

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

It is early in the morning in Washington, and we are back at it again talking about this wonderful opportunity that we have to come down to the floor of the House of Representatives and speak our minds. And it is no surprise to the American public that the Democrat Party and its Members oppose reform in Medicare. It is no surprise to the American public that we recognize that the Democrat Party is not only opposed to reform but also to competition, which is what is in this bill; and it is no surprise to the American public that what will happen in the next day or two as the debate gets closer is that the American public will hear and find out about how the market reforms and things and ideas that will come from this bill will make life better for millions of Americans.

What is surprising is to hear the Democrat Party lambast AARP. The AARP is that organization for senior citizens all across this country who I think has made a very wise and careful decision to look at this prescription drug plan, and they have very clearly said that the Republican Party is right on the policy and they are right on what will give long-term success to this great Nation.

But we have heard very clearly this morning what the Democrat Party intends to do. They intend to keep Medicare exactly the way it is, in trouble financially and will very soon go bankrupt.

Reform is necessary if we are going to save this system, but reform is also necessary for the millions of Americans who today are without the ability to purchase health care solely because of money. What we are going to do is make it easier for Americans, not just people who go to work but some of them who are just now entering the marketplace, to be able to save money for health care on a pretax and tax-free basis, an opportunity for them to save this money and, when they are younger, to put that money away and to grow it tax free to be able to use it for health care, to make sure that they will be able to make wiser decisions in their future, that they will be able to make the wise decisions for their family at a time when they need that money most of all.

So what Republicans really stand for once again is reform and making sure that the most critical systems that are in place in our country are not only strengthened, but we make sure that they will survive the onslaught as times change and we have so many people retiring, but we need to make sure that our children and grandchildren have that same opportunity that we have had to have a system, an underpinning in this country that takes care of people.

So I am very pleased today, as we begin our work and debate in Washington. It is no surprise that here we are on this beautiful day in Wash-

ington, D.C., we begin with the debate on the floor to talk about the activities for the week, and I am so proud that not only what the Republican majority stands for but that the reform and the things we are going to bring to the American public will include opportunities for them to save for their own health care, because the most important part is, just like my family, I have a chance then to make a decision, to be a decision-maker in the health care needs of my family.

□ 1030

I have a beautiful wife of 19 years. I have a son who is 14 years old and a Down's Syndrome son who is 9. If there is one thing that I am passionate about, it is that I want a system in this country where families have an opportunity to make their decisions about health care, and we can do that when we have money in our own pockets. And that is what this reform is about, to make sure not just my family, but millions of other families across this great Nation have that same opportunity. That is what this health care savings account is going to be about. That is what Medicare reform is all about. I am proud of what we are doing.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, had the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), my good friend, yielded to me, I simply wanted to ask him if he is aware that the administration has just given AARP a \$20 million grant and ask if he wondered if that had anything to do with their decision.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to thank the gentleman from New York for engaging us this morning on this very important rule which will allow us to continue our work. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this rule as I am sure they do.

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.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER
AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT
ON H.R. 2417, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 451 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 451

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2417) to authorize appropriations for

fiscal year 2004 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, 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 Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules has granted the customary rule for consideration of conference reports to H.R. 2417, the Intelligence Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2004. This is standard procedure. The rule is fair and without controversy as far as I know, and it does allow ample time for consideration of conference matters that have come up.

Mr. Speaker, as in past years, we thought it best to allow Members ample opportunity to review the bill and debate the issues they feel are important to our Nation's security. This was certainly exhibited earlier this summer when we passed, with overwhelming bipartisan support, the Intelligence Authorization Act in the House. Our classified annex and staff have been made available to any Member of Congress interested in reviewing the underlying bill and the reports thereto.

Today we are at the culmination of this process. The conference report on H.R. 2417 is critical, it is must-do legislation.

The bill authorizes appropriations for fiscal year 2004 intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability system.

In the past 2 years, our country has made very strong steps to improve our Nation's intelligence-gathering capabilities, as well as the analysis of the results of those intelligence-gathering capabilities. With that said, the attacks this morning in Istanbul are yet again a painful reminder that every day, we must not let down our guard. Rather, it emphasizes work that remains to be accomplished. We need to strengthen our intelligence capabilities and align them to deal with the threats that we face today.

This legislation convincingly moves us in the right direction by enhancing the depth and the capacity of all facets of our intelligence community. The bill provides for improved intelligence analysis and coordination. It continues the effort to increase our human intelligence resources, an area vital to the

security of our Nation during the war on terrorism, as we have seen discussed virtually every day.

