

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.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 397, noes 25, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 307]

AYES—397

Abercrombie Cole
Ackerman Connolly (VA)
Aderholt Cooper
Akin Costa
Alexander Costello
Altmire Crenshaw
Andrews Crowley
Arcuri Cuellar
Austria Culberson
Baca Cummings
Bachmann Dahlkemper
Bachus Davis (AL)
Baird Davis (CA)
Baldwin Davis (IL)
Barrett (SC) Davis (KY)
Barrow Davis (TN)
Bartlett DeFazio
Barton (TX) DeGette
Bean Delahunt
Becerra DeLauro
Berkley Dent
Berman Diaz-Balart, L.
Berry Diaz-Balart, M.
Biggart Dicks
Billray Dingell
Bilirakis Doggett
Bishop (GA) Donnelly (IN)
Bishop (NY) Doyle
Bishop (UT) Dreier
Blunt Driehaus
Bocchieri Edwards (MD)
Boehner Edwards (TX)
Bonner Ehlers
Bono Mack Ellison
Boozman Ellsworth
Boren Emerson
Boucher Engel
Boustany Eshoo
Boyd Etheridge
Brady (PA) Fallin
Braley (IA) Farr
Bright Filner
Brown (SC) Fleming
Brown, Corrine Forbes
Brown-Waite, Fortenberry
Ginny Foster
Buchanan Frank (MA)
Burgess Franks (AZ)
Burton (IN) Frelinghuysen
Butterfield Fudge
Buyer Gallegly
Calvert Garrett (NJ)
Camp Gerlach
Cantor Giffords
Cao Gingrey (GA)
Capito Gohmert
Capps Gonzalez
Capuano Goodlatte
Cardoza Gordon (TN)
Carnahan Granger
Carney Graves
Carson (IN) Grayson
Carter Green, Al
Cassidy Green, Gene
Castle Griffith
Castor (FL) Grijalva
Chaffetz Guthrie
Chandler Gutierrez
Childers Hall (NY)
Clarke Hall (TX)
Clay Halvorson
Cleaver Hare
Clyburn Harman
Coble Harper
Coffman (CO) Hastings (FL)
Cohen Hastings (WA)

Massa Peterson
Matheson Petri
Matsui Pingree (ME)
McCarthy (CA) Pitts
McCarthy (NY) Platts
McCaul Poe (TX)
McCollum Polis (CO)
McCotter Pomeroy
McDermott Posey
McGovern Price (NC)
McHugh Putnam
McIntyre Quigley
McKeon Radanovich
McMahon Rahall
McMorris Rangel
Rodgers Rehberg
McNerney Reichert
Meek (FL) Reyes
Meeks (NY) Richardson
Melancon Rodriguez
Mica Roe (TN)
Michaud Rogers (AL)
Miller (FL) Rogers (KY)
Miller (MI) Rogers (MI)
Miller (NC) Rohrabacher
Miller, Gary Rooney
Miller, George Ros-Lehtinen
Minnick Roskam
Mitchell Ross
Mollohan Rothman (NJ)
Moore (KS) Roybal-Allard
Moore (WI) Rush
Moran (KS) Ryan (OH)
Moran (VA) Ryan (WI)
Murphy (CT) Salazar
Murphy (NY) Sanchez, Loretta
Murphy, Patrick Sarbanes
Murphy, Tim Scalise
Murtha Schakowsky
Myrick Schauer
Napolitano Schiff
Neal (MA) Schmidt
Neugebauer Schock
Nye Schrader
Oberstar Schwartz
Obey Scott (GA)
Olson Scott (VA)
Oliver Sensenbrenner
Ortiz Serrano
Pallone Sessions
Pascarell Sestak
Pastor (AZ) Shadegg
Paulsen Shea-Porter
Payne Sherman
Pence Shimkus
Perlmutter Shuler
Perriello Simpson
Peters Sires

NOES—25

Blackburn Foy
Brady (TX) Holt
Broun (GA) Johnson, Sam
Campbell King (IA)
Conaway Kingston
Conyers Linder
Deal (GA) Markey (MA)
Duncan McClintock
Flake McHenry

NOT VOTING—11

Adler (NJ) Jackson-Lee
Blumenauer (TX) Sanchez, Linda
Boswell Kennedy T.
Courtney Ruppberger Sullivan
Fattah Wilson (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE) (during the vote). Two minutes are remaining.

□ 1655

Mr. KINGSTON changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN EN-GROSSMENT OF H.R. 2200, TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of H.R. 2200, the Clerk be authorized to correct section numbers, punctuation, cross-references, and to make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to accurately reflect the actions of the House.

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

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 626, FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ACT OF 2009

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 501 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 501

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 626) to provide that 4 of the 12 weeks of parental leave made available to a Federal employee shall be paid leave, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the

customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 501.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 501 provides for the consideration of H.R. 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009, under a structured rule. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The rule makes in order three amendments listed in the Rules Committee report, each debatable for 10 minutes. The rule also provides a motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, I rise today not as a Democrat or a Republican, but as a father. Nothing can replace the first few days and weeks between a parent and a newborn or a newly adopted child when the bond that is forged is critical and sets the foundation for the child's entire later life. It is in these first few moments that a child's emotional and physical health and development is established—time which cannot be made up for later in life once it's lost.

Yet many parents are unable to forge this bond simply because they cannot afford to take unpaid leave from their jobs. In fact, a 2000 Labor Department survey showed that 78 percent of employees chose not to take unpaid leave because they just couldn't afford it. And they certainly cannot do so in the trying economic times we face today when hardworking families are struggling just to get by.

□ 1700

No parent should be placed in the position of having to choose between bonding with their new child and forgoing these formative moments in their child's life in order to keep a roof over that same child's head or to put food on the table, especially when the fate of a child is ultimately at stake. This is a moral and societal situation that has legislators, parents and as protectors of God's children, we must get right.

