

It is also my hope that this will be a year of action by this Congress in working to strengthen our nation's response to child abuse and foster care.

Sadly, as is the case on the Mainland, child abuse and neglect are very serious and urgent problems in Puerto Rico. The twin evils of poverty and substance abuse have combined to conspire against our children and have placed too many of them at risk for abuse and neglect. In 2002, the Commonwealth received around 30,000 complaints of abuse and neglect and nearly 10,000 children went through our foster care system.

Governor Calderon has made this issue a top priority, and, with an additional investment of \$12 million in Commonwealth funds, and no additional support from the federal government, doubled the number of social workers in the Family Department, lowered caseloads to 31, and practically eliminated the backlog of complaints. A pilot program to reduce investigation time to less than 48 hours was implemented successfully and is being expanded, and a new inter-agency, multi-service transitional housing center for foster children was inaugurated. We know this is not enough, but we think it is an excellent start, and the Commonwealth will be more aggressive in reaching out and partnering with the community based and church affiliated organizations on the island in order to succeed.

In fact, some of the residential services offered to our foster children are being provided by a variety of community and faith based organizations throughout the Island, such as "Ave Maria," in Bayamón, which is run by priests and shelters children from infancy to five years, and "Aldea Juvenil," in San Lorenzo, a specialized facility for boys with behavioral problems that is run by a local pastor.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, on the mainland a child in need of foster care is entitled to federal/state assistance for foster care through the Title IV-E program. However, because of statutory restrictions, children in Puerto Rico do not have that same guaranteed access. Our children get care, but once the limit of federal support is reached, it is the Commonwealth alone providing the resources. Even when the Commonwealth has earned a performance bonus for its good work, if it means the so-called cap is exceeded, the Commonwealth is denied the bonus. Just last year a \$200,000 adoption bonus payment was denied because of limitations on Title IV-E funds—a restriction that children on the mainland do not have to worry about.

This resolution calls on us to give children hope for the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that my colleagues will join with me this year in working to see that Puerto Rico's abused and neglected children are provided the same access to federal assistance during the darkest times of their lives—without the imposition of arbitrary limits that bear no relationship to their actual needs.

If we are able to accomplish this goal, it will get one more positive step in making sure no child living under the laws of our land be left behind.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Arizona for bringing this important issue to the floor of this House and I join with him in urging the resolution's adoption.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today the House considered H. Res. 113, a resolution that recognizes the scope of child abuse and neglect and declares support for efforts to raise public awareness of this tragic problem. I wholeheartedly support H. Res. 113 for several reasons. Approximately 3 million cases of suspected or known child abuse and neglect involving 5 million American children occur each year. The actual incidence of abuse and neglect is estimated to be 3 times greater than then number reported to authorities. This social problem results in human and economic costs due to its relationship to crime, delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and welfare dependency.

As a child growing up in Indiana, I personally experienced the horrors of child abuse in my own family. Children in abusive homes have very few options to improve their situations. I believe that the public needs to be better educated about the effects of abuse. It is important that children living in abusive homes know that there are people and organizations available to help them. Children shouldn't have to live in fear of abuse. The law should be there to protect them, and when it doesn't we should take steps to ensure their safety.

H. Res. 113 recognizes the need for better public awareness of the tragedy of child abuse. I urge my colleagues to continue to promote awareness of this tragic problem.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 113 offered by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. HAYWORTH. House Resolution 113 recognizes the social problem of child abuse and neglect and supports the goals and ideals of the National Day of Hope. I am pleased to have the opportunity today to speak on behalf of it.

This resolution addresses an issue that, unfortunately, plagues many of our districts. Each year approximately 3 million reports of possible child abuse and neglect are made to child welfare agencies. As a result, about 556,000 children are unable to live safely with their families at home and are placed in foster care.

Child abuse and neglect is a social problem that affects all Americans. The results of such abuse and neglect have great human and economic costs and are related to crime and delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and welfare dependency. Therefore, all Americans should strive to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect to give victimized children hope for the future.

Childhelp USA is one of the Nation's oldest and largest nonprofit organizations dedicated to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. As part of their efforts to bring attention to this issue, Childhelp USA has initiated a National Day of Hope to be observed on April 2, 2003. A day that is appropriate and timely as April is designated as National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

This day of hope is a reminder to all Americans that they should keep the victims of child maltreatment in their thoughts and prayers, and it encourages community efforts to mobilize resources to assist abused and neglected children.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is very simple and straightforward. It rightly recognizes the need for more public awareness of the prob-

lem of child maltreatment and supports the goals and ideals of the National Day of Hope.

I commend the gentleman from Arizona for his leadership on this matter and urge my colleagues to vote in support of the resolution.

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

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I applaud all the speakers this morning. We have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 113, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1104, CHILD ABDUCTION PREVENTION ACT

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 160 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 160

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. 1104) to prevent child abduction, 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. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour, with 45 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary and 15 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each 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. 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. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. After passage of H.R. 1104, it shall be in order to consider in the House S. 151. All points of order against the Senate bill and against its consideration are waived. It shall be in order to move to strike all after the enacting clause of the Senate bill and to insert in lieu thereof the provisions of H.R. 1104 as passed by the House. All points of order against that motion are waived. If the motion is adopted and the Senate bill, as amended, is passed, then it shall be in order to move that the House insist on its amendments to S. 151 and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. MYRICK. 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 purposes of debate only.