In addition, H.R. 2417 augments the information shared between Federal, State, and local governments and encourages strong cooperation in the pursuit of joint counterterrorism activities to keep our homeland safe.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes possible the important work performed by dedicated intelligence professionals, people who are out and about right now taking very high risks to get us vital information so the right decisions can be made to nip terrorism in the bud before it strikes us again. It is the product of a bipartisan agreement that we deal with today and, as I stated previously, another prudent step in the right direction for developing our capabilities in the intelligence community.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this rule that will provide them with a fair forum for debate on this matter.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank my good friend, the gentleman from Sanibel, Florida (Mr. GOSS) for yielding me this time. It is a pleasure to serve with the gentleman on both the Committee on Rules and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and, as I said last night, not in a self-serving way, I do not know of any two committees which work harder or more diligently than the two on which the gentleman and I serve. It turns out that we are the only two Members on both of those committees, and what I said last night is we must be gluttons for punishment.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule, providing for the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2417, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. This bill authorizes classified amounts in fiscal year 2004 for 14 United States intelligence agencies and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, including the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency, as well as foreign intelligence activities of the Defense Department, FBI, State Department, Homeland Security Department, and other agencies.

Members who wish to do so, and I urge Members to do this if they have concerns, can go to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence office to examine the classified schedule of authorizations for the programs and activities of the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the national intelligence program. As I said, this includes authorizations for the CIA, as well as the foreign intelligence and counterintelligence programs within, among others, the Department of Defense, NSA, Department of State, Treasury and Energy, and the FBI.

Also included in the classified documents are the authorizations for the tactical intelligence and related activities and joint military intelligence program of the Department of Defense.

The measure covers specific and general intelligence operations including all of our operations that we put forward in any manner. Today, more than ever, we must make the creation of a strong and flexible intelligence apparatus one of the highest priorities of this body. The terrorist attacks of September 11, combined with the continuing threat of further attacks, underscore the importance of this legislation. I am pleased that it has been brought to the floor in a truly bipartisan manner. Thanks to the gentleman from California (Ms. HARMAN), the ranking member, and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman GOSS) and all of the members of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the specific subcommittees, a good job has been done on behalf of this country.

Let me say though, Mr. Speaker, that just because this is brought here in a bipartisan manner does not mean that it is a perfect bill; far from it. There are several areas that many of us would have liked to have seen improved. One of them that we have an exacting concern about is the expansion of the executive authorities under section 374, the amendment of the National Financial Services Act. We feel that that bears further scrutiny and certainly, without judicial review in that section, could pose problems at some point in our future. It is something that many of us will continue to review.

We also felt very strongly, and I thank my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) who will speak specifically to it, that we should emphasize the area of language ability in a more dramatic fashion.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides authorizations and appropriations for some of the most important national security programs in this great country. Any hesitation by this body in passing it would be a disservice to the American people. I urge my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying conference report.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), my good friend.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this time, and I thank him for his good work not only on the Committee on Rules, but also on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

As he said, I would welcome the opportunity later to speak about the need to have better training in critical languages here in the United States, but at the moment, I would like to talk about something that is relevant to the rule and to the Committee on Rules.

Here in Congress we have a responsibility, not only to appropriate funds, to

authorize those funds, but also to oversee their expenditure. It is a sacred responsibility to deal with other people's money. It is a difficult job.

Now, in the areas of transportation and the Department of the Interior and other areas, we are assisted by millions of engaged citizens who keep an eye out for waste or misguided programs or programs that are less than well-thought-out. We do not, in classified programs, have that advantage, so it falls to us and our staff. We have an excellent staff that keeps tabs on the multifarious programs of the intelligence community. We are blessed with a chairman who has an agreeable personality and demeanor and wields his gavel with equanimity, and an excellent ranking member who keeps us on track. But we have a difficult job under the best of circumstances to oversee the intelligence programs.

It is made almost impossible when large fractions of the intelligence budget come through special appropriations, not through the normal course, not through the normal authorization and appropriation process, when in emergency allocations, money is put in without any previous oversight.

So as I speak in favor of the authorization bill that we are considering today and hope that we approve the rule so that we can get to the debate and approval of this authorization bill, I would ask the Committee on Rules to use its considerable influence in the future to see that we do not appropriate large sums of money for intelligence and other operations without going through the customary and necessary authorization process. We have done that over and over again in recent years, and it is a disservice to the intelligence community and a disservice to the American people. So again, I ask the Committee on Rules to use its considerable influence to see that we not fall into that problem.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), the distinguished chairman of our Subcommittee on Human Intelligence, Analysis and Counterintelligence.