The Federal Government, I believe, has a moral obligation to set the stage for making changes across the table. We need to do more than just help in the care and development of a child. We must take the reins and lead by example. We should be setting the standard in family-friendly workplace policies across the Nation, not lagging behind.

H.R. 626 is quite simple. Current law requires that new parents be given up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave. If they wish to be paid, they must use any unused accrued sick time or vacation time. This bill helps families by providing 4 weeks of paid parental leave for Federal employees for the birth, adoption or fostering of a child and allowing employees to use that accrued vacation or sick time for that parental leave.

This small change in law will hopefully entice other employers to follow suit but, more importantly, have an immeasurable impact on the countless parents and the well-being of their children.

Madam Speaker, I can speak to this from my own experience. My dear wife Kathie and I have three beautiful children—one biologic and two that we adopted out of the foster care system. These children we love as much as they were our biological daughter. I will tell you from our own experience, however, that by adopting a child, especially one out of foster care, it requires special care and attention and additional time for bonding. This is not an option in their case. It is an absolute necessity. Our children—in fact, all foster children have faced and will continue to face significant challenges in their lives from the abuse that they incurred when they were in foster care. They will forever carry those unspeakable scars that every parent fears and no child should ever bear. Yet the only hope and chance that you have to save these children is to give them time to bond with those very new parents that are the ones that will be, in fact, trying to save their lives and rub away those scars. There is no other choice than to immediately give them all the love they can take and more than they've ever known; food, nutrition they desperately need, and the health care they have never had. They need the unflagging support and nurturing that they get from these new adoptive parents in order to establish a pattern of survival in their lives. I also know that without the time to forge this bond immediately after adoption, they have no hope of overcoming the enormous obstacles that they face.

Madam Speaker, you can put a price tag on a piece of legislation, but you cannot put a price on the importance of not having to worry about a paycheck and having the full and undivided attention of both parents lavishing boundless love on a disadvantaged child. I can think of no greater gift that we can give as parents to our children than the gift of time. Without it, far too many children will simply slip through the cracks, and for many more, all hope will be lost. As legislators, it is our imperative that we do what is morally right, not to let hope be lost, but rather to let hope spring eternally and to give these children, who already have so many things working against them, as I mentioned in the case of adoption and foster care, the chance at life that they deserve.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from California for yielding this time to me to discuss the proposed rule for consideration of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I've heard a lot of arguments here on the floor of the House of Representatives. I'm not a psychologist, but I would tend to bet that probably more than the first 12 weeks of a child's life is very important to their development. I'm kind of surprised that we don't have evidence today that says that the first 13 or 14, 16 years of a child's life is really the most important point, and maybe we just ought to let Federal employees take 16 years off since that's the defining moment. There's just no reality with this about the first 12 weeks of a child's life. Let me tell you, it's about probably the first 14 or 15 years; and as a parent, I can tell you, I remember the first 12 weeks. I remember them very vividly for both of my boys. I'm sure that there is some bit about what my children understood about the bonding with me.

Let's just go straight to this. This is expensive. It's going to cost a lot of money, and it's for Federal employees at a time when this Federal Government needs to be more efficient, and the people of this country cannot afford it. We've done without it for this number of years, and I'm surprised that we're doing it today in the economic times that we have.

Today I will discuss my opposition to the structured rule, which limits debate and does not provide for the "open and honest Congress" my Democrat colleagues have always called for for the past 3½ years. I also rise in opposition to putting taxpayers further in debt, those people that don't work for the government, to pay for this new extension of benefits by expanding an already generous government paid leave.

The economy is in a recession. Hello. Hello. Wake up, Washington. We're in a recession, and somebody else is going to have to pay for this. Oh, I know. It's about the kids. I know it's about this bonding for the first 12 weeks. Unemployment is at a 25-year high. Government spending is out of control, and individuals and retirees that have lost trillions in their savings and retirement are now going to have to pay another billion dollars for this plan. The government should be ensuring the future of the economy before taking on additional government benefits for those who have some of the greatest job security at the expense of the people who are paying for it, namely, the taxpayer.

I rise in opposition to this so-called structured rule and to this legislation, which would provide more government benefits to bureaucrats with benefits already in excess of what most hardworking Americans in the private sector have. I guess we're supposed to sacrifice a little bit more to make sure

our government employees get more benefits.

Madam Speaker, as the father of two children, I return to my home every weekend in Dallas, Texas. I have only been in this body 13 years. I have never spent a weekend in Washington, D.C. I go home when the votes end to be with my family; and I, like every Member of this body, love my family. We understand the importance of family and how strong families are to our country. Additionally, I know how hard Federal employees work. I honor them for their work and their devotion to the people of this country and the devotion to their jobs, and they do deserve competitive compensation and a good benefits package. At the same time, I believe at this time this bill sends the wrong message at the wrong time to working Americans, the taxpayers and their families that they, themselves, are struggling to sacrifice to give a select few in this government additional new benefits.

In February of this year, my Democratic colleagues passed a \$1.2 trillion economic stimulus package with absolutely no—zero—Republican support. This was their failed attempt to provide jobs to the struggling economy. The U.S. has eliminated 663,000 jobs in March alone, an additional 563,000 in April. Over the past 12 months, the number of unemployed has risen by 6 million people to 13.7 million, and the unemployment rate has grown from 3.9 to 9 percent. We should be thinking about how we're going to struggle to get people employed in this country, not give additional benefits to government workers.

