Bush to supplement Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage to the Medicare benefits package.

You may remember early this year, almost a year ago, President Bush proposed a prescription drug plan only if people left fee-for-service Medicare and went into a privatized plan. Clearly, the public rejected that. Even members of his own party said no to that. The American public has not asked this Congress, has not asked President Bush, to dissolve Medicare and replace it with a private insurance voucher program.

The voucher provisions in the bill have nothing to do with prescription drug coverage. The voucher provisions do not supplement Medicare, the