Yesterday, the Committee on Rules met and granted a structured rule for H.R. 1104, the Child Abduction Prevention Act. This fair rule also facilitates resolving the differences between the two bodies by making in order the motion requesting a conference with the Senate after the passage of H.R. 1104.

The Child Abduction Prevention Act sends a clear message to those that prey upon children that, should they commit these crimes, they will be punished. This legislation provides stronger penalties against kidnapping, ensures lifetime supervision of sexual offenders and kidnappers of children, gives law enforcement the tools it needs to effectively prosecute these crimes, and provides assistance to the community when a child is abducted.

It is hard for me to understand how someone could prey on a defenseless child. It is the worst nightmare a parent has to hear, that his or her child has been taken by a stranger and that they do not know what has happened. The agony that they must go through every day is something that no parent should have to endure.

Unfortunately, a family in my area has been living with this agony since Valentine's Day of 2000. Asha Degree has been missing since she left her Fallston, North Carolina, home in the early hours of the morning with a book bag and other items. She was only 9 years old at the time.

It has been quite a while; and, after time, there are torn and damaged billboards seeking information about Asha, and faded yellow ribbons still around town. If this legislation had

been enacted earlier, her story may have been very different.

This is a bill that will make a difference. We know that if we can find a missing child within 24 hours after they are abducted, we have the best chance for a safe recovery. To accomplish this, H.R. 1104 authorizes increased funding for a National AMBER Alert Program.

AMBER is an acronym for America's Missing Broadcast Emergency Response. The AMBER program was created in 1996 as a legacy to 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas.

States can apply for grants so that information can be broadcast on radio and television. Outdoor boards can be posted; and, in some States, the electronic highway message boards are used so that license plates or vehicles or a description of the child can actually be displayed along the highway. The purpose is to provide a rapid response to the most serious child abduction cases.

Doing this bill will enable all 50 States to implement this life-saving program, and we have seen several examples of it very recently working and saving children's lives.

For the individuals who would harm a child we can ensure that the punishment is severe and that sexual predators are not allowed to slip through the cracks of the system to harm other children. We all know that the recidivism rate of sexual offense is about 70 percent. No excuse for that.

To this end, this legislation provides a 20-year mandatory minimum sentence of imprisonment for stranger abductions of a child under the age of 18, lifetime supervision of sex offenders and mandatory life imprisonment for second-time offenders. We know that, as I said before, that most of them are repeat offenders.

Furthermore, this bill removes any statute of limitations and opportunity for pretrial release for crimes of child abduction and sex offenses. Often times it is years later that the sex offense comes to light out of fear. The child is very afraid to tell.

That is why this bill is so important. Not only does it come to the aid of children after the abduction with the AMBER alert, but it aims to prevent the abduction with the provisions that I just mentioned.

I would also like to note that these provisions have overwhelmingly passed the House in the previous Congress. So there is no reason not to support this overall bill. It is a good bill. I urge my colleagues to support this rule and to support the underlying bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am going to make a lengthy statement in just a moment, but I think it should be made clear to people who may be watching this on television, listening to this, Members

listening to this in their offices or watching it, what is really going on here today. We have a noncontroversial bill, the AMBER alert bill, that was passed unanimously by the Senate both last year and this year; and we have an omnibus bill with all kinds of provisions, the AMBER alert provision being one of those that has now been reported out of the committee.

While this omnibus bill passed the House in the last session, it did not pass the Senate because there are a number of provisions that the Senate finds objectionable. So what we are doing is we are holding hostage the AMBER bill, the stand-alone AMBER bill, because some Members in the other party want an omnibus crime bill with controversial provisions.

If the leadership on the other side would simply let us have a separate vote on the AMBER provisions that have already passed the Senate unanimously this year, those would be passed by this House immediately and then could be sent to the President for his signature, but that is not what is being done today.

What we are doing is considering an omnibus bill with AMBER as one part of it, an omnibus bill that contains some very controversial provisions that indications are the Senate will not accept.

I would paraphrase something that is often said in criminal court: Justice delayed is justice denied. That is basically what is happening here today, is that we are packaging something that we know probably will not be accepted by the Senate, and even if it is accepted, it would be after a long and lengthy discussion and perhaps a conference committee.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a Member of this House for 25 years, and over that time I have been disappointed with the majority leadership on more than one occasion, but I cannot recall anything as utterly indefensible as the fact that the House leadership, Republican leadership, continues to block a very simple, very noncontroversial legislation, to set up a nationwide network of AMBER alerts to help save abducted children. If that sort of obstructionism is not out of touch, then I do not know what is.