One would think that this massive amount of spending that was done this year by my friends on the other side would ensure job growth, investment and economic output. Instead, the failed policies of the Democratic Party and of this administration have led to a budget deficit that already has been announced, it's not just \$1 trillion, it has now grown to \$1.8 trillion, about \$89 billion more than was predicted in the President's budget. That is nearly four times the record set last year by my Democrat colleagues of this House. This has led even to the President's chief economic adviser, Dr. Christina Romer, while speaking on CNN to acknowledge that it is "pretty realistic" that there will be no job growth until 2010, and the U.S. will hit 9.5 percent rate of unemployment this year. Well, let's just be honest about it. The Democratic plans are that there would be 9 percent unemployment next year. That was the Democrats' blueprint, their plan that was in the budget. Nine percent, that's their best estimate, their guess. We're going to rise to 9 percent. Well, the question is not whether Congress should support families but whether it makes sense when so many Americans are already struggling with unemployment rates, increased taxes, thanks to our good friends in the Democrat majority, and

an economic recession in the 3 years that the House and the Senate have been run by Democrat leadership, to increase their tax burden to pay for this increased paid time off from work, especially in light of the fact that government workers, in my opinion, have not even asked for it.

Madam Speaker, my friends on the other side of the aisle often argue that Federal employees need greater benefits to be more competitive with private industry. There could be truth to that. But even the Office of Personnel Management has determined that Federal and private sector benefits compare favorably, and additional benefits would not help with retirement and retention. Additionally, this bill does not assist the older workforce facing retirement since it specifically deals with paid leave for having a child, adopting a child or taking care of a foster child.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this new benefit-in-search-of-a-problem will cost taxpayers \$938 million over the next 5 years. Madam Speaker, at a time when average hard-working American families are already struggling and working many, many, many more hours and trying to find additional income through a job that they cannot find to pay their bills, I don't believe it's appropriate for Congress to increase the paid leave of Federal bureaucrats beyond their already generous levels by using taxpayer dollars to do it.

□ 1715

Since June of last year, the Federal Government workforce has grown by 37,000 employees while the private sector has shed more than 4.4 million jobs at the same time.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have spent trillions of the taxpayers' dollars over the past 6 months. Americans are faced with a \$1.8 trillion deficit this year alone from the Democrat majority in this administration. Their plan. Taxpayers are reaching a breaking point when it comes to subsidizing higher Federal spending at their expense. It is costing the free enterprise system jobs and the opportunity to get a job tomorrow because of the massive spending that is taking place by this Democrat majority.

Responsible American families are cutting back their costs. They are dealing with the job loss. They are doing the things to help their families and their friends, and they are looking at the destruction of their savings and retirement accounts.

I think it is simply wrong. It is wrong for the Democratic Party to move this bill. Rather than trying to create jobs, they are trying to get new benefits for Federal employees.

Madam Speaker, I will be honest. You are darn right that this is going to be a tough vote for Members of Congress. Are we going to pay attention to what is happening back home or are we

just going to come up here and spend another \$1 billion?

I encourage my colleagues to vote "no." Vote "no" on this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I just will respond to the gentleman that this is less than \$100 million a year for the entire country. While every dollar that the taxpayers pay is significantly important, I would say that this particular bill is much more important in some ways than many expenditures this Federal Government makes.

It is also something that I believe is fundamentally important in many sectors, especially in the area that I talked about with adopting new children. The gentleman says that the Federal employees are some of the most stable workforce that we have in this country. Well, that is exactly the kind of people you want to adopt children, people in stable homes that have jobs that they are not going to lose, that can take the time to do what we have set forth in this bill.

While leave policies in the government generally may compare favorably with some private sector employment, the Federal Government's paid parental leave policy simply does not. Seventy-five percent of the Fortune 100 companies offer at least 6 weeks of parental paid leave and make them much more attractive to young working families who cannot afford to go without pay for that length of time.

Madam Speaker, I would like to, at this time, yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in strong support of the rule and the underlying bill that would provide 4 weeks of paid leave to Federal employees for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. It is identical to the version of the bill, H.R. 5781, which passed the House last Congress with strong bipartisan support. The vote count was 278-146, with 50 Republicans voting for the bill in the 110th Congress.

My good friend on the other side of the aisle said that Federal employees are not asking for this. That is not the truth, and I would like permission to place in the RECORD various letters written in support. They actively have been meeting with us and supporting it for the past 15 years. Majority Leader STENY HOYER and I and others have been championing this bill. And I would like to put their letters of support in the RECORD.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS,

Washington, DC, June 4, 2009.

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) strongly supports HR 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009. This vital legislation would provide all Executive and Legislative Branch federal employees with income support for up to four weeks of parental leave in

order to facilitate bonding between parents with newborn infants or newly adopted children.

Federal workers are among those who must choose between meeting their family obligations and maintaining family income because under current law, no part of the leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act is guaranteed to be paid leave. The years when employees are most likely to become parents coincide with the early years of their career, when they are least likely to have accumulated enough savings to forgo their salary for several weeks. Workers early in their career are also least likely to have accumulated enough annual leave to cover the time needed to provide adequate care for a newborn or newly adopted child. As a result, many workers are effectively prevented from using FMLA leave at all.

Spending time with a newborn or a newly adopted child should not be viewed as a luxury that only the rich should be able to afford. Virtually all research on child development and family stability supports the notion that parent-infant bonding during the earliest months of life is crucial. Children who form strong emotional bonds or "attachment" with their parents are most likely to enjoy good health and have positive relations with others throughout their lifetimes. H.R. 626 takes as a given that all children who become new members of a family need this critical time with their parents, and provides all parents—adoptive and biological—equal treatment.

More and more private sector employers provide paid parental leave because they recognize that productivity is lost when a parent returns to work before they have found appropriate child care for a newborn or newly adopted child, or when an employee comes to work ill because all leave was exhausted during the protracted adoption process. Without the extension of paid parental leave to all Executive and Legislative branch employees, the federal government will lose good workers, trained at taxpayer expense, who decide to leave federal service for an employer who offers paid parental leave.

