

Mr. HOYER. Ladies and gentlemen of the House, after consultation with the minority, we have agreed that we will take the debate on the District of Columbia bill tonight. We will conclude debate, but we will roll votes until tomorrow so that we will not have to keep Members here. I've discussed this with, as I say, the minority. I've also discussed it with the Members of our side. Those who will want to participate in the debate, obviously, will remain, but there has been agreement that there will be no further votes tonight.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 6842.

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

There was no objection.

NATIONAL CAPITAL SECURITY AND SAFETY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1434 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. 6842.

□ 2209

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. 6842) to require the District of Columbia to revise its laws regarding the use and possession of firearms as necessary to comply with the requirements of the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of District of Columbia v. Heller, in a manner that protects the security interests of the Federal government and the people who work in, reside in, or visit the District of Columbia and does not undermine the efforts of law enforcement, homeland security, and military officials to protect the Nation's capital from crime and terrorism, with Mr. WILSON of Ohio in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 6842, the National Capital Security and Safety Act.

The bill before us this evening has been crafted with great care and with utmost concern for the safety and well-being of our Nation's capital—its residents, businesses, visitors, and the Federal Government.

I would like to recognize and thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) as well as Committee Chairman HENRY WAXMAN for their leadership in bringing today's bill to the floor and for not turning a blind eye to the concept of home rule and self-governance by attempting to rewrite the District's new gun laws since the Supreme Court's decision in the Heller case.

The measure has been considered and debated thoroughly by the oversight committee and was approved by a vote of 21-1, which demonstrates the bill's bipartisan support.

As chairman of the subcommittee with oversight authority over the District of Columbia, I am well aware of the long history behind the District's gun regulatory efforts as well as the city's continual efforts to protect its citizens against violence and crime. As chairman, I'm also well aware of the effect that the presence of the Federal Government places on the security concerns of the District.

H.R. 6842 seeks to highlight this issue by urging the District's city council to take into consideration such issues as homeland security, military functionality, threats of terrorism, and foreign dignitary protection as they continue to amend their laws to be in compliance with the Supreme Court's Heller decision.

The measure being considered today serves as a commonsense and practical approach to ensuring the requisite protection of our Nation's capital, while at the same time supporting the District in its efforts to reform its own gun laws versus rewriting the laws for them.

□ 2215

That is the job that the District's elected officials are tasked with, not Congress, and I am happy to see that this legislation recognizes that, especially since according to information from the District City Council, efforts are already underway to address several outstanding second amendment issues from the Supreme Court's Heller decision and expressed by Members of Congress in other pieces of legislation. The Council is revisiting the definition of "machine guns" and "semiautomatics" and making current gun storage requirements advisory versus mandatory.

In light of the city's efforts today, today's bill, H.R. 6842, represents both the least and the most we should be doing at this moment and at this level. The bill upon enactment gives the District 6 months to finalize its laws governing the possession and use of firearms as necessary to comply with the decision of the Supreme Court in District of Columbia v. Heller.

As the city continues to perform its work to produce a permanent gun law reform package, I am sure that at some point in the future Congress, under its legislative review authority, will have the chance to revisit this issue under regular and proper protocol. But until then, let us continue promoting the importance of self-government and home rule for the District of Columbia and the importance of safety and security in our Nation's capital by supporting H.R. 6842.

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

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of things that are less than normal procedure tonight, and I want to briefly explain what has gone on here.

We have an underlying bill that went through the Government Reform and Oversight Committee that is being offered first. The gentleman from Illinois is correct that that went through unanimously, partly after a contentious hearing and debate. Chairman WAXMAN and Ranking Member DAVIS asked if we could just move it without a lot of amendments, move it without contention, because we knew we were coming to the House floor for the major debate tonight.

In this major debate, there will be an amendment offered by Mr. CHILDERS of Mississippi that has been worked out in cooperation, proving that in fact when we try, we can work together, and that Congressman ROSS and I had a bill to overturn the D.C. gun ban. The Supreme Court took care of the need for that. The District of Columbia came back and attempted to reinstate the ban. It became apparent from the discharge petition that the will of this House, the overwhelming majority that signed the brief to the Supreme Court, the overwhelming majority of the Senate signed a brief to the Supreme Court, and it became apparent that this House wanted a vote.

The Democrat leadership, to their credit, worked out with the NRA and the minority a bill that was acceptable to Mr. ROSS and myself and those who had been attempting to overturn this. This will be offered in the nature of a substitute tonight. The underlying bill is not what is in contention here. The underlying bill is a stalking horse for the existing law and the debate we will have here is about the existing law.

The fact is that the reason the Supreme Court overturned the existing law is that under existing law if you wanted to protect yourself in your home, you had to have a gun in a