Mr. Speaker, the rule for the Child Abduction Prevention Act is fine enough, fine enough that is if one is okay with politics as usual, fine enough if one is okay with delaying help to abducted children. America's children desperately need a nationwide system of AMBER alerts, and passing the Child Abduction Prevention Act through the House will not provide that anytime soon, if ever, and abducted children do not have time to wait any longer for politics as usual.

□ 1100

Mr. Speaker, House Republican leaders have blocked the simple AMBER Alert bill for 6 long months, and I am confident they have carefully constructed talking points to confuse the issue even further today.

So I want to be very clear about what the House is doing. We will be debating in a little bit two separate bills. One is the large, complicated and somewhat controversial bill this rule makes in order, the Child Abduction Prevention Act, H.R. 1104, of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER). The other bill this bill does not make in order is the simple, noncontroversial AMBER Alert Network, S. 121, which has already passed the Senate unanimously and which could become law tomorrow if Republican leaders would only allow us to vote on it today.

I am not here to oppose the bill of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER). I am not trying to defeat it. That is why Democrats did not offer a substitute yesterday in the Committee on Rules. All I am asking, as I and others like Ed Smart and Marc Klass have asked for the past 6 months, is for a separate vote on a separate bill, the AMBER Alert Network Act. Why? Because the Senate has passed the simple AMBER bill unanimously; because it has 220 cosponsors in the House, a clear majority; because the President supports it; and because if Republican leaders allow the House to pass it, then it will become law and communities across the Nation will get desperately needed resources to set up and/or strengthen the AMBER Alert systems that save children's lives.

Mr. Speaker, there is no valid reason that the House could not easily pass both bills, the simple AMBER Alert bill and the larger bill of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) today, but the rule only allows a vote on the bill of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), and passing it through the House will not send immediate help to AMBER Alerts any more than passing bankruptcy reform last week did.

Mr. Speaker, that is because the bill of the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) is a large and complicated piece of legislation. It has not even been introduced in the Senate, much less passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee or the full Senate, or reconciled with the House bill in a conference committee. No one knows whether it will ever become law. That is why I tried to bring up the simple AMBER bill by unanimous consent last week, but the Republican leadership refused to allow it, and that is why I tried to amend the rule last night in the Committee on Rules to bring up both bills today on the floor, but Republicans blocked the AMBER bill as a stand-alone bill in a party-line vote last night.

Mr. Speaker, this is about protecting our children. It is not about party politics; so I cannot understand why Republican leaders insist on blocking the simple, stand-alone AMBER bill passed by the Senate. But they have been doing it for 6 months, and they make plenty of arguments. Last night in the Committee on Rules, one Republican member, the gentleman from Texas

(Mr. SESSIONS), called it a feel-good, do-nothing piece of legislation. Like me, he is from North Texas where the AMBER Alert was invented, so I was surprised to hear him say that. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) said that those of us arguing for a simple, stand-alone vote on the simple AMBER bill are misinformed about the impacts such a bill would have.

Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the family of Elizabeth Smart is not misinformed. That is why they wrote an open letter to the House last week stating, "As you know, I can't express enough how our children can't wait another day for the National AMBER Alert to be signed into law by President Bush. Please, please, please, pass the stand-alone AMBER Alert legislation now. You cannot comprehend the joy and adulation of having your child return. The AMBER Alert will make this a reality for countless families. Please don't underestimate the immediacy and power of this legislation."

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, Marc Klass, the father of Polly Klass, was not misinformed when he wrote a letter expressing support for a nationwide network of AMBER Alerts.

And several Republican Members of the other body, including the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, were not misinformed when they urged the House to pass the simple stand-alone AMBER bill. Finally, the President of the United States was not misinformed when he said passing the AMBER bill is critical. All of these people are advocates for passing the simple AMBER legislation. Why? Because they understand that the AMBER Alert system works.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The Chair would ask the gentleman to refrain from quoting Senators unless the quotations are from Senate proceedings.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I did not mention them by name, but I thank the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, they understand that the AMBER system works. It has helped to recover 52 abducted children, five of them in the month of March alone; but it does not work where it does not exist, and the AMBER Alert Network Act will help set up a nationwide network of AMBER Alerts. It provides 10 times the resources to communities that the President has requested for next year.

But the AMBER Alert bill will never become law as long as House Republican leaders are holding it hostage. Over the past 6 months, they have proven their willingness to do just that. As a result, Mr. Speaker, there is only one way to pass the AMBER Alert Network Act through this House, by defeating the previous question today. If we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to

bring up S. 121, the Senate-passed stand-alone AMBER bill immediately after the House passes H.R. 1104, the Sensenbrenner bill. That way the AMBER bill can become law and we can immediately begin strengthening AMBER Alerts around the country to save abducted children. The larger bill by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) can continue through the legislative process, hopefully through the Senate, through a conference committee, and back to the House and Senate as a conference report, and maybe one day become law. But abducted children cannot wait that long.

I urge Members, especially the 220 who have cosponsored the AMBER Alert Network Act, to defeat the previous question so we can vote on this bill today and begin helping abducted children.