The benefits to children and families of four weeks of paid parental leave have been well established. The AFL-CIO urges Congress to pass the Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM SAMUEL,
Director,
Government Affairs Department.

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, June 3, 2009.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I am writing to urge you to support H.R. 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, when it is considered by the House of Representatives on Thursday, June 4.

NARFE believes that extending paid parental leave to federal employees will assist federal agencies in their ongoing recruitment and retention efforts. Indeed, Congress needs to pass this family-friendly legislation if we are to attract the highly talented and skilled individuals necessary to take on the challenges of recovering from an unparalleled economic upheaval, fighting two wars and defending the homeland.

While federal workers need paid leave to care for a newborn or adopted baby, a growing number of "sandwich generation" employees require the same support as they struggle to provide care to their aging parents. The current trend toward an older workforce, coupled with overall increased longevity, greatly increases the need for em-

ployers to provide adequate leave and compensation for family caregiving duties on both ends of the sandwich generation. For that reason, we urge you to work with us to ensure that paid family leave is also extended to federal workers who serve as caregivers to their parents.

NARFE urges you to honor federal employees, who work each day to better our nation, by voting for H.R. 626.

Sincerely,

MARGARET L. BAPTISTE,
President.

NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION,
Washington, DC, June 1, 2009.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) and more than 150,000 federal employees in 31 agencies and departments across the nation, I am writing to ask you to vote for passage next week of H.R. 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

This important bill, introduced by Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), provides federal employees with four weeks of full pay to use while they are on Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave for the birth or adoption of a child. It will bring the government's approach on family leave closer to that of the private sector and many industrialized nations.

This bill will help our federal government recruit and retain dedicated and talented workers, and show that the federal government truly values families. Currently, federal workers do not have any guarantee of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a new child. Some have accrued paid sick or vacation time that they may be able to use while on FMLA leave. However, others, especially younger workers who have not accrued sick or vacation time, have no choice but to take unpaid leave. This measure will allow federal workers the ability to better balance family needs and work requirements as access to paid parental leave has become a necessity for today's working families.

In the coming years, federal agencies will be hiring many new workers. Fifty-eight percent of supervisory and 48 percent of non-supervisory workers will be eligible to retire by the end of fiscal year 2010, according to a 2004 report by the Office of Personnel Management. In order to compete with the private sector and attract and retain the best workers, federal benefits must be competitive. According to a March 2008 report by the Joint Economic Committee staff, nearly 75 percent of the Fortune 100 firms offer working parents some paid time off when they have a new child. A paid parental leave policy will also save the government money by reducing turnover and replacement costs, which is estimated to be 25 percent of the worker's salary.

On behalf of our federal employees, I look forward to your vote for passage in the House of H.R. 626.

Sincerely,

COLLEEN M. KELLEY,
National President.

NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION,
Washington, DC, June 4, 2009.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), with over 150,000 federal employees in 31 different agencies, I write to you today to ask that you vote no on the Issa amendment to be offered today on H.R. 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009.

This important bill, introduced by Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), provides federal employees with four weeks of full pay to use while they are on Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave for the birth or adoption of a child. It will bring the

government's approach on family leave closer to that of the private sector and many industrialized nations.

This bill will help our federal government recruit and retain dedicated and talented workers, and show that the federal government truly values families. Currently, federal workers do not have any guarantee of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a new child. Some have accrued paid sick or vacation time that they may be able to use while on FMLA leave. Many, especially younger workers who have not accrued sick or vacation time or workers who have had health issues, have no choice but to take unpaid leave. This measure will allow federal workers the ability to better balance family needs and work requirements as access to paid parental leave has become a necessity for today's working families.

The Issa amendment would require employees to use all accrued leave before receiving additional paid parental leave and would require additional paid parental leave to be treated as a repayable advance. This amendment essentially guts the bill, while not addressing the problem. Paid parental leave is needed precisely because the present leave is not sufficient for having a child and allowing bonding time with that child. We hear stories every day from my members, from women, mostly, who have put off operations to save sick leave to have a child, or people who have cared for their terminal parents, and now have hundreds of sick leave hours to repay, and put off having a child. Women go to work ill because they have to save time for childbirth. As a matter of fact, every time this bill is mentioned in the press, NTEU receives stories of federal employees desperate to get some help so they can stay home just a few weeks with their newborn or adopted child.

Representative Issa stated during the Oversight and Government Reform Committee's consideration that federal employees will somehow "game" this new parental leave by taking in a new foster child every year, thus getting a "free" extra four weeks a year—a statement NTEU finds preposterous. Now the opposition comes in the form of an amendment requiring a zero balance in sick and annual leave before paid parental leave begins. This is putting federal employees in exactly the position we seek to avoid by this legislation.

Seventy-five percent of the Fortune 100 companies in this country offer paid parental leave, and the average amount is six weeks. In the coming years, federal agencies will be hiring many new workers. Fifty-eight percent of supervisory and 48 percent of non-supervisory workers will be eligible to retire by the end of fiscal year 2010, according to a 2004 report by the Office of Personnel Management. In order to compete with the private sector and attract and retain the best workers, federal benefits must be competitive. A paid parental leave policy will also save the government money by reducing turnover and replacement costs, which is estimated to be 25 percent of the worker's salary.

On behalf of our federal employees, I urge a "no" vote on the Issa amendment and "yes" for final passage of H.R. 626 as reported from committee.

Sincerely,

COLLEEN M. KELLEY,
National President.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO,
Washington, DC, June 2, 2009.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the over 600,000 federal workers represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), I strongly

urge you to support H.R. 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009, introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY). H.R. 626, which has bipartisan support, provides four weeks of paid leave for federal workers who are the parents of newborns and newly adopted children. AFGE commends the bill's sponsor, Rep. Maloney for her years of "commitment and tireless efforts to establish this important improvement in the work and family lives of over one million federal workers. This landmark legislation is an investment in both the federal workforce and their families.

