

troops, a number of whom are going to Bosnia? The President urged us to support the troops, support the provision that was brought by the minority party, by the Democrats, to the House floor, basically validating the President's position on Bosnia.

We rejected that, but we are offering every Member of the House today, in just a few minutes, an opportunity to really support the troops. Members can support the troops by supporting the conference report on the defense authorization bill, which gives a 2.4-percent pay increase to the troops. It is a real pay increase that they can make house payments with and car payments with, and have a little better quality of life for their families. It provides more ammunition. It provides good equipment, so at least if the President puts our troops in harm's way, they will be well prepared. Please vote for this measure today.

CORRECTING TECHNICAL ERRORS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 1060, LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT OF 1995

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 36) directing the Secretary of the Senate to make corrections in the enrollment of S. 1060, to provide for the disclosure of lobbying activities to influence the Federal Government, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LONGLEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

Mr. SKAGGS. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, and I do not intend to object, but I want to engage my colleague, the gentleman from Florida, in a brief discussion of how we have gotten to this point, which is probably not susceptible to a brief discussion.

As I understand it, however, we are taking up Senate Concurrent Resolution 36, which is a purely technical, typographical error correction bill to the lobbying bill, is that correct?

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SKAGGS. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this concurrent resolution directs the enrolling clerk to correct solely technical errors in the lobbying bill, especially with respect to some erroneous cross-references. It makes no substantive changes in the bill. The concurrent resolution is necessary so that the bill we send to the President, hopefully later today, will be technically correct.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, if I may reclaim my time on the reservation, as has been widely reported now, there is a more substantive issue that now pertains to this bill having to do with the

contract language in section 18 and its effects on, in particular, certain health insurance organizations, corporations organized under 501(c)4. This bill does not deal with that issue, is that correct?

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, this concurrent resolution does not deal with any substantive issues. The Senate passed a separate resolution; actually, they amended the concurrent resolution the House had previously passed, with a change that would affect section 18 of the bill. That is not the resolution that is before the House now.

Mr. SKAGGS. Continuing to reserve the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the gentleman if he would be willing to consent to an amendment to Senate Concurrent Resolution 36 that would address what I believe to be a sincere problem with the implementation of section 18 and delay its effective date.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I cannot consent to that for two reasons. One, there are Members who have substantive objections to that particular change; and second, an amendment to the concurrent resolution at this point would only further delay this bill which has already been delayed far, far too long.

We can discuss why it has been delayed, but the point before us now is that we can end the delay. If we pass the resolution that is before us now without amendment, it will go to the enrolling clerk. The enrolling clerk will complete the enrolling clerk's duties and the bill will be available for transmission to the President. I believe that could be accomplished today. If we accepted the gentleman's amendment, I do not know how much longer this would go on.

Mr. SKAGGS. Continuing to reserve my reservation of objection, Mr. Speaker, that is certainly good news on the underlying issue. I was just looking to address the concern some groups have about compliance by January 1.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. If the gentleman will continue to yield, I am certainly willing to work with Members who have an interest in section 18 on a separate bill to correct problems that may exist with it. Of course, as Members know, there is a difference of opinion of what the problem may be and the scope of the problem with section 18, but I am certainly willing to work with Members who have an interest in this, and I want to make certain that all the concerns of Members are adequately addressed in the proper forum.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, under my reservation of objection, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK].

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I hope I may not cause too much difficulty with the chairman of the subcommittee for expressing my admiration on how he has dealt with this bump in the road.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, sometimes people say things they do not really mean. People often like to talk about how they hate to say "I told you so," but I have found it to be one of the few pleasures in life that gets better with age.

A few weeks ago several of us cautioned against amending this bill, let it have to go back to the U.S. Senate, and some said we were exaggerating what would happen if that were to take place. We have seen now, even when we made no substantive amendment, that the U.S. Senate was capable of entangling this bill. So I think this shows that when we urge people not to vote for amendments, we knew whereof we spoke, because there be dragons, as they said in the 15th century, and I hope now this bill is free.

Mr. Speaker, I would just ask, finally, of my friend, the gentleman from Florida, who has done such good work on this bill, can we now expect the U.S. Senate will allow both the base bill, the lobbying bill, and this correction, to go to the President for signature?

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, of course, this would not go to the President for signature. This just goes to give instructions to the enrolling clerk, but I am hopeful that the enrolling clerk's work can be completed today and that the bill will go to the President today. However, as the gentleman knows, I do not control the process in the Senate, but I am going to contact the Senate as soon as this action is taken today and encourage that the bill be transmitted to the President today.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. If the gentleman will yield again, we all know that the gentleman does not control the processes of the Senate, because it is patently clear that no one controls what goes on in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate concurrent resolution, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 36

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That in the enrollment of the bill S. 1060, to provide for the disclosure of lobbying activities to influence the Federal Government, and for other purposes, the Secretary of the Senate shall make the following corrections:

(1) In section 6(8), strike "6" and insert "7".

(2) In section 9(7), insert "and" after the semicolon, in section 9(8), strike "; and" insert a period, and strike paragraph (9) of section 9.

(3) In section 12(c), strike "7" and insert "6".