Mr. Speaker, defeating the previous question will not stop the Child Abduction Prevention Act, but it is the only way to immediately strengthen AMBER Alerts around the country.

In closing, let me quote from a letter that the family of Elizabeth Smart sent to all Members of the House this morning. They write: "Chairman Sensenbrenner's efforts on this issue are greatly appreciated, and his bill contains several worthy measures. But there is no reason the House can't vote on this bill while also passing the AMBER Alert Network Act that has been delayed for over 6 months.

"So we urge Members of the House who want to strengthen the AMBER Alert to vote 'no' on the previous question today. That is the only way for the House to pass the National AMBER Alert to help protect America's children immediately.

"Our children can't afford to wait another day for the National AMBER Alert so we urge the House not to waste this opportunity to act on the legislation that has already passed the Senate twice."

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Smart family has stated the case very clearly, so I urge my colleagues to oppose the previous question.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST) is aware, there are technical problems with the stand-alone Senate bill that need to be corrected and that is being done so it can come to the House floor.

My second point is some have suggested that this stand-alone AMBER bill would implement the system. That is erroneous information. It is very misleading because this legislation provides for grants to the States, and the States can apply for that money and then implement the program if they wish to do so. Currently, 38 States have done it, but there is nothing in this bill that says that the other 12 States will be required to implement it

if they chose not to. That is their choice.

I find it difficult to understand how these following things are controversial. We are talking about a 20-year mandatory minimum sentence of imprisonment for abduction of a child under the age of 18, for lifetime supervision of child abductors and sex offenders, for mandatory life imprisonment for second-time offenders. It also removes any statute of limitations for child abduction and sex offenders. It denies pretrial release for those who rape or kidnap children, and it allows local law enforcement agencies to receive funding to establish sex offender apprehension programs, and it doubles the authorization for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to \$20 million a year.

I would think that any parent who has a child abducted not only wants to find that child, but wants to be sure when that happens the maximum punishment is given to the person who did that horrible thing. That is what this omnibus bill does. Again, I recommend that Members support this rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), another member of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the underlying legislation, H.R. 1104, the Child Abduction Prevention Act of 2003.

H. Res. 160 is a structured, but fair, rule designed to ensure that the whole House has the opportunity to consider a number of substantive amendments to improve upon the underlying legislation. The Committee on Rules has worked to be as evenhanded as possible and has permitted the overwhelming majority of amendments that were submitted for review last evening.

Mr. Speaker, it is disheartening to know that the youth of this country are exposed to the harsh realities of life earlier in their lives than ever before. This does not mean, however, that they are better prepared to face those realities. We must do everything possible to protect those who cannot defend themselves.

During this debate, it will be argued that we should simply take up a more limited bill that would be acceptable to the other body. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that we serve in this House simply to pass legislation acceptable to the other body. We are elected to pass effective legislation that will have the optimum benefits for the people we represent. In this case, we have the opportunity to enact effective legislation that will prevent crimes against children and save lives.

The Committee on Rules heard compelling testimony from the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), who stated that he wanted to enact the AMBER Alert legislation into law as

soon as possible to assist in finding those children who have been taken. But he continued to state that we have a duty not only to pass legislation to find those who have been abducted, but we have an obligation to ensure that this legislation does everything possible to prevent children from being abducted in the first place. H.R. 1104 will achieve this goal by deterring crimes and providing a necessary line of defense. This bill does not impose excessive fines or punishment on convicted individuals; rather, this bill imposes reasonable, bottom-line standards of intolerance for the violation of our laws. I cannot possibly think of a more appropriate situation where strong punishment is warranted.

The desire to protect our children originates not from the mortal law of man, but rather the rules and state of affairs governed by the laws of nature. As a father and grandfather myself, I fully support any reasonable efforts that prevent harm from befalling our children or grandchildren and that punish those who would commit the crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House pass this rule and pass the underlying legislation.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, Members watching this must be scratching their heads and saying what are they talking about. The stand-alone AMBER bill has already passed the Senate 92-0. It would pass this House probably unanimously. They should just have a vote on it. Why do we just not have a vote on it; they will not let us have a vote on it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Last night in the Committee on Rules I put the question to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER): Is it correct that all of the Members of the House of Representatives want an AMBER Alert bill? The gentleman concurred.

Additionally, I asked the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER): Is it not true that the Senate has passed this measure unanimously on two occasions? The gentleman concurred.

Now what is happening here today is a whole lot of measures have been added to the AMBER bill that are in some respects going to slow this process down. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), well-intentioned though he may be, is mindful that the matters that are brought in the legislation that he offers will muddy up the clean AMBER bill passed by the Senate that we could pass here in the House of Representatives and the United States President would sign.

I am asking Members to vote "no," not to stop consideration of the Sen-

senbrenner bill; but so we can receive our own vote on a clean AMBER Alert.

