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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OSE).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 20, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DOUG OSE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord of history and giver of all good and lasting gifts, America's Thanksgiving prayer seems to expand each year. Perhaps because human life seems all the more fragile in a globalized world where there is so much war and violence. Perhaps because we treasure freedom all the more as we learn about so many people in the world who have never experienced what true freedom means. Perhaps because we have come to see that so many blessings are not costly but freely given by You to all and that the most valuable blessings are not material but wrapped in spiritual meaning and not individually possessed but mutually shared with others.

No matter how we as persons calculate, measure, or recognize our blessings, Lord, may each of us here in America grow in gratitude this Thanksgiving Day because grateful people are usually more gracious; and as Americans, we not only see ourselves blessed, we also wish to be a blessing to the rest of the world.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will receive up to five 1-minute speeches from each side.

GRATITUDE FOR U.S. MILITARY IN IRAQ

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Washington Post reported the U.S. military has discovered in southern Fallujah the main head quarters of an al Qaeda organization of Abu Musab Zarqawi, who claims responsibility for bombings, kidnappings, and beheadings across Iraq.

As a grateful parent of three sons in the U.S. military, including an Army National Guard member in Iraq, as a proud veteran of 31 years of service in the Army National Guard and as a Member of Congress, I have never been

more proud of America's heroes fighting in the frontlines of the War on Terrorism in Iraq. Despite defeatists who slander every success, America's military will succeed to protect America's women and children from barbarian murderers.

It is more clear than ever President Bush is correct: "We will not waver, we will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail."

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON RULES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 846 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 846

Resolved, That the requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported on or before the legislative day of November 20, 2004, providing for consideration or disposition of any of the following measures:

(1) A bill or joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005, an amendment thereto, or a conference report thereon.

(2) A bill or joint resolution making general appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, an amendment thereto, or a conference report thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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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.

The resolution we are considering today would provide for the same-day consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules. It waives clause 6(a) of rule XIII, requiring a two-thirds vote to consider a rule on the same day it is reported from the Committee on Rules, against certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules.

The rule applies to the waiver to any resolution reported on or before the legislative day of November 20, 2004, providing for consideration or disposition of any of the following measures:

First, a bill or joint resolution making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005, an amendment thereto or a conference report thereon; or, second, a bill or joint resolution making general appropriations for fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and an amendment thereto or a conference report thereon.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear what we are trying to do. We are trying to make sure that as a result of the action that we took on or about October 8 as it related to the funding of the government that we would make sure we would responsibly work on behalf of the American people to make sure that all spending bills would be necessarily approved and done properly by this House. But we wanted to make sure that the government was funded from that day forward.

Today, as we end what we believe will be the last day for the House of Representatives for the 108th Congress, it allows us a chance to make sure that we are prepared to do just that. As we speak, up in the Committee on Rules right now here in the Capitol, the Committee on Rules is meeting to approve the omnibus appropriations bill. This bill will make sure that we can bring this very important bill to the floor and then we can get on with our work today and hopefully adjourn tonight.

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 the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) for yielding me this time.

It is the 11th hour and the deals have been struck. Most, if not all, of us want to go home. Certainly the majority does. So we find ourselves again being asked to override regular House rules and vote on legislation which I defy anybody to tell me that 99 percent of us have read. I am talking about 99 percent of the Members of the House of Representatives have not read this legislation.

There is no reason why we cannot consider the omnibus appropriations bill tomorrow or Monday or Tuesday. There is no reason why all of us in the

body and, most importantly, the American people should not have at least 24 hours to try to read how we are spending their money before we spend it.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that most of the Members will support this measure. But I am opposed to the process by which it has come together floor today. And in just a few short hours, Members of this body will be asked to approve a bill that spends nearly \$400 billion of Americans' hard-earned tax dollars without being afforded the opportunity to actually read the bill. That is just not right.

The bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, one party controls Washington, D.C.'s political circumstances. One party controls the House, the Senate, and the White House. One party has controlled Congress' legislative agenda and one party has controlled this year's appropriations process. I ask the American people what have they done for them this year? In a word, if I were answering, it would be not much.

Despite escalating gas prices and continued reliance on fuel needs from the volatile Middle East, has Congress enacted a comprehensive energy bill? No. Bridges and tunnels and highways around America are literally crumbling away due to years and years of neglect. And despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of jobs are on the line, has Congress passed a transportation bill? No. Welfare reform? Still on the starting blocks. Patient's bill of rights? In intensive care. Fully funding education programs like No Child Left Behind? Still waiting at the schoolhouse door. Getting our first responders the tools and equipment they need to protect the homeland? Do not hold your breath.

As far as I can tell, the only thing that the ruling party can do successfully is explode the national debt and burden our children and grandchildren to fix the mistakes we make on a daily basis around here in the House of Representatives. Enough already.

So we will go home today or tomorrow after having worked fewer days in this session of Congress than in any previous Congress in nearly the last 60 years. These really are the best words that I can use to describe this situation. The rule is a disservice to the Members of this body. More importantly, it is an affront to the people whom we represent. This process smells and the odor wafts from sea to shining sea.

I understand the circumstances at the end of the session deadline of which the majority speaks, but I ask why the rush? Why run this House in such a disorderly way? The precedent that we continue to set with this kind of action will haunt us and our successors for many generations. It is up to the majority to step up to the plate and attempt to restore integrity to the process this body practices.

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

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

appreciate the gentleman's speaking about the way in which the House is operating today. I am proud of what we are doing. And in just a few hours we are going to hear the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, come and say that this package before us represents a freeze or a 0 percent growth in nondefense discretionary spending. That is hard work. That is hard work, Mr. Speaker, but in the very beginning of this year the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), chairman of the Budget Committee, as a result of enlisting the Members of Congress, decided that we were going to have a budget that did the right thing for 2005. And that is exactly what this Republican-led Congress has done.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) worked very diligently to make sure that the budget that this conference put forth and this House put forth is something that will be passed. We intend to make sure that we are not going to have any wild spending sprees like we have done in the past. It is going to be responsible. I am proud of what we have done. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), our great Speaker, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority leader, have made sure that the things that are in this bill deal with the essence of what is good for America. I am very proud of what we are doing.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), minority whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

□ 0915

Mr. Speaker, I believe it appropriate for me to rise in light of the gentleman from Texas's remarks. First of all, I note that the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations is on the floor. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) is one of the most respected Members in this body. He is a gentleman who has led our committee with fairness and great ability. Mr. Dyer is also on the floor, our chief clerk of the Committee on Appropriations. The Committee on Appropriations continues to be, in my opinion, one of the committees that really strives to work in a bipartisan fashion to meet the responsibilities that it has and the responsibilities that this Congress has to the American people.

The budget to which the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) spoke has resulted in a dysfunctional appropriations process over the last 4 years really. I have served on the Committee on Appropriations for 23 years, so I have some experience of the workings of that committee. In the early years that I served, it was also difficult to pass appropriation bills. Then we got

into the 1994 election, the majority changed and, in 1995, of course, we shut down the government on November 22, 1995. The government essentially remained shut down and with sporadic periods of being open between then and early in January of the following year.

Since that time, particularly since the election of President Bush in 2000, in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, this year, we have clearly had a dysfunctional budget and appropriations process, about which my friend from Texas seems to be so proud. In fact, this is the third year in a row where we have passed an omnibus appropriations bill including most of the appropriations. We have ignored the regular order. We have ignored the process of adopting appropriation bills one by one. We have ignored the process of having our appropriation bills open to full disclosure and consideration, not only by the House of Representatives, but by the American people. We have prevented the American people from having the opportunity to make their views known on these appropriation bills. Why? Because we have passed them in the dead of night, as we did last night, come out with a very quick Committee on Rules report, a martial law rule, and an inability to expose those to the light of day.

