

that purpose. Last week, both Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), in charge of transportation spending in the House, gave the idea a cautious blessing.

Approval is still far from certain, but it is essential. Congress and the administration have previously decided that Amtrak must operate free of public support by 2001—a status that has no precedent anywhere in the world and justification. All other modes of transport are subsidized, roads and highways especially heavily. Why should rail alone not be publicly supported?

Whatever its wisdom, the goal has been set, at least for the time being. If there is the slightest chance that it can be met, capital funding of at least \$2.5 billion over five years is the bare minimum cost.

The evidence is all around us that a transportation system that pours money into roads and air travel and starves everything else doesn't work. Spending for airports and highways soared in the '80s, and now economic losses from congestion on the ground and in the air are setting records. In that same time, support for rail declined by a third. It now gets a bare 3 percent of federal transportation funds.

Undercapitalized businesses fail every day. That could happen to Amtrak. Or it could succeed with payoffs in quality of life and national competitiveness out of all proportion to the federal cost. It's up to Congress.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, 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.

□ 0100

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3675, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION ACT 1997

Ms. GREENE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 460 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 460

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker, may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3675) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with section 401(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 or 6 of rule XXI are waived except as follows: beginning with the colon on page 10, line 25, through "program" on page 11, line 3.

Where points of order are waived against part of a paragraph, points of order against a provision in another part of such paragraph may be made only against such provision and not against the entire paragraph. The amendment printed in section 2 of this resolution shall be considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. During consideration of the bill for further amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may reduce to not less than five minutes the time for voting by electronic device on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote by electronic device without intervening business, provided that the time for voting by electronic device on the first in any series of questions shall be not less than fifteen minutes. After the reading of the final lines of the bill, a motion that the Committee of the Whole rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted shall, if offered by the majority leader or a designee, have precedence over a motion to amend. 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 the final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. The amendment considered as adopted in the House and in the Committee of the Whole as follows:

Page 8, line 18, strike "proceeds from the sale of".

Page 8, line 20, strike "credited as offsetting collections to this account so as to result" and insert in lieu thereof "disposed of in a manner resulting".

Page 8, line 22, strike the comma after the figure and all that follows through "Act" on page 9, line 1.

Page 11, line 18, strike "\$2,742,602,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$1,642,500,000".

Page 27, line 4, strike "\$400,000,000" and insert in lieu thereof "\$460,000,000".

Page 48, line 12, strike the colon and all that follows through "funds" on line 15.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentlewoman from Utah [Ms. GREENE] is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. GREENE of Utah. For purposes of debate only, Mr. Speaker, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 460 is an open rule providing for consideration of H.R. 3675, the fiscal year 1997 Transportation appropriations bill. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

The rule contains a technical waiver of section 401(a) of the Budget Act, which prohibits consideration of legis-

lation containing contract authority not previously subject to appropriations, and two waivers of rule XXI: clause 6, prohibiting reappropriations, and clause 2, prohibiting unauthorized and legislative provisions, with the exception, as requested by the authorizing committee, of a provision relating to funding for a boating safety grant program.

In keeping with our commitment to ensure that the appropriations bills comply with authorizations, the rule resolves certain concerns expressed by the authorizing committee by providing that an amendment printed in section 2 of the resolution is considered as adopted.

In order to better accommodate members' schedules, the rule allows the chairman to postpone votes and reduce voting time to 5 minutes. The rule also permits the majority leader to offer the privileged motion to rise and report the bill back to the House at any time after the final lines of the bill have been read. Finally, the rule provides for priority consideration of amendments that have been pre-printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that this is the seventh appropriations bill that we have considered this year, and that all seven appropriations bills have been considered under open rules. Under this open, deliberative process, we have given every member of the House an opportunity to offer an amendment on any issue they feel important.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again emphasize that this is an open rule, providing for fair consideration of the important issues contained in this bill. I urge my colleagues to support the rule.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for this open rule. The Rules Committee acted appropriately in exposing certain parts of this bill to points of order. In doing so, they followed the long-standing tradition in the House of honoring the authorizing committees' request to be able to raise points of order against legislative language in spending bills. This rule will give them that opportunity.

I also commend Mr. WOLF and Mr. COLEMAN for this bipartisan bill they've put together which I fully support.

This bill allocates \$12.5 billion for transportation programs across the country which are very good investments in our country's infrastructure.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, this bill emphasizes safety. It allocates \$4.9 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration to continue the good work they do making sure our skies are safe. Thanks to this bill, the FAA will be

able to hire 660 new employees entirely devoted to passenger safety.

Even though our planes are among the safest in the world, as last month's tragedy in Florida showed us, we are still not as safe as we should be.

