

maintaining our Nation's history. The House bill fully funds the budget request of \$35.9 million for the electronic records initiative and this funding will help build the infrastructure necessary for properly maintaining the Federal Government's electronic records. It also serves as a standard for States and municipalities as they deal with issues involving electronic records archiving.

Unfortunately, the other body neglected to provide the necessary resources for these vital programs. Without funding at the House level, hundreds of thousands of electronic records and historic records will not be maintained as they should be.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the motion to instruct conferees.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the motion to instruct conferees, of course, is not binding upon the conferees. It is intended, I know, by the gentleman from Massachusetts as an expression of intent. Although I would not pretend to agree with all the priorities that he seeks to express in it or to bind us, but in the spirit of advancing this issue through the House, the bill, in the spirit of comity, I am willing to accept the amendment. Then we will do the best we can on that and other priorities in conference.

I should point out, of course, that if we do as the gentleman from Massachusetts suggests and guarantee that there be over \$100 million additional for new starts, that money might come out of highways. I do not know how we are going to work through these things, but I do believe that it is best, rather than fight over things on the floor, to accept the amendment and let the conferees do the best they can in working on this and on the other priorities.

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his willingness to accept the motion. I have just one or two speakers that I would like to allow time for. Then we will go on to other things.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished ranking member for yielding me this time, and I thank the chairman of the subcommittee as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise enthusiastically to support the Olver motion to instruct the conferees, the transportation appropriations conferees for, I think, a very well-thought-out instruction that emphasizes the direction that is crucial for this country. To maintain or support the Senate level for the new starts, I believe, is absolutely crucial.

As I look at the Nation's needs as a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, one of the issues that we have spoken about is to ensure

the safety of the Nation's byways, highways, freeways and certainly to reassess the needs for improved and increased regional mobility, clean, secure, efficient regional mobility opportunities. These new-start moneys will assist in light rail, it will assist in guideways, it will assist in helping urban and suburban areas, and it will assist in rapid buses and commuter systems.

It is interesting that, as we debate this question, we in Houston are in the throes of moving forward on our light rail projects; and certainly a city that is the fourth largest city in the Nation clearly would have a very ready opportunity, if you will, on its plan to be able to secure Federal funds. We do know that in the appropriations process now, there are about 30 cities with others standing in line. I believe in the 21st century this is no time to turn around on our commitment to transit issues. It helps us improve the quality of life, and it helps us in particular to improve the opportunity for air quality and for the ability of our citizenry to move about. Clearly, the Senate level for the job access and reverse commute grants is imperative. Right now we know we have totally about 4.6 million in dislocated workers around the Nation. In Texas we have over 131,000 unemployed individuals and growing. Therefore, this question of being able to access your job without necessarily having a car and also to access training is crucial, particularly in States that have been hard hit by unemployment.

I would hope that my colleagues would see the reason of this motion to instruct and know that this is no time to shortchange the opportunities of growth in mobility that we have before this Congress. Local communities look to the Congress to be bipartisan, to be embracing, to be smart, and to move forward on transportation issues where they cannot. All over our country they are looking to improve many of their systems. Let it be known that regional mobility is not singular. It is rapid buses. It is guideways. It is light rail. In some instances it may be expansion of our roadways. But whatever it is, those Federal funds are imperative for us to have. I would ask my colleagues to enthusiastically support the decision that this Congress needs to make.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the fol-

lowing conferees: Messrs. ISTOOK, WOLF, LEWIS of California, ROGERS of Kentucky, TIAHRT, Mrs. NORTUP, Messrs. ADERHOLT, SWEENEY, CULBERSON, YOUNG of Florida, HOYER, OLVER, PASTOR, Ms. KILPATRICK, and Messrs. CLYBURN, ROTHMAN and OBEY.

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 75, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 417 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 417

*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. 75) 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. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINDER. 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.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 417 is a closed rule that provides for the consideration of H.J. Res. 75, a continuing resolution that will ensure further appropriations for the 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, we passed the first continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 69, during the final days of September and it became Public Law 108-84. The provisions of H.J. Res. 69 are scheduled to expire this Friday, October 31. Therefore, under the joint resolution that this rule makes in order, the provisions of that first continuing resolution will be extended until November 7, 2003. In brief, for the fiscal year 2004 appropriations bills that have been enacted into law, the continuing resolution provides an additional week of funding for government agencies.

Mr. Speaker, we did pass a continuing resolution last week that conjoined the six fiscal year 2004 appropriations bills that have been passed by

the House, but the other body clearly needs additional time to complete the funding work for the coming year. The House has passed each of the 13 regular appropriations bills. However, to ensure that essential government services continue to operate, this rule makes in order another continuing resolution to give us the additional time to complete the appropriations process in an orderly manner.

