Back to the main subject here, which is the farm bill. This is a good bill for farmers. This is a good bill for people who are vulnerable, who have been shortchanged by the administration in the Republican Congresses when it comes to food security. This is a good bill for America.

I congratulate the distinguished gentlelady from Connecticut for working together so hard to put together a bill we can be proud of. Vote ''yes'' on the previous question, and vote ''yes'' on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Washington is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 581 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF WASHINGTON

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

Sec. 3. That immediately upon the adoption of this resolution the House shall, without intervention of any point of order, consider the bill (H.R. 3138) to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to update the definition of electronic surveillance. All points of order against the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. 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 Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; and (2) one motion to recommit.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308–311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the definition of the previous question used in the Floor Procedures Manual published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress, (page 56). Here's how the Rules Committee described the rule using information form Congressional Quarterly's ''American Congressional Dictionary'': ''If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business.''

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Democratic majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative Plan.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title.

H. Con. Res. 175. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that courts with fiduciary responsibility for a child of a deceased member of the Armed Forces who receives a death gratuity payment under section 1477 of title 10, United States code, should take into consideration the expression of clear intent of the member regarding the distribution of funds on behalf of the child.

LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 579, proceedings will now resume on the bill (H.R. 2831) to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to clarify that a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice that is unlawful under such Acts occurs each time compensation is paid pursuant to the discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When proceedings were postponed on Monday, July 30, 2007, 6 minutes remained in debate.

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON) each control 3 minutes.

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, in order to speak in favor of this restoration of the law, I am pleased to acknowledge the majority leader of the House for 1 minute.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, when the Supreme Court wrongly decides a case, as they do from time to time, particularly when congressional intent is at issue, the United States Congress can and should act to remedy it. That is precisely what this carefully crafted measured legislation, the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007, is designed to do.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), and I thank the ranking member as well for the work that they do on this committee.

Make no mistake. The Court's 5–4 decision on May 29 in Ledbetter v. Goodyear was wrongly decided. The merits of Lilly Ledbetter's wage discrimination claim seemed beyond doubt. A Federal jury agreed that she was discriminated against. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission agreed with Ms. Ledbetter's claims, although the Bush administration switched its position once the case got to the Supreme Court.

Most importantly, Lilly Ledbetter was paid less than all of her male counterparts, all of her male counterparts, even those who had less seniority. This clearly was not a case where her performance was suspect. Goodyear gave her a top performance award in 1996.

The fact is, the Court majority took an extremely cramped view of the title VII of the Civil Rights Act, holding that Ms. Ledbetter and claimants like her must file their pay discrimination claims within 180 days of the original discriminatory act. In other words, even if the discriminatory acts continued, every week, every biweek, every month, that they would have to look back to the original first check.

There are at least three serious problems with the Court's flawed analysis. First, the unlawful discrimination against Ms. Ledbetter did not begin and end with Goodyear's original decision to pay her less than they paid her male counterparts.

In fact, every paycheck that Lilly Ledbetter received after Goodyear's decision to pay her less was a continuing manifestation of Goodyear's illegal discrimination. As Justice Ginsburg said

in dissent, each subsequent paycheck was ''infected'' by the original decision to unlawfully discriminate.

Secondly, the Court dismissed the realities of the workplace far too casually. Detecting pay discrimination is not easy, and sometimes it may take years to uncover.

Now, each of us in this body knows what the other Member of the body makes, but that is not true in almost every workplace in America. Why? Because people generally do not talk openly with their coworkers about their salaries, raises and bonuses. In fact, many employers strive to keep such information confidential.

Just consider, Ms. Ledbetter apparently did not become aware that she had been discriminated against until she received an anonymous letter alerting her to the discrimination.

Third, the Court majority ignored its own holdings that Congress intended title VII, the majority ignored its own holdings that Congress intended title VII to have a broad, remedial purpose, to make persons whole for injuries suffered on accounts of unlawful employment discrimination.

Finally, let me say that those who claim that this bill somehow eliminates the statue of limitations are incorrect. Under this bill, as we thought the law was for 30 years, an employee must still file a charge within the statutory filing period after receiving a discriminatory paycheck.