Virtually all research on child development and family stability supports the notion that parent-infant bonding during the earliest months of life is crucial. Newborns and adopted children who form strong emotional bonds or "attachment" with their parents are most likely to do well in school, have positive relationships with others and enjoy good health during their lifetimes. These are national outcomes that should be the goal for all children, including those of federal employees. A parent should not be forced back to work immediately after the birth or adoption of a child because she or he could not do without his or her paycheck.

Those who oppose the bill cite "fiscal responsibility" as a reason to delay or deny action on H.R. 626 opposed these same provisions long before the recent economic downturn. Hard economic times are exactly the right time for the government to take responsible action on behalf of families. A recent Financial Times article stated that in this most recent recession, men account for almost 80% of job losses. A responsible worker benefit like federal employee paid parental leave provides a certain source of income that allows families to bond and households during economically troubled times.

A lack of paid parental leave negatively impacts the government when a good worker, trained at taxpayer expense, decides to leave federal service for another employer who does offer paid leave. Although federal workers do accumulate leave, by conservative estimates it would take a federal worker who uses two weeks of annual leave and only three days of sick leave per year close to five years to accrue enough sick and annual leave to receive pay during the 12 weeks of parental leave allowed under FMLA. Younger workers of child bearing years are at a moment in their careers when they can least afford to take any time off without pay and least likely to have accumulated significant savings. These so-called alternatives to a benefit of paid parental leave to federal workers are unrealistic and fail to adequately address the problems families face.

The time has come for the federal government to set the standard for U.S. employers on paid parental leave. Although there is no current law providing paid parental leave for federal workers, the federal government currently reimburses federal contractors and grantees for the cost of providing paid parental leave to their workers. Surely if such practice is affordable and reasonable for contractors and grantees, federal employees should be eligible for similar treatment. The benefits to children and families of four weeks of paid parental leave are enormous and long-lasting. AFGE strongly urges you to support the Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009.

Sincerely,

BETH MOTEN,

Legislative and Political Director.

I also would like to point out that this bill is PAYGO neutral and would not affect, and I quote, "direct spending or receipts." To be clear, there are no PAYGO implications for H.R. 626 be-

cause it does not create new expenditures. Whether or not an employee takes paid leave, the pay for that employee has already been included in the salary budget for that agency. The only cost associated with the bill is the amount that agencies currently save when employees who have a new child take their 12 weeks of unpaid leave. And the \$140 million figure for 4 weeks of paid leave in the Congressional Budget Office score is what Federal agencies currently save when employees take unpaid leave.

Paid leave can also offset costs by boosting employee morale and productivity while reducing turnover. Turnover is costly. It costs 20 percent of an employee's salary to hire and train a new worker compared to just 8 percent to provide a skilled, experienced employee with 4 weeks of paid parental leave. And the military already provides paid leave. New mothers are provided not with 4 weeks but 6 weeks of paid leave. And fathers are given 10 days.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CARDOZA. I yield the gentlelady 1 additional minute.

Mrs. MALONEY. This bill puts the civilian branch on par with the military. It has already been pointed out that a large portion of the private sector voluntarily provides paid leave. And in a study by Harvard and by the GAO, we found that we are ranked 168th in the world; 168 countries provide some form of paid leave. We are tied with Papua New Guinea, Swaziland, and Lesotho as countries that do not provide paid leave.

So this is an opportunity for this body, which constantly talks about family values, to show that they truly do value families and provide paid leave, 4 weeks, building on the 12 weeks of unpaid leave from the Family and Medical Leave Act, so that families can have support during this critical time of the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child.

I believe my time is expired. I urge a "yes" vote on the rule, and I urge a "yes" vote on the underlying bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, we have had two wonderful speakers on the majority side tell us—I think they were contradicting each other. One said it only costs \$100 million a year. Another speaker said, oh, there is no cost. As a matter of fact, PAYGO says there is nothing to it.

Well, maybe the PAYGO rules of this House say that, but let me tell what you what the Congressional Budget Office says, their cost estimate. The Congressional Budget Office says, 5 years, \$938 million; \$938 million. Almost \$1 billion over 5 years. Now, that is real money. Oh, no, no, no. You got it wrong. We are already going to give them the money anyway, so it doesn't cost any more.

That is not reality, and that is not the way it works. The CBO is right, \$938 million over 5 years. We had our

President just 3 or 4 weeks ago say, after spending all these trillions of dollars, the President said, I'm going to ask my budget to cut a whopping \$100 million from all their budgets across government; 100 million. Well, that is this bill just for 1 year, as the gentleman says, just 1 year. But the bottom line is it is \$938 million over 5 years.

You just can't have it both ways. You can't try and explain to the American people that you are really trying to do something good for them but turn around and make it more difficult. I think our friends that are in the majority party don't understand that you just can't sneak up here to Washington and do this and get away with it back home. People are going to pay attention to this.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Clovis, California (Mr. NUNES).

Mr. NUNES. I want to rise in opposition to this rule. Madam Speaker, when our government can't ensure water to the people that live in this country, the government has failed. And I want my colleagues to know, particularly those in the Democratic leadership, that this government is presiding over a manmade drought in California. Thanks to this, my district is at 20 percent unemployment. Some communities are at 50 percent unemployment. And despite this crisis, today, the Obama administration announced a new biological opinion that will end water deliveries in California, laying waste to billions of dollars worth of infrastructure and starving the State of water. We must not allow this to happen, and this body must act.

I would like to conclude by addressing my friends in the Democratic leadership in this country. I want to express my congratulations for dealing with this crisis. You have managed to make the crisis worse.

Madam Speaker, we need to stop the spending, stop the bailouts, and get back to the basic responsibilities that this government has, like providing water to people.

