

The Senate refused to include language to provide for a real commission to look into a long-term nongovernmental solution to the issues involved in insuring and reinsuring for the threat of terror. And this bill ignores language to provide insurance protections for the rebuilding of the World Trade Center, the actual reason we created this Federal backstop program in the first place.

But while I am not happy about the process and exclusion of important provisions, the underlying need for TRIA to be extended is reason enough for me to vote for this bill, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

I want to thank Chairman OXLEY for his honesty, for all of his hard work on this bill, as well as Congressman STEVE ISRAEL, MIKE CAPUANO and Congressman PAUL KANJORSKI, all who have worked very hard to see this pass. But most importantly, I want to thank Ranking Member BARNEY FRANK, who has pushed for the reauthorization of this program for over a year, has incorporated ideas from both sides of the aisle and has been a true champion in developing and in crafting legislation that helps keep our economy moving.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this worthy legislation.

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO).

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I just rise briefly to congratulate the chairman, the ranking member, and the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee.

This is a classic piece of legislation that hopefully will never, ever, ever be used. No one, hopefully, will ever know that we actually did this because if they do, it means we will have suffered another terrorist attack. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary.

We have heard of all the details of what is not here, but to me, the most important thing that is not here is the formal mechanism to make sure that we are not stuck in the same position a few years from now. I fear that if we do not get to work in an official way through a commission, that we will be here a few years from now doing this all over again, simply saying we could not get it done and we did not do it right, and that is a travesty to the American people. It is unnecessary, and I will tell the Members that, based on this experience and past experience, particularly with the chairman, he is a man of honor, he is a man of his word, and I know he will be pushing as best he can to get this Congress to pay attention to this issue for the next year so that we will not be placed in this position.

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation because of its necessity to America's working men and women and the business community of America.

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

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to say, and a lot of us have intimated this, we could do better than this that we have before us today. We did better in the House version, and I think all of our committee members know that, and I think most of the Members of the House know that. But there is a time to hold them and a time to fold them.

At this point, I would ask that the House do adopt this conference report.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that we are passing this crucial Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) extension, which will provide necessary stability for our Nation's economy in a post 9-11 world. I have strongly supported this legislation from the outset, and I congratulate Chairman OXLEY and Ranking Member FRANK for their hard work and the excellent product as it passed the House. While I wish more of the House provisions we passed 10 days ago had survived conference, I am pleased that we are able to extend TRIA before the deadline, so that it does not expire in 2 weeks. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important conference report.

A stable, secure insurance market is vital to the health of our national economy. More than 4 years ago, the stability of the insurance industry, and all of our Nation's policyholders, were put in jeopardy when insurers and reinsurers lost more than \$30 billion as a result of the 9/11 attacks. After these substantial losses, insurers were unable to make terrorism insurance available, which left many of our Nation's businesses vulnerable to unacceptable risk.

In response, Congress overwhelmingly passed TRIA to provide a temporary, limited federal backstop in the event of another catastrophic terrorist attack. While we still expect the insurance industry to eventually develop methods for making terrorism insurance available without government support, the market has not yet stabilized to the point where this is possible. Extension of TRIA, which is necessary to prevent the chill of development in our cities, has wide, bipartisan support, and should be enacted promptly.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Extension Act. This bill provides key safeguards to stabilize the economy in the event of a terrorist attack while putting us on a path toward restoring a private terrorism risk insurance market.

This legislation will ensure that terrorism insurance coverage is available, providing a degree of certainty in a still uncertain market place.

It is time to make the reforms necessary to encourage the continued development of a market for terrorism risk insurance. A healthy market for terrorism insurance is critical to continued economic growth and expansion. America's taxpayers expect Congress to help that market develop and relieve their burden for assuming much of the risk in the existing TRIA program.

That is what this legislation will do, and I am proud to support it.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from

Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate bill, S. 467.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment to the House amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1900

FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2006

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 75) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 75

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Public Law 109-77 is further amended by striking the date specified in section 106(3) and inserting the following: "December 31, 2005".

SEC. 2. Section 114(b) of Public Law 109-77 is amended by striking "and December 1, 2005," and inserting "December 1, 2005, and January 1, 2006".

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am bringing to the House a continuing resolution for fiscal year 2006. This CR runs through December 31. It is clean without exception. This CR will fund agencies in our last two remaining bills, the Labor-HHS and Defense bills, at the lowest level possible.

When we passed the last CR, my hope was that it would bring a strong motivation for Congress to complete its work in regular order. I want the body to know that the Committee on Appropriations has been strongly committed to bringing to this floor individual conference reports for each and every bill. The committee does not support an omnibus in any form and has done everything in its power to ensure that that did not happen.