□ 1115

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Let us be clear what is going on here. I may have misunderstood my colleague from Georgia, a member of the Committee on Rules. I think he said that I did not support the larger bill. That is not the case. I support the larger bill, the Sensenbrenner bill; and I intend to vote for it. I just want a separate vote on the stand-alone AMBER provisions so that we can do that today rather than 6 months ago, 6 months later or a year later.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his leadership on this issue; and I want to strongly associate myself with and endorse all the remarks he has made in this debate today. I, too, will vote for the underlying bill, the omnibus bill, but I cannot believe that we are in the circumstance we are in right now.

I come from Salt Lake City. The Smarts are my constituents. We had a miracle occur in Utah a couple of weeks ago. It happened based on the principles of AMBER Alert, where information was disseminated to the public, and the public was looking for the perpetrators, and they were found.

How can we let this delay any longer? Every day we delay is another opportunity lost, perhaps; and how do we place the value of even one, just one time when we could find a child after being abducted before that child was harmed?

I think that, as we look at this debate, it is important to note that the Senate passed this bill unanimously. A majority of the House of Representatives in both parties has signed on as cosponsors to the comparable legislation in the House. If it comes up for a vote, I cannot imagine anyone not supporting this. We are getting caught up in another important piece of legislation that, as I said, I would support, but it is going to take time for that legislation to become law. That is the fact. If we separate out a stand-alone AMBER Alert vote in the House, that can become law very quickly. That is the issue at hand today. That is why I urge all my colleagues to vote "no" on the previous question. Let us get this bill out on the House floor.

I cannot understand why this has become partisan. This should not be a partisan issue, but the leadership seems to not want to allow a vote on this. It happened in the last session of Congress after the Senate passed it unanimously. It is happening again now. It is time for us to put that aside. This is too important of an issue. We all care about this so much. Again, I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question.

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

I would like to note that there currently is \$12.5 million in the system already for States who wish to implement AMBER Alert systems.

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds. I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for pointing out that, on an administrative basis, there is \$12 million that has been set aside. Of course, this or some subsequent administration could withdraw that money, could terminate the program if it does not become permanent statutory law. We know this administration is under great budgetary pressures because of the large deficit that they have run up, and we do not want to risk someone in the administration waking up tomorrow and deciding that they cannot afford to spend this money for the AMBER Alert. So we want to put it in statutory law where they will have to spend it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

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

Mr. OBERSTAR. A "no" vote, Mr. Speaker, on the previous question will allow the House to vote on both the bill reported by the committee and the clean AMBER Alert bill passed by the Senate which can then go immediately to the President for his signature.

I have heard the claim that the amendment on AMBER Alert developed by our Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure shows that there are, quote, serious flaws in the AMBER Alert provision in the Senate bill. That is simply not the case. I support our committee's amendment, but I believe the original provision is workable and could be the basis for prompt implementation of AMBER Alert as it has been initiated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The original AMBER Alert provision in the House and Senate bills authorized the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to develop a program in general terms. The amendment our committee adopted made two changes: First, it described the concepts of the program and the purposes for which grants would be made in very specific terms to track the criteria included in the DOT announcement of its AMBER Alert grants issued February 12 of this year. Secondly, the amendment changed the Federal share.

These are good changes, a good provision in the amendment, but I also believe that if the original language is adopted, DOT could go ahead with the program announced on February 12 because the specific criteria for DOT's program fall within the general criteria of the Senate bill. DOT would not have to redo its criteria. I would be supportive of prompt passage of the Senate bill followed by further proceedings on the House bill, to include the technical changes in the AMBER

Alert. We can do that at some other time. It is not necessary now. We do not have to gild the lily, if you will.

A "no" vote on the previous question will allow consideration of both the committee bill and the Senate-passed bill. Let us get on with the substance of this issue.

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

I would just make the comment, Mr. Speaker, that there is also an additional \$2.5 million in the 2004 budget that just passed the House for AMBER Alert.

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I call on the House to immediately turn to what we know as the Frost-Dunn National AMBER Alert Network Act. This legislation would make \$25 million available to State and local entities for highway signage, for education, for training programs. It would make AMBER Alert a national program. AMBER Alert works. It should be a national program.

This legislation has 220 cosponsors. We are all influenced by the evidence that this works with more than 52 abducted children recovered through AMBER Alert-like processes, five here in the month of March alone.

As my colleague from Texas said, anyone who is watching this debate must wonder what in the world is going on. We have the opportunity to pass a clean bill for AMBER Alert to become law. We had this opportunity last fall. At the time I got in some political trouble in my home State for saying this bill is designed to prevent AMBER Alert from becoming law, and it is not very constructive to say I told you so, but in fact 6 months have passed and when AMBER Alert could have been law on a national scale last fall, it still is not.

The reason is, the other side here insists on putting other things into the bill. These might be controversial. At least they are complicated and serious issues that deserve to be aired and debated, such things as expanding the death penalty, increasing mandatory sentences, criminalizing traveling with a criminal intent or a perceived intent, two strikes and you're out for certain kinds of legislation, expanding wiretap authority, eliminating the statute of limitations in some circumstances, eliminating pretrial release in some circumstances.

I think any Member of the House, if they would speak objectively, would have to say that some or all of these provisions deserve thorough airing. They are serious matters. They should not just be stuck into another bill, and they certainly should not be put into this bill that is urgent that we pass now.