Now, most of those appropriations bills, the nine bills that will be incorporated into this omnibus have, in fact, been subjected to hearings, discussion on this floor, discussion on the Senate floor, and most, I do not know what percentage, but I would guess well over 90 percent, perhaps even as close to 97 or 98 percent of the bills have, in fact, been subjected to the regular order and the legislative process as it should run.

But the fear of the American people is that in the dead of night, in the cloudiness of quick consideration, that many things are included in these bills which perhaps both Houses would not have put in there, as has happened too frequently during the course of this Congress, or that neither House really knows is in there.

So when my distinguished friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) refers to this as being a process that is contrary to regular order, he is absolutely right. It is not something of which we ought to be proud. To that extent, I disagree with my good friend, the gentleman from Texas. It is, in fact, something that we ought to commit ourselves to not repeating. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), my good friend, is on the floor, and was the chief of staff of one of the most distinguished leaders with whom I have had the privilege of serving, Bob Michel, himself a member of the Committee on Appropriations. I used to remember Leader Michel during the times when he was the Minority Leader of this House saying that this process was wrong when we pursued it, when we got into a deadlock and could not get bills passed.

So it is not that it is solely the actions of one party. It is, however, to

say that we ought not to pretend that when we are doing it, that it is good, and that when the other guy is doing it, it is bad. It is not a good process. We did not in the year of last year pass eight of our appropriations bills until the calendar year following the beginning of the fiscal year. It was January. The previous year, it was February before we adopted most of the appropriations bills. I regret that we do not consider the appropriations bills one by one. There has not been a conference on the Labor-Health bill, a bill which will have approximately \$150 billion in discretionary funding in this bill. It has not been conferenced. I have been a member of that committee for 23 years. I did not participate in a conference on that bill.

Now, because of the way our committee operates, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA) and others have kept me apprised, and I am not surprised at that. As I said, they are good and decent and fair leaders of the Committee on Appropriations. We ought not to delude ourselves because of their fairness and because of the fact that they have kept me informed and kept the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) informed and others informed. But the American people who have been precluded from seeing that bill conferenced have not been informed as our democracy contemplates, so I do not share the gentleman's pride in this process.

Mr. Speaker, because I have the time and I am on my feet, I also want to make a comment. I may make this comment again when he is here. In my view, the House of Representatives has sustained an extraordinary loss in the last election. I do not speak in terms of the fact that another candidate won the election. I, in no way, denigrate that candidate. But I do rise to lament the loss of a giant of this House, a Member of this House who, in my opinion, is arguably the best legislator in this House, a Member of this House whom I have grown to have the highest respect for, for his intellect, for his integrity, for his focus on fiscal responsibility. No one, no one in this House or in the United States Senate has any more faithfully focused on fiscal responsibility than my friend, the gentleman from Texas (CHARLES STENHOLM). It is a great loss to the House that he will not be serving with us next year.

As we consider this appropriation bill, and as the gentleman from Texas remarks with respect to constraining funding, I will tell my friend that we have constrained funding less over the last 4 years perhaps than at any time since I have been here, less than we did during the Clinton years. Domestic discretionary spending has risen higher over the last 4 years, as perhaps the gentleman knows, discretionary spending has risen higher. Now, there have been some reasons for that. Certainly, 9/11, terrorism, the war in Iraq. As the

gentleman from Texas knows, I have supported that funding. We cannot, we must not send our best abroad to fight terrorism without supporting them fully. I have done that, and I intend to do that. But having said that, I do not intend to pretend that that money is for free, that somebody is not going to pay that bill.

Earlier this week, the Republicans increased the debt of this Nation by \$800 billion, meaning that over the last 42 months we have increased the national debt by 25 percent, \$2 trillion. I personally do not believe that that is something of which to be proud, \$2 trillion in additional debt. I have three grandchildren. One is a little older, one is little younger, and one is very young. And all of them are going to pay that bill. Because this generation of Americans, acting through its Members in the House of Representatives, has determined that it will not pay its bills. I think that is an immoral policy. It is the refusal to accept personal responsibility for the challenges confronting our generation, and we are going to allow the next generation and perhaps generations thereafter to pay that bill.