This bill is fair, it is just, and it comports with the intent of this Congress in passing the Civil Rights Act.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, to make sure that what Congress intended is, in fact, what the law remains.

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Madam Speaker, I would urge our colleagues in both the Republican and Democratic Parties to vote ''yes'' in favor of this bill.

The opponents have raised two arguments. I believe both of them are wrong.

The first is that the bill repeals or eliminates the statute of limitations. This is not correct. What is, in fact, correct, is that once 180 days have passed from the final act of discrimination, the final tainted paycheck, then the plaintiff's claim would be barred.

The second argument that has been raised by the opponents of the bill is that there would be a flood of litigation and a flood of claims that would vex employers across the country.

This is not so. We are restoring the law as it has existed for more than three decades. During those three decades, there was no such flood or plague of litigation.

This conclusion is borne out by the Congressional Budget Office, which, in analyzing the costs of this bill, concluded that there would be no appreciable increase in the number of claims filed with the EEOC.

So, for these reasons and others, the arguments raised against the bill are invalid. Members should vote ''yes'' in favor of the bill.

□ 1315

Mr. MCKEON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

We have had a good debate last night and this morning, and the other side has tried to make this an emotional debate about discrimination, but that is not debate. We all, both Democrat and Republican, oppose discrimination.

Madam Speaker, in Congress bad process usually makes for bad product. Let there be no mistake, the process that brought H.R. 2831 to the floor today was incredibly sloppy. Likewise, the product itself could not be sloppier. The title of this bill should be, ''The End of the Statute of Limitations.''

This bill was hastily patched together by the Education and Labor Committee Democrats at the behest of the House majority leadership with the hope of grabbing a few headlines just a month after the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the 1964 Civil Rights Act statute of limitations.

Neither House Republicans nor many key outside stakeholders were consulted as the bill was drafted, and the bill was not considered at a single legislative hearing. Then, again, at the behest of the House Democrat leadership, the Rules Committee granted a completely closed rule, locking out nearly 400 Members from amending or even considering amendments for this legislation.

Had this bill truly been a narrow fix, as its supporters would have the American people believe, this sloppy process may not have been such a problem. However, this is a major fundamental change to civil rights law and no less than four separate statutes.

The last change to civil rights law of this magnitude, the 1991 Civil Rights Act, took 2 years of negotiation, debate, and bipartisan accord to accomplish. By comparison, this bill took just 2 months. It cheapens our legislative process and, indeed, it cheapens the work that has gone into decades of serious considerate civil rights lawmaking. The legislative product itself, as my Republican colleagues and I have discussed, is no less flawed. It guts the statute of limitations contained in current law and, in so doing, would allow an employee to bring a claim against an employer decades after the alleged initial act of discrimination occurred. And trial lawyers, you can be sure, are salivating at this prospect.

Madam Speaker, this is a bad bill that is the result of an equally bad process. The President has threatened to veto it should it arrive at his desk, and rightfully so. But we should never let it get to that point. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ANDREWS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, this is a narrow bill that supports a very broad principle. The broad principle is that discrimination has no place in the lives of Americans.

This House has people working in it whose families came here who could not speak English but now their sons and daughters write the law. This House has people in it whose ancestors were brought here as slaves but now who write the law of the land. And this House has one person in it whose grandmother could not vote but who now is the woman who is Speaker of the House of Representatives. When we eliminate discrimination, great things happen in America. When we restore discrimination, America moves backwards.

This country is bigger and stronger than the worst thoughts of any bigot. Discrimination has no place in our law, no place in our hearts, and no place because of technicalities. Vote ''yes'' in favor of restoring this strong tool against discrimination.

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and commend my Chairman, Mr. MILLER for his efforts to bring this legislation forward. The Supreme Court's decision in Ledbetter versus Goodyear was a setback for fundamental equal rights. As a Member of the Education and Labor Committee I am pleased that the House is standing up today for America's workers by essentially invalidating this misguided ruling.

Mrs. Ledbetter's pay discrimination case was dismissed—not because she was not being discriminated against—but because the Supreme Court believed she filed her claim too late.