This rule was approved by the Committee on Rules yesterday. I urge my colleagues to support it. I know all of us in the House wait with great anticipation the completion of the appropriations work by the Members of the other body. Until that time, this resolution will provide a continuation of funding for government agencies until these important issues are resolved.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), for yielding me the time. I oppose this closed rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I wondered to myself last night as the Committee on Rules majority Republicans passed yet another closed rule which stifles debate and shuts off meaningful contributions from all of the Members of this Chamber, what is the problem? Congress has only had since January 3 of this year to complete work on the 13 annual appropriations bills, the so-called "must pass" bills that Congress works on every year. In case anyone is unclear, so far Congress has passed three of the 13 appropriations bills that must pass before September 30. Defense appropriations, done. Homeland security, done. And, of course, the bill which funds this very institution, Congress, done. Everything else, military construction; veterans affairs; labor, health and human services; commerce, judiciary; education, all just kind of out there somewhere in this vacuous air inside the Beltway.

And the sad part? No one to blame but the party in control. Despite the fact that just yesterday I heard a Member of the other body blame former President Clinton, I do not think the American people are buying that. The fact is the last time there was single-party control of Congress at the beginning of President Clinton's administration, control of Congress and the White House, all 13 appropriations bills were passed by September 30.

□ 1045

We had a balanced budget, and, oh, yes, we had budget surpluses as far as the eye could see.

My, how times have changed. Well, thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, my good friends, the Republican Congress. Now, we have debt in our Nation as far as the eye can see, and, in many respects, disdain from a large portion of the rest of the world.

In my view, the majority is the modern day reincarnation of Nero. The majority fiddles while the Nation burns, or, to put it another way, we are drowning in a sea of red ink.

It will surprise no one, then, that I think we should not pass this rule. We should not pass the underlying legislation. We should stop working 2-day workweeks like we did last week, and we should stay here and finish our work; yes, work maybe even 7 days a week, until we do what the people have elected us to do. What a crazy suggestion.

Enough already. Let us get to work. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged at this time to yield 3 minutes to my good friend, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me time and for his leadership on many of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rose just a few minutes ago to support the movement of the conference of the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies and hope that this body would support the idea of going with the Senate numbers on certain aspects of that appropriations process.

The distinguished gentleman from Florida is absolutely right: This Congress is in the hands of the other party, and any delay that is now going on that requires us, again, to implement another CR, as we have done in sessions past when this body, both this House and the other body, have been dominated and controlled by the Republicans, is because we have this aggravation and tension about who should be provided for first, the domestic needs of this Nation, or whether or not we should be continuing to throw good money after bad in areas where we cannot point to the success of that investment.

It is clear that the struggle in HHS is about funding our children's educational needs, and, because the Republicans are not interested in doing that, then we have gridlock. It is clear that in instances where we are trying to provide extra resources for investment in the Nation's troubled transportation systems we have gridlock, because the other body, the other party, is not interested in compromise. So I believe it is crucial that we have a CR that has the opportunity for an open rule to provide insight and amendments on these very issues.

I would hope that my colleagues would see the folly of a continuing CR that does not in fact have the teeth to address the concerns that we have, address the concerns of the \$20 billion bill that we have now begun to move forward on the rebuild of Iraq.

The President said yesterday we had about \$13 billion from our friends and

allies. I believe that with a little more time we could get more money, have more stakeholders in the rebuild, and that we should insist that the President collaborate with our NATO allies before we give one cent. I believe if we do give the \$20 billion, it should be in the context of a \$10 billion loan, as opposed to a total \$20 billion giveaway.

None of us are against the rebuilding of Iraq or investing in democracy. We are against the continued loss of life of our young men and women on the front lines. We are against a haphazard policy as relates to Iraq. We were against a preemptive attack. And we certainly were against the lack of finding of weapons of mass destruction.

All of this ties into, ultimately, how this Congress spends its money and how it invests in spending its money. I believe the CR is misdirected, it should be an open rule, and I believe the American people expect more from this Congress and we should be held accountable.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), my good friend and colleague on the Committee on Rules.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I have a list here from the NFL of the top punters in the NFL. The top 3 punters are Shane Lechler from Oakland, Brian Moorman from Buffalo, and Scott Player from Arizona. And as talented and experienced and skilled as these punters are, they have nowhere near the ability that the Republican leadership in this House has when it comes to punting, because that is what we are doing today. We are punting once again, because the Republicans in this House cannot get along with the Republicans in the other body, and they cannot get their work done.