Although I am disappointed that this bill doesn't provide any new funding for the Northeast corridor, the most traveled passenger rail route in the country, I understand that there is a balance from previous appropriations to fund the continued construction of this project.

I urge my colleagues to support this open rule and to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY], the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say I support this rule. It is far preferable than the rule that we just considered. I would simply observe that with respect to the previous rule, this country has walked away from our values in dealing with trade. There is absolutely no reason in my view for us to provide MFN treatment for a country that produces goods through slave labor. I think it is a preposterous joke that we should in any way give credence to the idea that a country with a controlled economy is a fitting participant in free- or fair-trade arrangements. By definition, they are not. I thank the gentleman for his time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. GREENE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. GREENE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter on House Resolution 460.

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

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3675, making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and that I may be permitted to submit tables, charts, and other extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION ACT, 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 460 and rule XXIII, 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. 23675.

□ 0109

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. 3675) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes, with Mr. BEREUTER in the Chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Under the rule, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] and the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. SABO] will each be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognize the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF].

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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

In the interests of brevity, Mr. Chairman, and because everyone, including the staff, ought to be able to go home, I will include my remarks.

Mr. Chairman, today I am proud to present to the House H.R. 3675, the transportation appropriations bill for fiscal year 1997. I believe this is a very good bill which will improve aviation and highway safety, provide essential funding for highways and other infrastructure improvements across the country, and maintain the Federal Government's commitment to help localities and Amtrak with assistance in their operating budgets. This is a balanced bill, created in a bipartisan manner under difficult budget constraints.

Before I go any further, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize the huge contributions of the gentleman from Texas [Mr. COLEMAN] in putting together this bill, and past bills, in a truly bipartisan fashion.

This will be the gentleman's last transportation appropriations bill, and I want to say how much I appreciate his diligence and hard work, and his true concern for transportation safety and infrastructure around this country. He will be sorely missed, and we all wish him well.

As all of us know, Mr. Chairman, the coming fiscal year will be very difficult, as we continue to tighten our belt on the way to a balanced budget. This is even more painful with each passing year, because the easiest budget reductions have already been made. Yet this body has shown its strong and unwavering commitment to eliminating the deficit by the year 2002, so some continued sacrifices will be needed.

Before I get into specifics of the bill, let me put the larger budget numbers in perspective.

This year, our 602(b) allocation in new outlays is \$11.4 billion, which is the same level as last year. This might not seem too difficult until you realize that just to fund things like the employee pay raise, normal inflation in employee medical insurance and other benefits, and general inflation in goods and services, the Department of Transportation would need \$250 million more than it received in fiscal year 1996.

And if you use the President's budget as the baseline instead of the current level of funding, even greater reductions are required, because the budget proposed a large increase in new outlays. Combined with the money we need to pay off debts from past years, our budget allocation puts us \$359 million in outlays below the administration's request. So very difficult choices had to be made below the level of their request.

This bill sets priorities with the limited resources we have available. What are those priorities?

Safety: Maintaining and improving safety is the number one priority in this bill, above everything else. The recent aviation accidents have convinced many of us that more needs to be done, and there are other troubling signs as well. Fraudulent and unapproved aircraft parts now get inside our commercial airliners all too often. And our aging air traffic control equipment raises concerns.

Last year, air traffic centers all over the country experienced breakdowns in important radar and communication systems. And air traffic controllers are getting stretched thin as air traffic increases without consistent growth in staffing.

To deal with these problems, the bill before the House today raises funding for air traffic control operations by about 6 percent, providing funds for 250 additional air traffic controllers and 373 new staff in aviation safety inspection and oversight. The bill also adds \$139 million, not in the President's request, for new air traffic control equipment and systems to improve safety and airway capacity.

Because of the extremely serious questions surfacing now over aviation safety and the FAA's oversight, the bill appropriates \$2.4 million for a blue-ribbon commission to perform a comprehensive review of aviation safety, financing, and acquisition. Over the past few weeks, we've seen FAA inspectors and the Transportation Inspector General testify before the House and Senate about safety problems. We read about internal FAA memos raising safety alarms which go ignored by management.

And we know how long it takes the FAA to procure and install new safety equipment. These problems must be addressed in a comprehensive, non-political and professional way.

This high level commission will be bipartisan, and will have adequate funding to analyze in-depth the aviation safety situation in the United States, the FAA's financing problems, and its organization. I intend to offer an amendment to the FAA authorization bill which provides the authorization for this commission when that bill is before the House later this summer. The chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee agrees with me on this approach. He supports this language, and I am pleased that the appropriations bill provides funds for this important activity.

And we must do more in other safety areas as well, or at least hold the line in the face of