With that, Madam Speaker, I urge a "no" vote on this rule.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, I respond to my colleague from California and my colleague from Texas in this way. My colleague from California knows that I support him in his efforts to try and solve the California water crisis, and, in fact, I have been a leader in trying to do that. I don't always agree. I have come to this House floor and argued with my own leadership with regard to the issues that have dealt with the causes of the California regulatory drought.

I would also like to remind the gentleman, who loves to blame the Democrats for everything that goes wrong, that it was a Republican bill and a Republican judge that put both of those concerns that are causing much of our water problems on the map.

With regard to my friend from Texas and his claim that this is all about the cost, I can tell you that as an adoptive parent, if I hadn't taken the actions I did by adopting two children, they would not have filled the place they hold in my heart, but they would have also cost the Federal Government much, much more. When we take kids out of an abusive home and put them into foster care, we do so in order to try and recapture their lives.

My children came out of a home where they were being neglected and abused by a drug-addicted mother. The scars that they will carry from that time in their lives are profound. Had I not had the ability to spend time with them, the challenges that we face with the emotional difficulties of those young people that I love so much would be, in fact, much worse than they are even today.

The gentleman can talk about how this is a cost issue, but let me tell you, if people can't get the time to do what is right about adopting young kids, they won't do that. And it will cost the Federal Government much more.

We argued this in a bill last year where we gave the opportunity for our troops to adopt young people and take that leave. It was the right thing to do then, and it passed. Last year, this bill was on the floor, and 58 of the gentleman's colleagues from Texas voted in support of this. This is the right thing to do for our country. It is the right

thing to do for our kids. I believe in it profoundly. And, yes, this government wastes a lot of money in many different ways, but I can tell you that money spent in this area on this particular set of young people that I have talked about so much today is money well spent and will pay dividends many times over in the future. I have no question about that.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I would like to inquire of the gentleman from Texas if he has any remaining speakers.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the gentleman for the inquiry. As a matter of fact, I do have at least one more speaker. I would anticipate that if you do not have any additional speakers, I will then offer my close and then we could allow you to do the same, and then we can move on through this rule.

Mr. CARDOZA. I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman for that opportunity to move forward on this important bill.

Madam Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD the cost estimate for H.R. 626 from the Congressional Budget Office.

H.R. 626—FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ACT OF 2009

Summary: H.R. 626 would amend title 5 of the United States Code, the Congressional Accountability Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) by cre-

ating a new category of leave under FMLA. This new category would provide four weeks of paid leave to federal employees following the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. In addition, the legislation permits the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to increase the amount of paid leave provided to a total of eight weeks based on the consideration of several factors such as the cost to the federal government and enhanced recruitment and retention of employees.

Under current law, federal employees who have completed at least 12 months of service are entitled to up to 12 weeks of leave without pay after the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be returned to the same position or to an "equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, status, and other terms and conditions of employment." Employees may get paid during that 12-week period by using any annual or sick leave that they have accrued. The leave provided by this bill would be available only within the 12-week FMLA leave period.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 626 would cost \$67 million in 2010 and a total of \$938 million over the 2010–2014 period, subject to appropriation of the necessary funds. Enacting H.R. 626 would not affect direct spending or receipts.

The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 626 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation would fall in all budget functions (except functions 900 and 950).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010–2014
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Estimated Authorization Level	69	215	219	221	224	947
Estimated Outlays	67	209	218	221	223	938

Basis of estimate: For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 626 will be enacted by October 1, 2009, and that the necessary amounts for implementing it will be appropriated each year. Under the legislation, the new category of leave would become available six months after enactment (that is, around April 2010). As a result, the cost of the legislation in 2010 reflects implementation for only half of the year. After 2010, CBO has included in its estimate a 50 percent probability that OPM will use its authority to increase the amount of paid leave available from four weeks to eight weeks. Costs in future years are projected to grow with inflation.

CBO assumes that the potential users of the new leave would be primarily the roughly 700,000 civilian employees who are between the ages of 20 and 44 and have been employed at least 12 months. (This figure excludes employees of the Postal Service because H.R. 626 amends title 5 of the United States Code, which does not apply to them.)

Estimating an adoption rate based on data from the Department of Health and Human Services and applying birth rate information for the relevant age cohorts from the National Center on Health Statistics to the roughly 313,000 women eligible for the new leave yields about 17,800 women who might give birth or adopt in a given year. Based on average salary information from OPM, CBO estimates that four weeks of paid leave—the maximum amount guaranteed by the bill—for female employees would cost between

\$2,800 (for those in the youngest age cohort) and \$5,400 (for those in the 40–44 age cohort). Assuming that nearly all of those women took the maximum amount of leave, CBO estimates the cost of the leave to be \$77 million this year (if it were available for the entire 12-month period).

Applying those same calculations to the 390,000 men in the affected age groups, CBO estimates that roughly 24,000 men would be eligible for the four weeks of paid leave, at an average cost of between \$3,100 and \$6,000 per male employee. Assuming that eligible men would take the leave at about one-half the rate of women, CBO estimates that men would use another \$54 million worth of leave this year (if it were available for the entire 12-month period), bringing the total to \$130 million.

Since CBO assumes that the new leave would not be available until half-way through fiscal year 2010, there would be no costs for 2009 and the 2010 costs would represent only six months of the year, totaling \$67 million. Beyond 2010, CBO assumes a full year of availability and has included a 50 percent probability that OPM would increase the amount of paid leave available to employees. As a result, anticipated costs increase to \$209 million in 2011. (The 2011 costs would be about \$140 billion if the benefit were kept at a maximum of four weeks.)

The effects of this bill on the budget derive from the provision of a new form of paid leave. To the extent that such a new benefit enables people to take advantage of paid

leave rather than taking leave without pay, the costs are clear. However, employees who would currently use annual or sick leave upon the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child may choose to use this new form of paid leave and save their accrued leave for a later date. CBO has no basis for estimating the magnitude of such substitution, but the deferral of annual and sick leave also represents a cost either in terms of increased availability of paid leave or cash payments upon separation.