The main job that the leadership of this House has is to pass 13 appropriations bills, work with the other body to get them passed and get them on the President's desk by September 30. This leadership has failed in doing that. They cannot do their job.

The Republicans cannot get along with Republicans. They cannot blame a Democratic Senate because they have a Republican Senate. They cannot blame a Democrat in the White House because they have a Republican in the White House. They control the House, they control the Senate, they control the White House, they even control the courts, and they still cannot get their job done.

So it is important for all of my colleagues to understand at this critical moment that we are here because the leadership in this House cannot get their work done. They cannot coordinate with Members of their own party. They cannot do the work that they are supposed to do.

I would just hope, and I say this especially to those who are watching this, that they understand, that these are the people who said give us the power and we will impress you with our ability and our skill and our efficiency.

Well, they have the power. Again, they have the power because they control the House, they control the Senate, they control the White House, and they cannot get their work done.

So we are going to punt until November 7, but I want to make a prediction right now, we are going to punt again. And it is kind of sad, because they are not doing the work they are supposed to do. They are not getting the job done.

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

Mr. Speaker, the points that have been made are echoed all throughout this Chamber.

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

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). The question is the resolution.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2691, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 418 ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 418

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2691) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, 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 Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 1 hour.

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate

only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), 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, House Resolution 418 is a rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 2691, the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2004. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule further provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, the Interior conference report that the House shall consider, following adoption of this rule, provides for \$19.8 billion in budget authority for fiscal year 2004, which is \$300 million above the level requested by the administration.

Specifically, the bill provides increased levels of funding for the National Park Service, for our system of National Wildlife Refuges, for the Indian Health Service, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, among others.

As a Member from the West, I am particularly pleased that the conference agreement provides for \$227.5 million for payment in lieu of taxes, or PILT, which is greatly needed to reimburse local communities in Western States whose tax rolls are limited by extensive Federal land holdings in their areas. This bill funds PILT at a level of \$7.5 million above the current year and \$22.5 million above the level requested by the administration.

The bill also provides \$212 million for Indian Trust reform to ensure that Indian Tribes receive full value for oil, gas and other mineral resources Federal agencies permit to be produced on their lands. By law, the Interior Department serves as trustee for Indian lands and resources, and Congress is committed to taking the steps necessary to see that the Department carries out those trust responsibilities to their fullest.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the conferees are to be commended for their efforts to fund a wide range of forest, health and wildfire safety initiatives. The tragic wildfires now raging in California have focused the public's attention on the importance of reducing the threat of massive fires that endanger both lives and property in their affected areas. This year, the Congress has provided historic levels of resources for Federal fire fighting assistance, including in this conference report a total of \$2.9 billion, one of the largest one-time fire fighting allocations in our history.

The bill includes \$2.5 billion for the national fire plan, as well as additional \$400 million to repay wildfire suppression expenses of last year. These funds emphasize providing fire fighting resources and personnel to keep fires small, reducing wildfire risks by reducing the buildup of hazardous fuels, in-

creasing State, volunteer and community assistance, and stepped up research and development, performance monitoring and accountability.

Specifically, the conference agreement increases wildfire suppression by \$289 million over the current year, wildfire preparedness by \$65 million, hazardous fuels reduction by \$11 million, and forest health and rehabilitation activities by \$35 million over the current year.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from North Carolina (Chairman TAYLOR) and his fellow House conferees have done an excellent job under challenging circumstances. They have negotiated an agreement which protects the House positions on provisions far too numerous to mention, and they have reported a balanced bill that meets the most pressing needs of Interior Department and related agencies.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the conference agreement.

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

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

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, again the Committee on Rules has trampled on the rights of the minority and the voices of millions of Americans. Last night, the Committee held an emergency meeting to consider a rule for the Interior appropriations conference report. The Democrats had only an hour to skim the contents of the lengthy report before a quick hearing was held and the rules hastily approved along party lines. Now, this morning, the entire membership of the House is expected to consider the Interior appropriations conference report, even though Members had only a few late-night hours to scan the report.

It is almost November, and we are well into the new fiscal year, with only three of the 13 appropriations bills enacted into law. But inefficiency does not justify our hurriedly passing a bill appropriating almost \$20 billion. The American people expect their elected Representatives will have more than a handful of dark hours in the late night to consider vital legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in the few hours I have had to read this conference report, I saw several problems with the bill. Back in 1992, the funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts reached its funding zenith, \$176 million for each agency. Over the years, the NEA and NEH budgets have been slashed again and again, but for the last 2 years this body has voted to increase the funding for the arts and humanities.