Under this decision, employees in Ledbetter's position are forced to live with discriminatory paychecks for the rest of their careers. Moreover, the Court's decision ignores the realities of the workplace—where employees generally do not know enough about what their co-workers earn or how decisions regarding pay are' made to file a complaint precisely when discrimination first occurs.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would clarify that every paycheck resulting from a discriminatory pay decision constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act.

When the Supreme Court sanctions discrimination through technicalities or misinterpretation, it is the job of Congress to clarify the intent of the law. We start this process today by passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. I urge all my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2831.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007. I regret that this legislation is even necessary in the 21st Century, but even today, we see instances of pay discrimination time and time again.

The reason we are bringing this legislation to the Floor today is because unfortunately, activist judges on the U.S. Supreme Court have changed the rules to make it much, much harder for an employee suffering pay discrimination to bring his or her case to court.

Prior to that case, an employee had 180 days from her previous paycheck to file a lawsuit for pay discrimination. However, five members of the Supreme Court, led by Justice Samuel Alito, changed those rules. Now, an employee has 180 days from the time of the decision to file a lawsuit.

However, oftentimes it is extremely difficult to know when pay discrimination is occurring. In the Supreme Court case under which the new rules were decided, Lilly Ledbetter filed her lawsuit because she was being paid far less than the lowest paid male employee holding the same position as hers. And she only found out about this because an anonymous person slipped her a note that showed her that fact.

There was no way that Ms. Ledbetter could have known about her pay discrimination if she had not received this anonymous note. However, the five Supreme Court Justices decided that she could not sue because it had been more than 180 days since her employers had decided to pay her less than the men.

This legislation is not only beneficial to employees, it is good for employers as well. With the current strict time limits, employees have more of an incentive to file lawsuits if they suspect discrimination, simply because if they delay their suit, they will give up their right to sue. It does not make sense to encourage people to sue before they have all the facts. We should ensure that we have a statute of limitations that makes sense.

I have fought against pay discrimination since my first day in Congress. Discrimination of any kind should never be allowed, and I intend to keep fighting against it.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is commonsense legislation that should be enacted into law as we work to end discrimination at all levels.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 2831, and I would encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007. Colleagues, I wish that I did not have to stand here today; I wish that we did not have to have this debate. However, in reversing decades of precedent and placing new limits on the ability of victims of pay discrimination to pursue their claims, the Supreme Court's May 29 decision in Ledbetter v. Goodyear makes our debate here today critically necessary to ensuring a better America for all of our citizens.

Some on the other side of the aisle have complained that this legislation will dismantle the statute of limitations established by the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They maintain that this legislation will allow an employee to sue for pay discrimination resulting from an alleged discriminatory act that might have occurred 5, 10, 20, or even 30 or more years earlier and that under H.R. 2831 a worker or retiree could seek damages against a company run by employees and executives that had nothing to do with the initial act of alleged discrimination that occurred dozens of years ago.

These arguments represent nothing more than an attempt to muddy the waters. The reality is that Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act does nothing to disturb the current law's 180-day charge-filing period and employees continue to be subject to these time limits. Instead, the bill merely clarifies the conduct that triggers the running of the 180-day clock. Under the legislation, if an employee wants to challenge discriminatory pay, he or she must file within 180 days of the discriminatory conduct, such as the payment of a discriminatory wage. If the employee waits longer than 180 days after the discriminatory conduct, the 180-day clock will run out and a charge will become untimely.

The fact of the matter is that pay discriminatory is often difficult to discover and takes place over many years. Many employers have policies explicitly forbidding employees from talking to one another about their pay. Workplace norms also discourage employees from asking each other about their pay. Additionally, discriminatory pay tends to have a cumulative effect—what may seem like a minor discrepancy at first builds up over time. By the time the discrimination is noticed, it would be too late to file a charge under the Supreme Court's ruling. These facts were undoubtedly the reason why a jury of her peers originally awarded Lilly Ledbetter more than $3.5 million; finding "more likely than not" that sex discrimination during her 19-year career led to her being paid substantially less than her male counterparts.

By passing this legislation here today, Congress will be heeding Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's call to stand up and ensure that no American's income should be determined by race, sex, creed, color, or sexuality.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, as cosponsor of this legislation, I rise in strong support and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

This legislation corrects and clarifies a serious misinterpretation by the Supreme Court when it ruled earlier this year in the case of Ledbetter v. Goodyear.