In addition, providing a more generous benefit to employees may enhance the federal government's ability to retain employees after the birth or adoption of a child and thereby lower recruitment and training costs. CBO estimates that such potential savings are likely to be relatively small over the next five years.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: H.R. 626 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Barry Blom; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Elizabeth Cove Delisle; Impact on the Private Sector: Paige Piper/Bach.

Estimate approved by: Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD a newsletter with information provided

by the National Federation of Independent Business, known as the NFIB. This letter provides information about strongly opposing this bill.

NFIB: FMLA SHOULD NOT GRANT PAID LEAVE FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 4, 2009—Susan Eckerly, senior vice president, public policy for the National Federation of Independent Business, the nation's leading small business association, released the following statement asking the U.S. House of Representatives to defeat the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (HR. 626).

"This legislation mandates an alarming expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act from an unpaid leave program into one that would provide partial paid parental leave for federal employees. By carving out four of the 12 weeks of FMLA as paid parental leave, we are deeply concerned that H.R. 626 sets a precedent for future discussions over expansion of FMLA.

"In addition to creating a new paid leave component of FMLA at a great cost to the taxpayers, the bill doesn't require federal employees to first use accumulated vacation or sick leave before taking the paid parental leave. Again, this would set a bad precedent for the private sector. Currently, if an employee has accrued paid time off, an employer may require them to use some or all of their accrued paid time for some or all of the FMLA leave.

"Small businesses are struggling to survive in our tough economic times, and are very concerned that creating an expensive, new paid leave benefit for federal employees will eventually lead to new paid leave mandates on small business, something that's neither practical nor affordable. We are strongly urging the House to defeat this bill."

Mr. SESSIONS. At this time, Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LEE).

Mr. LEE of New York. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding.

I rise to oppose the rule on the legislation in consideration of H.R. 626. Having run a business, I understand how important it is to look out for workers and to be supportive, especially in these difficult economic times, when families are making tough choices with regard to how they spend their money and their time.

I believe this debate should be focused on whether Washington should be granting additional fringe benefits to public sector employees in a period when private sector workers in hard-hit areas, like western New York where I come from, are struggling to hang on to their jobs. This is why I offered a simple amendment that said that legislation would not take effect until the national unemployment rate is down to 4 percent and no State has an unemployment rate greater than 7 percent.

I regret that the House will not have the opportunity to consider this amendment, because I think it provides a commonsense way to address the timing of this measure. Take an area of my district like Niagara County where tens of thousands of jobs are tied to the auto industry. The unemployment rate there is nearly 11 percent, a figure that was reported before General Motors and Chrysler began their restructuring,

which we already know will lead to more job losses.

□ 1730

We also know that these workers who are able to hang on will have to accept significantly reduced compensation packages in order to stay employed.

These are tough times, regardless of what industry you're in. But think about these auto workers, the farmers, the retail workers who are being forced to do more with less just to keep their jobs and to keep their heads above water. Think about them when Washington turns around and proposes more generous fringe benefits for public sector employees. It sends the wrong message at the wrong time, and it's just another example of how Washington continues to find ways to spend money it doesn't have.

Again, I'm disappointed that the House will not have the opportunity to consider my amendment.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from New York.

Madam Speaker, I did engage in an agreement with the gentleman from California. The gentleman has given concurrence. We had another speaker from the Republican Party who would choose to speak, and so, going back on my word, but with agreement, the gentleman is allowing me to extend 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF).

Mr. WOLF. I think this will be better for Mr. ISSA too so I don't get into his time, so I thank the chairman for letting me do this. And I thank you.

I rise in support of the bill, and I just wanted to give you some reasons. One, I supported the bill in the last session.

Two, our military today currently gets 6 weeks of parental pay leave. And the first person killed in Afghanistan was from my district, a civilian along side of the military, and so for the FBI, the CIA, the DIA, the DEA, the ATF they deserve basically the same thing.

Secondly, I was the ranking member on Children, Youth and Family years ago. And Dr. Brazelton, the leading child pediatrician, came in and pointed at the initial moment of birth—and I have five children and 13 grandchildren and soon to have two more—at the initial moment of birth, when the mother breathes on the baby, the bonding process begins. It begins. Those early days, weeks are absolutely positively critical. And so, for me, on a family issue, and a family value issue, I think that's really important.

The last thing is I just want to remind my colleagues that one of the leading people in this Congress, one of my heroes, two of the people that I looked up to more than anybody, one, Congressman Henry Hyde and former Congressman Dan Coats, who later went on to be a Senator, both supported parental leave.

Let me read to you what Henry Hyde said. The words of Henry Hyde, during the debate on family leave, and it was

not paid family leave, so there was a difference just as important. He reminded us that "the family supplies the moral glue that holds society together, and it is a central institution that stands between us and social disintegration."

And so, one, the military gets 6 weeks. Two, that bonding process is when the baby comes out, you want the mother to be there. It is critically important. And, thirdly, one of the giants from the beginning of this Hall that ever served, Congressman Henry Hyde, led the effort and made the most passionate case on why family leave should have been passed years ago.

And with that I rise in support of the bill and thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Virginia, not only for coming to the floor, but also the gentleman from California for allowing me to extend to an additional speaker. And I thank the gentleman very much.

Madam Speaker, we should have a different title to this bill. This bill should be the bill for what Congress needs to do to expend Federal benefits, benefits to Federal employees, while knowing that in April there were over 611,000 private sector jobs that were lost. That should be the name of the bill. This is what this Congress is going to do to respond to some almost 3 million jobs that have been lost, while this administration is in power. That's what this bill really should be known for.