The immediate consequences, of course, were evidenced yesterday. I hope they will be ameliorated. I hope interest rates will not skyrocket. I hope the deficit will, as the gentleman from Texas hopes, will be constrained. But I will not delude myself, I tell my friend from Texas, that it is discretionary spending that has caused our problem, because those of us on the Committee on Appropriations know it is not discretionary spending. In fact, discretionary spending as a percentage of the budget is less today than it was in 1962 and 1972 and 1982. So we ought not to delude ourselves that our failure to fully fund No Child Left Behind, as the gentleman from Florida has said, is something of which to be proud. There are going to be children left behind as a result of us failing to do that.

So I rise, Mr. Speaker, to say that I will vote for this omnibus bill when it ultimately gets to the floor. I will vote against this rule, but I will vote for the omnibus bill. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), Jim Dyer, and each one of our chairmen and ranking members have worked hard to try to come to grips with bills that meet our responsibilities. These bills do so only in part. I thank my chairman and would say that there are areas in which we are short, not because we want to be short, but because the resources are not there to meet our commitments.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this brief time, at a time when debate is not fulsome and I had time to ruminate to some degree on what I consider the very serious fiscal challenge that confronts our country. We cannot pretend that we can have tax cuts and war and investment in education and transportation and energy and other needs of our country and simply pass the

debt along to our children and our grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, that is not right.

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

The gentleman from Maryland I believe articulated a hope and a dream that both of these parties want to stand for, and that is that we can continue to work together. He expressed great confidence not only in the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and Jim Dyer, who is the staff director of the Committee on Appropriations; he appropriately talked about the service to this body of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), a Congressman from Texas 17. But he also talked about our hope and dream for the ability that we have to control ourselves, to bring forth spending that is worthy of the American public will.

The only thing that I would add is that we also need to have an economy that works, that is competitive with the world. We know we passed this last year, a medicare prescription drug bill that, for the first time, will allow senior citizens not to have to make a choice between food, clothing, housing, and getting the prescription drugs that were ordered by their doctor. These too are accomplishments that we have done, and it does come at a cost and a price, but it is the right thing to do.

I continue to believe in the American dream. I think that is what we are all about here today on a Saturday, working hard. And yes, the gentleman referred to us working until 2, 3, and 4 in the morning. I think that is good too. I think this body is faithful to the American public, and I believe in what we are doing.

□ 0930

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) has 12½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding me time. He is a very able member of the Committee on Rules.

I think I follow in the tradition that those of us who are outside of the body politic of the appropriators do every year, and that is that we rise to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), the ranking member, and the chairman, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), and particularly the chairman as he finishes his tenure. I want to thank him very much for the collegial and sensitive work he does. I particularly thank him for coming to my district to support our Fishers

House. We thank him so very much for the work that is being done for our veterans and for their families that are at our veterans hospitals all over the country.

But for our colleagues and the American people that wonder why we rise today, because what we do today is probably one of the more important responsibilities of this body, and it is to get out of Washington and send the dollars, your tax dollars, back to your communities, to be able to keep your hospitals open, your schools open, to be able to help our senior citizens and to create peace around the world.

The reason why I rise is because we have not completed our job, coming from Texas where there is no energy policy discernable so that we can say to the American people that you will not continue to see your fuel prices increase, and, of course, the devastation that has occurred because jet fuel prices are high.

We have not been able to infuse into the economy reasonable policy so that those individuals who work every day can have a reasonable quality of life.

And then, of course, my concern, as the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) talked about the Medicare bill, one of the most expensive and unworkable bills that we have ever seen. More money goes to the pharmaceuticals than money in your pocket. No guaranteed prescription drug benefit for our seniors. That is why I rise today.