We all celebrated with the Smart family, Edward and Lois Smart, when

their daughter Elizabeth was returned to them. Just a few days ago, the Smart family wrote to Members of Congress and said:

"As you know, we can't express enough how our children can't wait another day for the national AMBER Alert to be signed into law. Please, please, please, pass the stand-alone AMBER Alert legislation now."

I could not agree more with the Smart family, Edward, Lois and Elizabeth. We have the opportunity to do it. We can do it today. The President will sign it in a matter of days, I am certain.

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

I would just like to remind people that on these bills that are so controversial, they have been vetted, because on the lifetime supervision for sex offenders, the vote was 409-3; on the two strikes and you're out, the vote was 382-34; on the Child Sex Crime Wiretapping Act, it was 396-11; on the sex tourism bill, it was 418-8; and the Child Abduction Prevention Act was 390-24. Hardly controversial.

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

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

It was once observed many years ago in the pre-television age that there are two things that you do not want to see happen. One is the making of sausage and the other is the making of legislation. But, of course, now we see the making of legislation on television; and I would suggest that what the other side is doing today is giving sausage-making a bad name.

It is very clear that this legislation could become law in the next couple of days if they would just let it go, just let us have a separate vote on it. But they are not willing to do so.

My colleague from North Carolina cited the votes in the House for various provisions in this bill, other provisions. Of course those are all true, but the point is that they did not pass the Senate. They did not pass the other body. While they may be very popular in the House, that does not mean that the other body is going to take them all in one package with a little bow around them. They would not do it in the last Congress, and there is no real reason to believe they would do it anytime soon in this Congress. So all we are asking is a vote separate, a stand-alone vote just on the national AMBER network provisions which the other side, unfortunately, in this rule does not give us.

Mr. Speaker, if the previous question is defeated, I will offer an amendment to the rule. My amendment will provide that, immediately after the House passes the Child Abduction Prevention Act, it will take up the Senate-passed version of the AMBER Alert legislation. The Senate bill is identical to its House counterpart, H.R. 412, which has over 220 cosponsors.

The Senate passed S. 121 by a unanimous vote of 92-0 on January 21 of this

year. All that stands in the way of a presidential signature on this legislation is a clean vote by the House. That is what my amendment will allow us to do.

I am sure most of us cannot imagine the horror of having a child kidnapped. Research has shown that most kidnapped children are killed within 3 hours of their abduction. In these terrible, terrible instances, it is absolutely crucial that information be disseminated immediately so that these children can be rescued. AMBER programs in 39 States have already been credited with saving 31 lives.

It is hard to put into words the collective joy that this Nation felt 2 weeks ago when Elizabeth Smart was found alive and returned to her loving family. Let us help more families celebrate the joy of the safe return of a kidnapped child and not the sorrow of a tragic ending. Let us pass the Senate AMBER bill now and send it to the White House immediately.

Let me make very clear that a "no" vote on the previous question will not stop consideration of the Child Abduction Prevention Act. A "no" vote will allow the House to vote on H.R. 1104 and on S. 121 as well. However, a "yes" vote on the previous question will prevent the House from passing the clean AMBER bill and getting it to the President's desk as soon as possible. I urge a "no" vote on the previous question.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I would offer be printed in the RECORD immediately before the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, again, I have been in this House for 25 years, and I simply do not understand what the other side is doing today. It makes no sense. It is indefensible. Let this legislation come to a vote and let it come to a vote today and be sent to the President.

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

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

I also agree AMBER Alert needs to be passed, but I think it is just as important that there be punishment for the abductors of these children. Because any parent is thankful to get their child back, but they do not want that person out on the street so they can do it again, and 70 percent of these people do it again.

The material previously referred to by Mr. FROST is as follows:

At the end of the resolution add the following new section:

SEC. ____ . Immediately after disposition of the bill H.R. 1104, it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (S. 121) to enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts

and information on such children, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read for amendment. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and ranking Minority Member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

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

□ 1130

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting, if ordered, on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 218, nays 198, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 86]