This is the answer to 3 million job losses in the private sector. We're going to extend benefits, further benefits to the Federal Government.

Hey, I understand that because the Federal Government employment has risen about 100,000, and with, you know, car companies and banks and everything else, no telling how many Federal employees that we'll end up with at the end of this year. So maybe I was wrong. Maybe there is a strong demand out there for Federal Government employees who want additional benefits.

But we should remember that back home, where I'm from, and where a lot of people are from, 611,000 jobs disappeared in the month of April. And this is the response from our Democrat majority and our President: let's go spend more money, new benefits for Federal Government employees.

I get it. I think you will too, Madam Speaker, when we hear from people back home.

Madam Speaker, in closing I'd like to reiterate the horrible precedent that I think this legislation sets to those Americans who today that I just talked about, some 611,000 in April alone in the private sector who lost their jobs. Millions of Americans are jobless, and due to the out-of-control spending of this Democrat Congress, no analyst or White House official believes jobs will bounce back this year. None of them. Nobody.

As a matter of fact, the Democrat Party is on record and it's going to get worse next year and we're planning on it already. We already understand that. We ought to be saying that instead of extending benefits that it's going to cost another billion dollars.

Why are my friends on the other side afraid of risking more of the taxpayer dollars to provide Federal employees who already have the most job security and excellent benefits? Why are they afraid to back away and wait on this? Why are they pushing this? I wonder.

I wonder really who is more important and who they're hearing from, because evidently it's not people back home. Maybe it is the government workers that they're listening to. Maybe government workers are more important to this party than people back home. Maybe that's why this is happening.

Look, Republicans are providing quality solutions. We think we understand what the American people are going through. We understand what's happening with the taxing, the borrowing and the spending. Huge deficits and unemployment rates continue on and on and on.

I oppose this bill, and I hope that the American people understand that the taxpayer was heard today on the floor of the House of Representatives. They were heard by the speakers of the Republican Party who said we should not be extending benefits right now. We should not increase the spending and the cost of \$1 billion over the next 5 years. We should understand what real people are going through.

I'm going to vote against this bill.

I yield back my time.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I've sat here and listened this evening to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) talk about how this is a terrible waste of dollars, and how the Republicans are saying that this is a terrible waste of money.

But I'd wish to correct the gentleman. Today this isn't a partisan issue. In fact, I would predict that there are a number of his colleagues, the gentleman from Texas, on the Republican side of the aisle, like Mr. WOLF, who understand what this is about.

This is about America's children, about children coming into this world and bonding with a mother and a father and having the opportunity to do that in this hectic world that we live in today. It's about foster parents that come in and do the right thing, taking care of abused and victimized children, and needing that time to do it right.

It's about adoptive parents who, when they reach out and bring into their home permanently children who have been victimized by society's ills, having the opportunity to do it right so we can start healing those children.

There are a number of Republicans on that side of the aisle that are going to do the right thing tonight. They're going to vote for this rule, and they're

going to vote for this bill because it's the right thing for America and building families.

They call themselves the "Family Values Party." Tonight they can prove it by coming in here and voting to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I'd like to submit for the RECORD the statement of administration policy.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

The Administration supports the goal of H.R. 626, which would provide Federal employees with access to paid leave upon the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child.

Being able to spend time at home with a new child is a critical part of building a strong family. The initial bonding between parents and their new child is essential to healthy child development and providing a firm foundation for the child's success in life. Measures that support these relationships strengthen our families, our communities, and our nation. The Federal government should reflect its commitment to these core values by helping Federal employees to care for their families as well as serve the public. Providing paid parental leave has been successfully employed by a number of private-sector employers, and can help to make job opportunities accessible to more workers.

The Administration is currently reviewing existing Federal leave policies to determine the extent of their gaps and limitations. The Administration looks forward to working with Congress to refine the details of this legislation to make sure it meets the needs of Federal agencies and employees, as well as their families.

You know, the gentleman from Texas talks about how much money this government has wasted. He's right, there's a lot of money that gets wasted.

But over the last 8 years, as our country was being absolutely raped by those defense contractors in the Middle East with no accountability, where was the gentleman to stand up against that?

No, ladies and gentlemen, he's not willing to stand up against that, or wasn't during the last 8 years. But tonight he will criticize us spending a few dollars to get it right for our families in America.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that while most parents wish to stay home with their new child, they just can't afford to take unpaid leave, which directly affects that child's well-being.

We can start with having the Federal Government lead by example to set the stage for making changes across the table. To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi, we must be the change we wish to see in this world. I believe that couldn't be more true.

I ask the Members of both sides of the aisle to support the parents of America, to support the children of America, and be the change that we wish for our world.

I urge a "yes" vote on this rule and on the previous question.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 501 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. 626.

□ 1743

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. 626) to provide that 4 of the 12 weeks of parental leave made available to a Federal employee shall be paid leave, and for other purposes, with Ms. DEGETTE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

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

Madam Chairman, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 626, the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009, which was introduced by our colleague, Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY, on January 22, 2009.

As chairman of the subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and District of Columbia, I'm proud to serve as an original cosponsor of this bill, along with 55 other Members of Congress.

H.R. 626 takes an important step toward improving the Federal Government's ability to recruit and retain a highly qualified workforce by providing paid parental leave to Federal and Congressional employees for the birth, adoption or placement of a child for foster care, which is a benefit that is extended to many in the private sector as well as to all government employees in other industrialized countries.

□ 1745

In considering H.R. 626, the Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia marked up the bill on March 25, 2009, and favorably recommended the measure to the full Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The full committee then held markup on H.R. 626 on May 6, 2009, and ordered the bill to be reported to the floor by a voice vote.

The bill being considered today will allow all Federal and congressional employees to receive 4 weeks of paid leave taken under the Family Medical Leave Act, also called the FMLA, for