And if we want to talk about peace, it is unfortunate that even today in Iraq, where I visited just a few weeks ago with our soldiers, we have soldiers in Iraq without the appropriate equipment, and we have already spent \$200 billion plus there and we have no plan.

My last point, Mr. Speaker, is on the floor yesterday we did something good with respect to Sudan. The Lugar bill was passed. But yet this administration and the will of this Congress has not seen its way to fund the African Union peacekeeping troops and to force Sudan to allow those troops in. And as we speak today, mothers and children are being raped and killed and villages are being raided and it is being done by the Sudanese police officers.

So you see there is much we could be doing but yet we are forcing an omnibus bill on the floor and yet many of us have never seen it. We welcome those dollars to go home to those street repairs, to help those nonprofits, to help ex-offenders return back into the community, to build affordable housing, to work with our Boy Scouts and other non-profit organizations. So this is why we are here. This is a martial rule that forces us to move forward on the people's business without the attention to detail to wonder whether there are enough dollars in there for Pell grants for our college students to go to school, and to be able to know whether our troops that are on the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq have the appropriate equipment.

In a few weeks we will be looking in Iraq for elections. Dollars will be needed to be expended there. Safety will be needed. We will need the appropriate number of troops. We do not even know whether or not that the dollars that we have will suffice for the troop deployment and enforcement as well as the equipment, as well as the many casualties that are coming into our hospitals here in the United States and Germany, and of course whether we have the dollars to provide for those families whose troops have lost their lives.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that we will proceed today. I do not know as we proceed that we will have the opportunity to say to the American people that we have done our very best. I would hope that we could do better in the 109th, but, more importantly, I wish we could do better for the American people today.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK).

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, in previous election years we have heard about an October surprise. We did not have an October surprise this year. We are getting a November surprise.

Now, it is not a surprise to those of us who serve in this body. It is an unpleasant surprise to the American people, particularly those people who think that as a collective society we have some responsibilities to each other, because this is an appropriations bill that fails to fund adequately those programs that are essential to improving the quality of our lives to the extent that they must be done together.

People on the other side are fond of saying it is the people's money, not the government's money. Of course it is the people's money. But civilized and sensible people understand that we have two sets of needs for our money. Some of our needs, our desires are best met by money that we have individually and as families. But in our society particularly there are essential needs for our well-being that can only be met if we pool our money.

Now, on the one level people understand that they know that homeland security cannot be advanced by a tax cut. But neither can environmental cleanup, neither can transportation, neither can our ability to extend some compassion to people in need. The majority understand that. They understand that the American people understand that. So that is why, and let us be very clear, the sole reason we are here today a couple of weeks after an election funding the government for the rest of the year is the majority's craven unwillingness to stand up before the election for what they truly believe in. They have successfully hidden from the American people the true consequences of their philosophy. And that is the November surprise.

People who believe that America ought to be vigorously cleaning up environmental messes left from earlier periods, people who think we ought to be expanding the amount of affordable housing we have, people who think we ought to be extending health care for Americans rather than seeing it continue to erode, people who think we ought to be meeting our international obligations.

I read just this past week in Congress Daily that there is a shortfall in the money we send to feed starving people overseas. That is not adequately funded. Some of the President's own priorities are not funded internationally. It is true, I gather, they did manage to give in to the administration and there is money to go to Mars, and maybe ultimately the homeless can live there. But God help them, they better be able to because they certainly are not going to be able to find housing here.

Again, let us be clear here. There is no reason whatsoever why in this lame duck session after the election we are funding all of the important domestic elements of government and some of the international ones, except the majority's understanding that the consequences of their anti-government attitude simply would not have worked well before the election. The sole purpose of this timing is to deceive the American people. Fortunately, that deception cannot continue because we are going to have elections in the future. And we are going to test this philosophy, and here is the philosophy.