YEAS—218

Aderholt	Deal (GA)	Hunter
Akin	DeLay	Isakson
Bachus	DeMint	Issa
Baker	Diaz-Balart, L.	Istook
Ballenger	Diaz-Balart, M.	Janklow
Barrett (SC)	Doolittle	Jenkins
Bartlett (MD)	Dreier	Johnson (CT)
Barton (TX)	Duncan	Johnson (IL)
Bass	Dunn	Johnson, Sam
Bereuter	Ehlers	Jones (NC)
Biggert	Emerson	Keller
Blackburn	English	Kelly
Blunt	Everett	Kennedy (MN)
Boehlert	Feeney	King (IA)
Boehner	Ferguson	King (NY)
Bonilla	Flake	Kingston
Bonner	Fletcher	Kirk
Bono	Foley	Kline
Boozman	Forbes	Knollenberg
Bradley (NH)	Fossella	Kolbe
Brady (TX)	Franks (AZ)	LaHood
Brown (SC)	Frelinghuysen	Latham
Brown-Waite,	Galleghy	LaTourette
Ginny	Garrett (NJ)	Leach
Burgess	Gerlach	Lewis (CA)
Burns	Gibbons	Lewis (KY)
Burr	Gilchrest	Linder
Burton (IN)	Gillmor	LoBiondo
Calvert	Gingrey	Lucas (OK)
Camp	Goode	Manzullo
Cannon	Goodlatte	McCotter
Cantor	Goss	McCrery
Capito	Granger	McHugh
Carter	Graves	McInnis
Castle	Green (WI)	McKeon
Chabot	Greenwood	Mica
Chocola	Gutknecht	Miller (FL)
Coble	Hart	Miller (MI)
Cole	Hastings (WA)	Miller, Gary
Collins	Hayes	Moran (KS)
Combest	Hayworth	Murphy
Cox	Hefley	Musgrave
Crane	Hensarling	Myrick
Crenshaw	Hergert	Nethercutt
Cubin	Hobson	Ney
Culberson	Hoekstra	Northup
Cunningham	Hostettler	Norwood
Davis, Jo Ann	Houghton	Nunes
Davis, Tom	Hulshof	Nussle

Osborne	Rogers (MI)	Sweeney
Ose	Rohrabacher	Tancredi
Otter	Ros-Lehtinen	Tauzin
Oxley	Royce	Taylor (NC)
Paul	Ryan (WI)	Terry
Pearce	Ryun (KS)	Thomas
Pence	Saxton	Thornberry
Peterson (PA)	Schrock	Tiahrt
Petri	Sensenbrenner	Tiberti
Pickering	Sessions	Toomey
Platts	Shadegg	Turner (OH)
Pombo	Shaw	Upton
Porter	Shays	Vitter
Portman	Sherwood	Walden (OR)
Pryce (OH)	Shimkus	Walsh
Quinn	Shuster	Weldon (FL)
Radanovich	Simmons	Weldon (PA)
Ramstad	Simpson	Weller
Regula	Smith (MI)	Whitfield
Rehberg	Smith (NJ)	Wicker
Renzi	Smith (TX)	Wilson (NM)
Reynolds	Souder	Wilson (SC)
Rogers (AL)	Stearns	Wolf
Rogers (KY)	Sullivan	Young (AK)

NAYS—198

Abercrombie	Harman	Oberstar
Ackerman	Hastings (FL)	Obey
Alexander	Hill	Olver
Allen	Hinchee	Ortiz
Andrews	Hinojosa	Owens
Baca	Hoeffel	Pallone
Baird	Holden	Pascrell
Baldwin	Holt	Pastor
Ballance	Honda	Payne
Becerra	Hooley (OR)	Pelosi
Bell	Hoyer	Peterson (MN)
Berkley	Inslee	Pomeroy
Berman	Israel	Price (NC)
Berry	Jackson (IL)	Rahall
Bishop (GA)	Jackson-Lee	Rangel
Bishop (NY)	(TX)	Reyes
Blumenauer	Jefferson	Rodriguez
Boswell	John	Ross
Boucher	Johnson, E.B.	Rothman
Boyd	Jones (OH)	Roybal-Allard
Brady (PA)	Kanjorski	Ruppersberger
Brown (OH)	Kaptur	Rush
Brown, Corrine	Kennedy (RI)	Ryan (OH)
Capps	Kildee	Sabo
Capuano	Kilpatrick	Sanchez, Linda
Cardin	Kind	T.
Cardoza	Kleczka	Sanchez, Loretta
Carson (IN)	Kucinich	Sanders
Carson (OK)	Lampson	Sandlin
Case	Langevin	Schakowsky
Clay	Lantos	Schiff
Clyburn	Larsen (WA)	Scott (GA)
Conyers	Larson (CT)	Scott (VA)
Cooper	Lee	Serrano
Costello	Levin	Sherman
Cramer	Lewis (GA)	Skelton
Crowley	Lipinski	Slaughter
Cummings	Lofgren	Smith (WA)
Deen (AL)	Lowe	Snyder
Davis (CA)	Lucas (KY)	Solis
Davis (IL)	Lynch	Spratt
Davis (TN)	Majette	Stark
DeFazio	Maloney	Stenholm
DeGette	Markey	Strickland
Delahunt	Marshall	Stupak
DeLauro	Matheson	Tanner
Deutsch	Matsui	Tauscher
Dicks	McCarthy (NY)	Taylor (MS)
Dingell	McCollum	Thompson (CA)
Doggett	McDermott	Thompson (MS)
Dooley (CA)	McGovern	Tierney
Doyle	McIntyre	Towns
Edwards	McNulty	Turner (TX)
Engel	Meehan	Udall (CO)
Eshoo	Meek (FL)	Udall (NM)
Etheridge	Meeks (NY)	Van Hollen
Evans	Menendez	Velazquez
Farr	Michaud	Visclosky
Fattah	Millender-	Waters
Filner	McDonald	Watson
Ford	Miller (NC)	Watt
Frost	Mollohan	Waxman
Gonzalez	Moran (VA)	Weiner
Gordon	Murtha	Wexler
Green (TX)	Nadler	Woolsey
Grijalva	Napolitano	Wu
Gutierrez	Neal (MA)	Wynn

NOT VOTING—18

Beauprez	Davis (FL)	Hall
Bilirakis	Emanuel	Harris
Bishop (UT)	Frank (MA)	Hyde
Buyer	Gephardt	McCarthy (MO)

Miller, George Pitts Wamp
Moore Putnam Young (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) (during the vote). Members are advised there are 2 minutes remaining to vote.