(4) In section 15(a)(2), strike "8" and insert "7".

(5) In section 15(b)(1), strike "5(a)(2)," and in section 15(b)(2), strike "8" and insert "7".

(6) In section 24(b), strike "13, 14, 15, and 16" and insert "9, 10, 11, and 12".

(7) In section 12(b)(1), strike "7" and insert "6".

The Senate concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SCHEDULING OF MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON RULES FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, AND FILING OF AMENDMENTS ON ANTITERRORISM ACT

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I had announced that the Committee on Rules would be holding a meeting of the Committee on Rules on H.R. 1710, the Antiterrorism Act. The hearing on that has been delayed until Monday at 5 p.m. There will be a meeting of the Committee on Rules this coming Monday at 5 p.m., and Members are again reminded that amendments to that legislation must be filed with the Committee on Rules no later than 4 o'clock this afternoon. That time still stands, and I would hope that Members on that side of the aisle in particular might notify their Members of the timing of those amendments being filed with our Committee on Rules.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules I call up House Resolution 307 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 307

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1530) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1996 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], a member of the Committee on Rules, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the rule, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a rule providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1530, the fiscal 1996 Defense authorization bill. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report, as usual in this circumstance, and against its consideration, and was reported out of the Committee on Rules by a voice

vote. I urge adoption of the rule so we can get on with the debate and passage of this long-awaited most essential piece of legislation.

I would like to commend the chairman, the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SPENCE], and his outstanding staff for the tireless work they have put in this year, and especially during this very long conference, which has gone on for months now. We all know that that was not easy.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass this legislation today, and the President must sign it into law, especially this President who is putting our troops over into Bosnia as we stand here right now.

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Mr. Speaker, this authorization bill is the first step in restoring our defenses to the level that they should be as the world's superpower.

We all know that the defense budget has endured 10 years of cuts in a row, 10 years. Real defense spending has declined over 40 percent since 1985, and it is beginning to show in the recruitment of good young men and women throughout this country. During that time, procurement has declined an astounding 71 percent, and this must stop; and this bill does stop it.

Indeed, 2 years ago President Clinton said that we must not cut our defenses any further. That was 2 years ago. He was right then, and we are right today. Here is the bill that makes good on that pledge.

That bill is for this year, 1996. The President's request, over last year, so we are now turning it around. As the deployment to Bosnia takes place, as we speak, this budget should be over the President's request, because, Mr. Speaker, that mission is going to cost billions of dollars, billions of dollars which will be drained out of our appropriation for maintaining a military that can meet the demands of our strategic interests across the world.

This bill adds \$5 billion to the President's procurement request, including monies to keep open the industrial baselines for the all-important B-2 bomber and the new generation of submarines.

Mr. Speaker, our military personnel who are about to put their lives on the line in Bosnia are well taken care of in this bill. This bill provides a 2.4-percent pay raise, a 5.2-percent increase in the basic housing allowances, improved health care provisions, and many other items specifically for individual members of our Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, this bill finally reverses the outrageous, outrageous attempt in 1993 when military COLA's were unfairly delayed beyond civilian COLA's. What a terrible thing that was to do to our military. I know many Members on both sides of the aisle have worked hard for this day, and I am glad to report that it is finally here. We are turning that around.

In this bill, readiness and training accounts, so critical for operational

successes, are also increased substantially. But importantly, Mr. Speaker, this bill, despite its increases, stays within the limits of the 7-year balanced budget. That is what is so terribly important. It does this substantially by reducing the nondefense items that have been weighing down this bill over the last few years, items such as foreign aid that never should have been in this bill, peacekeeping and environmental restoration that never should have been in this bill. They belong in other accounts, not in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, there is no more important bill in our annual process than the defense authorization bill. That is why we formed these republic States forming this great country of ours, to provide first and foremost, above all else, for a common defense of this Nation. This is the one bill that is constitutionally mandated and benefits all of the people of this great country.

This year's bill is critical if America is to maintain its leadership role in the world, as I think it should; and as our young men and women go into Bosnia, we must give them all of the support we can, make no mistake about it. We went through a lot of votes on bills yesterday and the other day to support our troops. This is a bill that supports our troops. This gives them the wherewithal to go in with the best equipment, the best training that they possibly can, and that is what will save the lives of individual men and women serving in our military today.

So this is one Christmas present that we can give them. Come over here and vote for this rule and then vote for this bill. My colleagues will be glad they did.

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule which provides for the consideration of the conference report to accompany the fiscal year 1996 Department of Defense authorization.

While there are matters contained in this conference agreement which I oppose, I will, however, support the agreement because it does address many matters of vital national security interest. I strongly support the funding made available for the B-2 Stealth bomber, and I especially support the initiatives taken by the conferees to accelerate high-priority quality of life projects for the men and women of our Armed Forces and their families. These projects are critical if we are to maintain a viable all-volunteer force, and especially so in light of the missions we have and will call upon our military personnel to perform. Finally, I am gratified that this conference report addresses the issue of core readiness and fully funds operations and maintenance accounts. Our military forces are by far the best equipped and trained in the world, but this conference report goes a long way toward assuring that they will remain so as we pass into the new century.