In that 5–4 decision, the majority ruled that Lilly Ledbetter, the lone female supervisor at a tire plant in Gadsden, AL, did not file her lawsuit against Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. in the timely manner specified by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The court determined a victim of pay discrimination must file a charge within 180 days of the employer's decision to pay someone less for an unlawfully discriminatory reason, such as race, sex, religion, etc.

Prior to the Supreme Court's ruling, the widely accepted rule in employment discrimination law was that every discriminatory paycheck was a new violation that restarts the 180-day clock.

H.R. 2831 restores the law prior to the Supreme Court's Ledbetter decision, by clarifying that the clock for filing a discrimination charge starts when a discriminatory pay decision or practice is adopted, when a person becomes subject to the pay decision or practice, or when a person is affected by the pay decision or practice, including whenever she receives a discriminatory paycheck.

The Supreme Court must not be able to roll back workers' rights in one ruling. Congress must pass this legislation to ensure workers are protected and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2831.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, HR 2831. Although women have made great strides towards income equality in the workplace, a gap still exists. According to the Census Bureau, women continue to make 77 cents to every dollar that their male counterparts earn. No one knows this fact better than Lilly Ledbetter. She worked hard at a Goodyear tire plant for 19 years. Initially, Ms. Ledbetter was paid the same as her male colleagues but over time her salary did not continue to rise at the same rate as male colleagues. However, like many employees, she was unaware of the discrepancy for years. By the time she discovered it, the Supreme Court said she was too late to receive justice, a finding that overturns 30 years of established case law.

The Supreme Court held, that the plaintiff must file suit within 180 days of the initial so called discrimination. This may seem like a reasonable amount of time, but for wage discrimination cases, this is often not feasible. Many employers forbid workers from discussing their salaries and employees are often not even aware that they have been discriminated against until after they leave their job. This finding stands in stark contrast with 30 years of case law, which has found that the 180 day "clock" starts anew with each discriminatory paycheck. This bill codifies by starting the clock for filing a discrimination charge starts when a discriminatory pay decision or practice is adopted, when a person becomes subject to the pay decision or practice, or when employees affected by the pay decision or practice, including whenever receive a discriminatory paycheck.

During her testimony in June at an Education and Labor Committee hearing, Lilly Ledbetter said:

> What happened to me is not only an insult to my dignity, but it had real consequences for my ability to care for my family. Every paycheck I received, I got less than what I was entitled to under the law.

Sadly, Ms. Ledbetter's case is not unique, in fact from 2001–2006, some 40,000 wage discrimination cases were filed from workers, much like Lilly Ledbetter. This bill will finally give workers the "what they are entitled to under the law".

I thank Chairman MILLER and my colleagues for bringing this legislation to the floor so quickly.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007.

The recent Supreme Court ruling in the Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire case turns the clock back on decades of progress. As a result of this ruling it is now even more difficult for employees to exercise their rights for equal pay and equal treatment as determined under the law.

This decision was based on a questionable technicality, not on the fact that Ms. Ledbetter was paid 20 percent less than even the least qualified of her male counterparts. Ms. Ledbetter did nothing wrong throughout the process. She toiled for 19 years and deserved equal pay and treatment by her employers.

For centuries, women, minorities, and many others have fought for equal rights and consideration under the law. Congress is being forced to invoke its constitutional powers to restore balance and justice for the sake of equality. Today we send a strong message that discrimination and injustice on the basis of gender is intolerable.

Simply said Madam Speaker, H.R. 2831 is not about turning back the clock on civil rights law; this legislation protects these hard-fought and hard-earned guarantees. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who work full time, earn, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar men earn. The figures are even worse for women of color. Clearly, discrimination is not a relic of the past.

I know that many, many Members of Congress recognize the importance of this legislation. I ask all of my colleagues to vote yes. I

hope that the President will stand for equality and justice by signing this important bill.

