

without any sense of purpose, without any sense of direction, and with grave jeopardy.

□ 1015

NO RUSH ON HOMELAND SECURITY

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I know the new Homeland Security Department is going to pass with almost no dissenting votes, but it really is sad that we have to create a new cabinet level department just to get government agencies to cooperate with each other. Really it will just make the government bigger, more bureaucratic, more expensive and no safer.

Many syndicated columnists are now questioning the rush here. Dan Thomasson in the Scripps Howard News Service, in the Scripps Howard papers all over the country, said the last thing the Nation needs now is a half-baked Department of Homeland Security removed from the oven too quickly because of obvious political considerations. He said this is a monumental task that if not carefully and cautiously tended could produce an unwieldy, overblown bureaucracy that would worsen the situation and leave the country even more vulnerable than it is now.

I hope that we will heed these words of Dan Thomasson and not make the problem worse than it is now.

VOTE "NO" ON FAST TRACK

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, under enormous pressure from defrauded investors, the Republican leadership has finally and reluctantly agreed to bring a strong accounting bill to the floor today. Passage of this bill will make America's corporations more accountable and will restore confidence and investor faith in our markets. I urge my colleagues to support it.

But, Mr. Speaker, completion of the conference report on Fast Track this week also appears to be a strong possibility. Fast Track—the biggest gift of all to overpaid CEOs in providing more opportunity for corporate abuse. Fast Track has been made even worse since its passage in the other body. The Dayton-Craig amendment will be eliminated, TAA and health care benefits are not nearly enough and less than promised, and there is still no core labor and environmental standards.

Mr. Speaker, it would be highly ironic if on the day this House finally made corporations tow the line that Republicans then turn around and give corporate America the biggest prize of all. Vote "no" on the Fast Track conference report.

INTRODUCTION OF "INSTANT REPLAY" BUDGET LEGISLATION

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

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, the Congress once again is facing the fiscal train wreck that seems to come about every October 1, the end of the fiscal year, when the Congress has not finished its appropriations cycle and we are left with a device, a tricky device, called the continuing resolution to continue doing business until a budget can be put into place.

Again, we are introducing here today a bill that could end this kind of crisis, this potential shutdown of government, once and for all. We have attempted it for 10, 12 years now. It passed once, but then President Clinton vetoed it. This bill calls for an instant replay that would occur on October 1 on those appropriations bills that have not been completed by the end of the fiscal year, September 30. The reason that it has not passed in my judgment and signed into law is because it makes good, common sense. In other words, after September 30, for the appropriations bills that are yet to be completed, instant replay comes into play. Last year's budget becomes automatic until the appropriators can come up with a new budget. I urge support.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON SARBANES-OXLEY

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, today we will be enacting the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, a historic overhaul of financial services oversight. But I am saddened by the crisis that brought us here. Today my heart goes out to all the innocent workers who have lost their jobs and the investors whose pensions have been pillaged.

Out of this calamity we have produced the strongest legislative reaction to a business scandal since Franklin Roosevelt was President. It is a triumph over incredibly powerful special interest lobbying and includes world-changing reforms for U.S. companies. I have high confidence in our free market system. We have been through other market declines, insider training scandals in the eighties, and the S&L crisis. Our system is the best at generating economic growth, jobs, and rewards initiative and innovation.

The Sarbanes-Oxley bill is an important step toward restoring investor confidence and transparency in our system.

CONGRATULATING BARBARA BYRD BENNETT, CEO OF CLEVELAND SCHOOLS

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I stand this morning to congratulate the CEO of the Cleveland municipal school district. Her name is Barbara Byrd Bennett. Why am I up here? Because they attempted to take her away from the city of Cleveland after all the good work she has done over the past few years. I am proud to stand here on the floor of the House to celebrate the work that she has done, to look at the improved schools that we have, to know that as a result of her work we have got a new issue 14 that was passed, we will be building some 48 new schools in the city of Cleveland and renovating about 50.

We have not built a new school in Cleveland in 20 years. Our school system is doing better. Our students are doing better. I salute Barbara Byrd Bennett, our CEO, and thank her for staying in Cleveland and pledge my support as well.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND HOMELAND SECURITY

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the misconduct at Enron was apparent as this House met not this morning, but at the beginning of the year. Yet, as in previous years, the House Republican leadership avoided doing anything meaningful about it. Finally today, we have overcome their continued obstructionism to take up the Sarbanes-LaFalce bill, the first genuine action to stop corporate wrongdoing. How tragic that so many investors and so many hard-working employees had to suffer while this leadership protected Kenny-boy and its other corporate pals.

And even as we gather today to take our first action, this same crowd that would yield on one reform after another is now trying to misuse the Homeland Security bill to offer new ways to protect corporations who wrong people in our communities across the country, and even to go so far as to authorize government contracts to be issued to politically powerful corporations who abandon their American citizenship and leave our country. We must prevent this misconduct from happening.

THE RISING FEDERAL DEBT

(Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that you left the floor, because I would like to remind you that on your watch, our Nation has now squandered a trillion dollars on interest on the national debt. That is a thousand times a thousand times a thousand times a thousand. Did not educate a kid, did not build a road, did

not help a veteran, did not help defend our Nation. Just squandered on interest on our now \$6 trillion debt.