It is an administration that believes that all we have to do to reach the good life is essentially to remove all restraints on capital. Do not tax it. Put the taxes on people's consumption or on the money they earn for working. Do not hobble them with environmental regulations. For goodness sake, do not allow labor unions to speak up for their people. Do not make them pay overtime very much.

Four years from now the minimum wage will be meaningless because it will not move for 4 years under their administration and inflation will accomplish what the ideologues cannot accomplish openly. It will be eroded.

But let us go back to the budget. Now, the members of the Committee on Appropriations have always gotten praise here, including the majority members. What is the general phrase? They have done the best they can in a bad situation. Given the constraints they face, they have done a good job.

Let us be very clear, those constraints, those limitations; that is, inadequacy of funding for our public purposes, which is how as a society we in part express our aspirations for decency, for quality of life, for compassion, those constraints were not natural constraints. They did not come from the heavens. They are not natural phenomena. They are the result of the conscious policy choices of the administration and the majority. A decision to go to two wars, one of which was

necessary in my judgment, one of which was not, and then to do five tax cuts, has left us, and the majority acknowledges that implicitly today by bringing up two weeks after an election measures that by any sense of democratic procedure should have been voted on before the people got to cast their ballots.

So the majority implicitly acknowledges that its extremely conservative assault on government, its refusal to acknowledge that there are important moral purposes that we can only accomplish if we pool our resources and work together as a people, they implicitly acknowledge the unacceptable nature of that, and we will continue this debate over the next 2 years.

Mr. SESSIONS. 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, while we were here considering this rule the Committee on Rules was meeting and reported out the conference report to accompany H.R. 4818, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005, and providing for consideration of H.J. Res. 114, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes.

I bring it to the attention of the body that that particular rule, if this same day rule passes and then its undertaking, will allow the members of this body one hour of debate on the rule and one hour of debate on spending upwards of \$388 billion, or more as it were.

Now, when we have passed the omnibus, and it will happen sometime today, the law requires that the President of the United States will have 10 days in which to review the omnibus provisions. What is amazing to me is that the House of Representatives Members are constrained by not knowing. My colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), and I have not seen this legislation. We have not read it. We may have participated in some part of the regular process of some of the particulars, but much of what is in this bill no member of the House of Representatives other than a handful have seen it at all. So the law requires that the President of the United States and his team of people rightly have an opportunity to review the provisions that are passed in this body and the other body, and they get ostensibly what will amount to 20 days, and many of the Members in this body will not get 20 minutes to read what it is that we are passing in spending the American taxpayers' money.

No, I am not proud of the process. There may be substantive things in the bill that will help Americans, but you and no one else can tell me that by avoiding regular order, by avoiding the way legislation ought to be presented in this country. You cannot tell me that today you can call your constituents and tell them precisely what is in this bill. I know I cannot. I do not think

that is right, and I do not think any Member of this House believes it is right.

Do you have the power? Of course you do. Can you continue down this path? Of course you can. You do so at your peril because ultimately the American people will come to understand that you cannot have deficit and borrowed money, run a war, it used to be called having guns and butter. I think my friends in the majority think we can have guns, butter, ice cream and cookies. It is not going to work.

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

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

It is a great way to start a Saturday morning, the opportunity to get up and debate before the American public the important parts about not only America and our process and the ability that we have by majority vote, but it is also an opportunity for us to look the American public right in the eye and to say that we have done what we said we would do, that this is a lean package. It follows exactly what we said we would do in the budget earlier this spring.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) has brought forth a package as a result of what we heard was bipartisan work, informing people what was in the bill, the opportunity to make sure that not only as the gentleman from Maryland said to keep him updated but others in his party to make sure that they were aware of what was happening on an omnibus spending package that is important to this great Nation and an obligation of this Congress.

□ 0945

Yes, I am proud that we have the ability to say today we will bring this to the floor of the House of Representatives. The Committee on Rules has acted, and subsequent to us leaving today, we will have a measured and wonderful debate. I am proud of what we have done. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this rule and the underlying legislation.

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

The previous question was ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on 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, 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. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.