□ 1151

Mr. FORD, Mr. BECERRA and Ms. ESHOO changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. PETRI changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, on roll-call No. 86, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 57) recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of "National Runaway Prevention Month".

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 57

Whereas the prevalence of runaway and homeless situations among youth is staggering, with studies suggesting that between 1,300,000 and 2,800,000 youth live on the streets of the United States each year;

Whereas running away from home is widespread, with 1 out of every 7 youth in the United States running away from home before the age of 18;

Whereas runaway youth most often are youth who have been expelled from their homes by their families, physically, sexually, and emotionally abused at home, discharged by State custodial systems without adequate transition plans, separated from their parents through death and divorce, too poor to secure their own basic needs, and ineligible or unable to access adequate medical or mental health resources;

Whereas effective programs supporting runaway youth and assisting youth and their families in remaining at home succeed because of partnerships created among families, community-based human service agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, and businesses;

Whereas preventing youth from running away from home and supporting youth in high-risk situations is a family, community, and national priority;

Whereas the future well-being of the Nation is dependent on the opportunities provided for youth and families to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for youth to develop into safe, healthy, and productive adults;

Whereas the National Network for Youth and its members advocate on behalf of runaway and homeless youth and provide an array of community-based supports that address their critical needs;

Whereas the National Runaway Switchboard provides crisis intervention and refer-

als to reconnect runaway youth to their families and to link youth to local resources that provide positive alternatives to running away from home; and

Whereas the National Network for Youth and National Runaway Switchboard are co-sponsoring National Runaway Prevention Month, during the month of November, to increase public awareness of the life circumstances of youth in high-risk situations and the need for safe, healthy, and productive alternatives, resources, and supports for youth, families, and communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives recognizes and supports the goals and ideals of "National Runaway Prevention Month".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 57.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 57, introduced by my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from the City of New York (Mr. ISRAEL), recognizes and supports the goals and ideas of National Runaway Prevention Month.

Mr. Speaker, we all want every child in America to grow up in a safe, loving home and to realize his or her full potential in life. However, the plight of children who run away from their homes continues to plague American families. Sadly, the factors that prove to increase the chances that children will leave their homes seem so preventable. These factors include drug and alcohol abuse by a family member, severe neglect or mistreatment, and serious family unrest. I remember hearing after one of the school shootings a couple of years ago the national head of the YMCA on the CBS national news who said children were being neglected in this country like never before.

Even in this compassionate Nation, the challenges that today's youth face are many. But so too are the responsibilities that all Americans have to be aware of the conditions that encourage children to run away from home, and to address those conditions where they exist.

Hopefully, all Americans will pay more attention to the serious problem of runaway children. We can each act to enrich the lives of children in our communities by volunteering at a local school, or in a child-mentoring program, or in a faith-based organization that works with children or families. And in the most unfortunate cases in which children have left their homes, for whatever reason, it must be a pri-

ority of all Americans to work together to reunite parents with their runaway children.

Since nothing is more important than the safety and stability of the lives of our Nation's children, I urge all Members to support the adoption of House Resolution 57.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL) for introducing this worthwhile measure.

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

□ 1200

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H. Res. 57, a bill recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of National Runaway Prevention Month, and I commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL) for its introduction.

Each year, more than 1 million teenagers run away in the United States, a rate of more than 1 every minute. Many of these young people leave their homes to escape abuse and neglect or because their parents could not or would not meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and a safe, supportive home environment.

While on the streets, America's children are vulnerable and may be exploited by drug dealers or become victims of crime or violence.

To survive, runaways may resort to shoplifting or prostitution to earn money for food and clothing. Medical conditions may go untreated or become aggravated by neglect, and those who drop out of school threaten their chances for economic independence.

The National Runaway Switchboard, which was founded by a group of Chicago agencies in 1971, gives help and hope to youth and their families by providing nonjudgmental, confidential crisis intervention and local and national referrals through a 24-hour hotline. The NRS, along with the National Network for Youth, are cosponsoring National Runaway Prevention Month during the month of November to increase awareness of the life circumstances of youths in high-risk situations and the need for a safe haven for these youths.

I also want to commend the Chicago public school system, the Chicago Board of Education for the work that it does of providing education for homeless children without their having to go through lots of changes in terms of identification of where they are and where they come from. This resolution supports NRS and NN4Y in their efforts to create National Runaway Prevention Month. I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 57 and the runaway children it will help.

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).