On your watch, we have added \$511 billion of new debt. You have been Speaker for 1300 days, yet you will not let us have a vote on one of the most simple laws of all and that will say that my generation will not burden my children's generation and my grandchildren's generation with our debts, that we will spend no more money in this body than we collect in taxes that year, a constitutional amendment that almost every State already has, so that they do not stick their kids and their grandkids with their bills.

Mr. Speaker, you have been Speaker for 1300 days and yet you cannot find time for that law to be voted on. I would ask on behalf of my children and my yet unborn grandchildren that you give this body an opportunity to vote on that.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we needed this. Over the months we have suffered, we have watched the marketplace go up and down, but, more importantly, I have watched my constituents living in the city of Houston and those around the Nation see their investments for retirement go down the drain.

And so I am proud to be able to join the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) and the other body who presented one of the strongest corporate responsibility and accountability bills that this Nation will ever see. It will tell the poor guy on the street, it will tell the common thief who steals a loaf of bread and goes to jail for 5 or 10 years, that justice in America reigns not only on the streets, but in the corporate boardrooms, because we will have a board to oversee auditors and accounting features as it relates to their work for corporations; we will make sure that there is no grand profit on consulting fees and you are supposed to be telling the corporation what they are doing wrong; and we will give shareholders, the moms and dads and grandparents who have lost their investment, the right to sue so that they can recover dollars that they have lost; and, yes, we will put in jail those who have done wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill and I will join my colleagues today, providing leadership to the marketplace of America.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3763, SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the previous order of the House of July 24, 2002, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3763) to protect investors by improving the accuracy

and reliability of corporate disclosures made pursuant to the securities laws, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of the legislative day of Wednesday, July 24, 2002, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of July 24, 2002 at page H5393.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Ohio and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY).

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I bring to the floor today a tough, sensible conference report that responds in a measured way to the very real crisis of confidence among America's 85 million investors. I am proud of the result we have reached. We act with the assurance that Congress must do something, yet remain acutely aware of the dangers of overreacting to a genuine problem and making matters worse.

Make no mistake, this is a difficult period for those who love and cherish the free enterprise system. Since early 2000, our capital markets, although still the most respected in the world, have unquestionably suffered a series of blows—mostly self-inflicted—which have truly damaged the public's faith in the integrity of corporate America. The Committee on Financial Services, and this body, have not sat idly by, however. Indeed, in response to Enron, Global Crossing and other bankruptcies, my committee was the first out of the gate, holding a series of hearings and passing a good, targeted bill on the House floor in April with the support of 119 of my Democratic colleagues. Nearly 3 months would go by before the Senate passed companion legislation.

The Senate built on the House bill's chief objectives, strong oversight of accountants, increased corporate responsibility, and improved information for investors.

The conference report before us today includes important provisions from both sides of the Capitol, but it also contains the following proposals offered only by the House: Disclosure of important company information to investors in real time, the inclusion of civil fines levied by the SEC in restitution funds for defrauded investors, tougher criminal penalties for a broad array of corporate crimes, and increased SEC supervision of the accounting oversight board. Though by no means a panacea, the conference report will help restore investor confidence in our markets. Investors can be assured that convicted corporate criminals will be sentenced to long jail time. In my view, the prospect of doing time, real time, will serve as an effective deterrent to wrongdoing in the corporate suite.

We saw a little bit of that yesterday with the arrest of the Adelphia executives in New York. Investors will now get better information and will get it faster and they will have more faith in the numbers because the accountants will be more vigilant, as will audit committees.

This legislation, combined with the truly substantive and far-reaching reforms proposed by the industry's self-regulatory organizations and the brutal and unforgiving market forces, will help restore faith in the system. A strong dose of character, honesty and ethics would not hurt, either.

For two decades in Congress, I have advocated a free market approach to regulation, but I also believe that capitalism can only flourish under the rule of law. Those views are not at odds. In fact, they are quite consistent. Government must be careful not to overreach and stifle the entrepreneurial spirit that has made the United States the most successful economy in the history of the world. At the same time, government has a responsibility to punish—and do so swiftly and severely—those who seek to cheat and steal from others.

I believe the conference report crafts a careful and appropriate balance of these two philosophies. I am proud of the bipartisan process that produced this legislation. Corporate accountability is an investor and retiree issue. It is not a partisan issue, and those who would attempt to make it so do a real disservice to all of us.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for this historic, pro-investor bill.

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

□ 1030

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

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

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in strong support of the conference report on H.R. 3763. Our conferees have taken an already good bill passed by the Senate and have strengthened it further.

The resulting legislation is a major step forward in reforming the operations of our financial markets and rebuilding our system of financial reporting in ways that will restore the confidence of investors at home and abroad.

I am particularly gratified that the final bill includes many of the provisions that I first introduced in the House and called for as early as last year. The centerpiece of this bill is the creation of a strong independent oversight board for the accounting industry. As with the oversight board in my bill, the oversight board included in the final conference report will be independently funded and will have strong disciplinary, investigatory, and, most importantly, standard-setting powers. I