Mr. ANDREWS. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 579, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

Mr. ANDREWS. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2272, 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS ACT OF 2007

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2272) to invest in innovation through research and development, and to improve the competitiveness of the United States, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. HALL OF TEXAS

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Hall of Texas 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. 2272, be instructed to:

(A) insist on the lower overall authorization level as set forth by the House in H.R. 2272; and

(B) insist on the language of subsection (a) of Section 203 of the House bill, relating to prioritization of early career grants to science and engineering researchers for the expansion of domestic energy production and use through coal-to-liquids technology and advanced nuclear reprocessing.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

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

I rise today to offer a straightforward motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2272, a bill to invest in innovation through research and development, and to improve the competitiveness of the United States.

This motion to instruct the conferees simply insists that the House conferees support the House position. It does this in two important ways that I believe will make the conference report better and Members on both sides of the aisle proud to support it.

First, the motion to instruct encourages the conferees to insist on the overall House authorization level, which is considerably lower than the Senate authorization level. In fact, estimates put the bill as passed by the Senate at approximately $40 billion higher than the total House authorization level.

Second, this motion to instruct insists that House conferees support the previously adopted House position with regard to giving priority to grants to expand domestic energy production through the use of coal-to-liquids. That type technology and advanced nuclear reprocessing should be used.

I believe this is an important section of the bill that will help to ensure that we are preparing our scientists and our engineers for the future of energy security.

Many Members of the House, both Republicans and Democrats, voted in favor of the authorization level and voted in favor of this program, including my good friend, the chairman of the Science and Technology Committee. I am encouraging Members to stand up for the House position on these two issues.

Before I explain the importance of the provision regarding grants to expand energy production, let me take a moment to compare the authorization level in the House bill with the authorization level in the Senate bill.

As the ranking member of the Committee on Science and Technology, I strongly support an increase in funding for the agencies that perform scientific research in this country. Without these agencies, we would fall far behind the rest of the world in innovation.

Some of the greatest inventions of our time have come from the brilliant scientists of our country. To remain competitive as a Nation, we must encourage new ideas and educate new young minds, but we must also be mindful to exercise fiscal responsibility. The young minds we are educating should not be taught irresponsible spending habits. We have to lead by example.

The House bill contains substantial increases for the sciences very close to the President's request, and moves us closer to the goal the President has set out in the State of the Union Message calling for a doubling of the spending on the sciences.

The Senate bill includes a vast increase in spending that is approximately $8 billion above the budget request by the administration for this year alone. I encourage my colleagues to work with me to increase spending on science in a responsible fashion.

As we move to conference on the competitiveness bill, I also want to encourage my colleagues to support the provision in the House bill urging researchers to invest time and to invest money into advancing coal-to-liquids technology and nuclear reprocessing.

There are, as my colleagues stated previously on the floor of this Chamber, several pieces to the energy puzzle. One very important piece continues to be the efficient and affordable research and development of this Nation's domestic energy resources. Twenty-seven percent of the world's recoverable coal reserves are in the United States and spread throughout our country, which would minimize supply disruptions in the event of a natural disaster or in the event of a terrorist attack.

We are currently importing around 60 percent of our oil supply, and that number is projected to grow unless we do something about it. As the Saudi Arabia of coal, if our Nation can economically produce liquid transportation fuel from coal, we can reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil and increase the security of this country.

We also need to better manage our nuclear energy resources. In the pursuit of expanding our nuclear fleet, we should encourage scientists and engineers early in their careers to focus on the development of abandoned nuclear reprocessing technologies. We need to invigorate our aging nuclear sector so this energy source continues to serve as a clean, affordable, domestic energy resource for our consumers.

The House may soon be taking up an energy package. To my knowledge, this energy package contains no language on coal-to-liquids and very little on nuclear energy. Given the fact that our Nation's continued growth and prosperity depend on affordable and reliable energy resources, I am disappointed that we are not promoting all options for Americans. This opportunity may be one of the few Members get to support our Nation's coal and our Nation's nuclear interests. We should take every opportunity to address citizens' concerns with rising energy prices. And that is why I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of this provision on this date.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WU. May I inquire of the gentleman from Texas if he has any further speakers?

If the gentleman from Texas does not have any further speakers, I believe that I have the right to close.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has the right to close.

Mr. HALL of Texas. I just continue to reserve the balance of my time. I do want the right to close, and I have a speaker that is approaching at this time.

□ 1330

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, at this point, we have no further speakers, and