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

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me this time.

I want to rise in strong support of the rule for the authorization of the intelligence bill, H.R. 2417. I want to take just a moment to explain the issue of compensation reform which I think is important and critical to the future of the intelligence community.

Over the years we have had a system of pay for the men and women who are doing the hard work of gathering intelligence for the people of this country.

□ 1045

And yet we have not been able to find a way to adequately compensate them.

These are individuals who are dedicated to this mission. They are not there because they want more money. They are there because they like what they do. They feel it is important for the future of this country and for the security of the American people. We have opportunities now to make sure that when we pay these individuals, we pay them correctly, we pay them adequately for their services. It is important that Congress continue this oversight.

We have an important part of this bill that addresses the issue of compensation reform. I am hoping that all our colleagues will rise and support this bill because of the important aspect of compensation reform for the men and women who are doing the valiant job of representing this country in faraway places in the dark of night, doing things that most other people would not do. These are true heroes in the American legend. We should all stand up and thank them for the work they have done. And I thank the gentleman from Florida (Chairman GOSS) for the opportunity to speak out on this rule and hope that everyone will support the rule.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), my good friend.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding, and I also want to commend our chairmen and ranking members for the great job that they do under what, I think, are very difficult circumstances. And I would also associate myself with the comments of my colleague, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), about giving good compensation for great work that is being done around the world for our national security by the intelligence community employees.

Having said that, I also want to state that I rise in strong support of this rule for H.R. 2417, but I also want to note that there are many of us that have concerns about issues that are vitally important to our national security, the lack of diversity in the intelligence community, and certainly the lack of a good solid plan to diversify and understand and recruit people that know and understand and speak different languages and come from different cultures. Those are critical and important in light of the attacks of September 11.

I would urge everyone to support this rule, but at the same time I also think it is vitally important that we continue to focus. And as my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), made mention, it is difficult in this environment because we operate in a closed oversight manner and we do not have the benefit of outside input and scrutiny. So it is critical.

And I know that our chairman, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), and the ranking member are committed to continue to work in these two critical areas, diversity and lan-

guage proficiency. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), his remarks about a concern about disenfranchising authorizing committees by the use of supplemental appropriations and other such matters as has sometimes happened. I do believe that the authorizing committees provide a critical contribution, a valuable contribution to the legislation of this institution. And I think it is unfortunate that sometimes in the press of business that we sometimes bypass that wisdom and that contribution because of urgency or other matters, which are understandable, but which should be an aberration rather than the practice.

And I can assure the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) and others who are interested that I am going to be spending some time and, hopefully, get a point or two across on the Committee on Rules that our view is that regular order is a whole lot better than supplemental appropriations.

The second thing I wanted to point out, very briefly, I am well aware this is not a perfect bill. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN) and I and the members of the committee have worked very hard. We have excellent staff. This is not a perfect bill. It is a very, very good bill. It deserves the attention of the Members on the floor today. Certainly the rule is appropriate to bring it forward.

I think I can promise on behalf of the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN) and all the Members that the minute this authorization bill passes we start on the next authorization bill. And there is plenty to be done.

There are a number of things we will hear about in the debate later today. These are things that we already have taken aboard, and we will be pushing hard on. So I am convinced that from the legislative perspective we are doing the job that the people of this country have asked us to take on in the oversight, and I am very proud to be part of that effort.

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.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 78, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call

up House Resolution 450 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 450

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 78) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes. The joint resolution shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the joint resolution equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 450 is a closed rule that provides for the consideration of H.J. Res. 78, a continuing resolution that will ensure further appropriations for fiscal year 2004.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate in the House equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the joint resolution and provides for one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, the provisions of the most recent continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 75, are scheduled to expire this Friday, November 21. The House Committee on Appropriations continues to work hard to complete the unfinished appropriations business of Congress, and we are hopeful that this work can be completed in the coming days. The resolution before us today, H.J. Res. 78, ensures funding through this weekend until November 23.

The House of Representatives passed all of its fiscal year 2004 appropriations bills long ago. We should complete Foreign Operations, Transportation-Treasury appropriate bills in the very near future. In addition, negotiations are under way to complete Agriculture, VA-HUD, Commerce-Justice-State, Labor-HHS, and the District of Columbia appropriations bills as well. However, to ensure that essential government services continue to operate while the omnibus appropriations bill is completed, this rule makes in order another continuing resolution to give us the additional time to complete the appropriations process in an orderly manner.

Mr. Speaker, under the joint resolution that H.J. Res. 450 makes in order, the provisions of the most recent continuing resolution will be extended for