

The feeble argument of proponents of this resolution that "under God" is not overtly religious is only undermined by their holy crusade to make darn sure that the phrase stays in the Pledge. This will be the sixth time this House has voted on this issue—hardly a sign of the phrase's unimportance to religious conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want my children or any child to have a compulsory, religious recitation in this supposedly free society, and seeing the vehemence of those who think otherwise only strengthens my opposition to the Pledge.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 245.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. 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 motion will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3402, the bill to be considered shortly.

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

There was no objection.

#### DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE APPROPRIATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 2006 THROUGH 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). Pursuant to House Resolution 462 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3402.

□ 1414

#### 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 consideration of the bill (H.R. 3402) to authorize appropriations for the Department of Justice for fiscal years 2006 through 2009, and for other purposes, with Mr. LAHOOD in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and

the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

□ 1415

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

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2006 through 2009. The authorization of executive agencies fulfills Congress' fundamental constitutional obligation to maintain an active and continuing role in organizing the priorities and overseeing the operation of the executive branch. With an annual budget of over \$20 billion and 100,000 employees, the Department of Justice is one of the most important agencies of the Federal Government and the world's premier law enforcement organization. Like other legislation reauthorizing the Department of Justice approved by the House in both the 107th and 108th Congresses, I am proud that this bill is the product of extensive bipartisan deliberation.

In addition to serving as a broad statement by the House of Representatives regarding the priorities of the DOJ over the next several years, this bill addresses the administration of grant programs by the Office of Justice Programs and the Office on Violence Against Women.

By providing grants to State and local governments to focus on current crime issues affecting cities and towns across the country, these grant programs can serve an important role in the fight against crime in America. However, given the finite Federal resources available, it is the responsibility of this body, both through the authorizing process and continuous oversight, to review and evaluate these programs to ensure that the taxpayers' money is used effectively.

This legislation contains a number of important provisions that will strengthen congressional oversight of the Department's law enforcement activities and financial management. Among the new provisions included are: The creation of an office of audit, assessment and management within OJP to monitor grants; a privacy officer to protect personally identifiable information; a directive to the Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs to establish a single financial management system and a single procurement system.

In addition to the important oversight tools provided in the bill, there are a number of commonsense provisions designed to improve the administration of programs within the department. H.R. 3402 eliminates duplication by consolidating the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program and the Byrne grant program into one program with the same purposes and simplified administration. The bill also preserves the COPS program, but modi-

fies it to allow grantees greater flexibility to seek grants for a number of purposes, including but not limited to hiring.

Other provisions contained in this legislation authorize programs to combat domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Titles 4 through 10 of the bill focus on reauthorizing, expanding and improving programs that were established in the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or VAWA, and reauthorized in 2000. The bill reauthorizes some important core programs, such as "STOP" grants and grants to reduce campus violence. These programs have been successful in combating family and domestic violence.

The reauthorization of VAWA will continue the tradition of changing attitudes towards domestic violence, and will expand its focus to change attitude toward other violent crimes, including dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Because these crimes affect both men and women, it is important to note that this legislation specifies that programs addressing these programs should serve both male and female victims.

Furthermore, the legislation specifies that the same rules apply to these funds as to other Federal grant programs. The funds devoted to these programs are not to be used for political activities or lobbying. This money is and always was intended to be used to provide services to victims and to train personnel who deal with these violent crimes. The Department of Justice is expected to enforce that provision for all its grants and to monitor grant activities to ensure compliance not only with this condition but all conditions of the grants.

Mr. Chairman, prior to the enactment of the "21st Century Department of Justice Authorization of Appropriations Act" in 2002, Congress had not formally authorized the operations of the Department of Justice in nearly a quarter of a century.

During floor consideration of that legislation, I expressed my desire that its passage would lead to a regular authorization process that permits Congress to more rigorously oversee the organization, structure, and priorities of DOJ. While the House unanimously passed legislation reauthorizing the Department last Congress, the legislation was not taken up by the other body.

H.R. 3402 contains important bipartisan provisions to ensure that the Department of Justice is better equipped to promote the purposes for which it was established. The legislation also reauthorizes critical programs necessary to help protect the safety and security of Americans while enabling Congress to properly exercise the vigorous oversight that the Constitution requires. I urge my colleagues to support this important and bipartisan legislation.

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