The Appropriations Committee passed each bill of the 11 subcommittee bills off the House floor by June 30, the earliest that has been done in some 18 years. The Appropriations Committee has remained committed to moving these bills individually and within the framework of the budget resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the Appropriations Committee has kept its word. I am convinced that moving bills individually is the only way to get us back to regular order. Lacking regular order, there is a tendency for the remaining bills to become "Christmas trees," if you will,

and for spending to grow out of control. In my view, that is simply not acceptable. I hope that, next year, we do not find ourselves in the position we are in today.

We are presently attempting to work with the Senate to finish a disaster assistance package that would be fully offset. It may include some avian flu preparedness money. Some have suggested that legislative language related to ANWR be included as well. This language has the potential, in my judgment, to sink the entire package once it reaches the Senate.

The underlying bill, the DOD appropriations bill, is the most important of our annual appropriations bills for it funds our national security. Agreements have been reached on all major issues in the DOD portion of the bill. Frankly, we could have passed this bill weeks ago. We are at war, we have troops in harm's way, and we still have not passed this critical legislation. There are funds in this bill to provide body armor for our troops, up-armored Humvees and a military pay raise. Failure to enact this bill in a timely fashion is a disservice to our men and women in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this CR and would like to close my remarks by wishing all my friends on both sides of the aisle a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It is great to be with you.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 8 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want Members of the House, at least those who are around, to understand what the controversy has been with respect to this continuing resolution today. Let me back up even further.

As the gentleman has indicated, the House Appropriations Committee was able to pass every bill through the House before we left for the August recess. Despite that fact, for a variety of reasons, most of which have nothing to do with the Appropriations Committee, the fact is that, today, we are 2 months into the fiscal year and the Department of Defense and the Departments of Labor, Health, Education and Social Services still have not received their funding for the year under a regular appropriation bill. That means that about 65 percent of the discretionary spending in the budget still has not been tied down for the coming year.

That is not just a problem in Washington. It means that local people cannot plan. It means that school boards cannot plan. It means that the Pentagon cannot plan. And it discombobulates everybody. This is not the first time it has happened, but it is certainly one of the most troubling episodes that we have had in a long time.

I think we are here with so little of this work finished because I really do believe that the leadership of the House has tried to impose an agenda on the House and on the Senate which is so extreme that even members of their own majority party have rebelled. Ex-

ample: We take a look at what happened on the PATRIOT Act. Example: We take a look at the inability to pass the labor health bill, first in the House and now in the Senate. It seems to me that a little more flexibility on the part of the House leadership could have resolved a lot of those problems.

Anyway, to bring us up to date, 10 minutes before the House opened today, we were informed on this side of the aisle that the continuing resolution to keep the government functioning for these agencies who have not yet received their funding, we received notice that a decision had been made to change the effective date of the continuing resolution, which meant that it would be extended through February 15 rather than simply to the end of the year.

It is one thing to provide a short extension so that the President has the ability to review legislation passed by the Congress before he signs it. It is quite another to try to leverage one group or another into a severe disadvantage with respect to some of this funding.

The problem with extending the CR to February 15 is that it creates a number of anomalies in both funding for the Defense Department and in the funding for the social service agencies which I do not think this Congress wants to be responsible for.

The problem with allowing the Pentagon, for instance, to continue on a CR, which is what would happen, the problem is that, at the levels under this CR, the military would be expected to run out of money for Iraq operations in January. That could create some significant problems for them. In addition, Pentagon contracts could be significantly delayed. Now, that could be overcome if we do manage to pass the Defense Appropriations Bill, and I hope we do, but we still would have a major problem with funding in the Labor-Health-Education bill.

Example: Everybody knows that, just a few days ago, the majority party restored funding to Rural Health Outreach Grants in order to try to overcome their inability to pass the Labor-Health bill earlier in the week. Guess what? The CR before us today takes out that additional money for Rural Health Outreach Grants, and it again returns us to a funding level which is 73 percent below last year. I do not think people want to do that, but that is the result of the continuing resolution.

The Community Services Block Grant Program, under the funding level in this CR, that program is cut in half from last year. The Low Income Heating Assistance Program, we had all kinds of people talking about adding money for that program, and yet under the funding level in this CR, LIHEAP is cut by \$176 million. Under No Child Left Behind, under the funding level in this resolution, No Child Left Behind programs would be cut more than \$1.1 billion below last year's level.

We have heard a lot of fulminating on both sides of the aisle about IDEA, about special education. Guess what? The funding level for this continuing resolution would freeze IDEA grants.

The International Labor Affairs Bureau, which protects American workers and wages through its efforts to eradicate child labor around the world, would be cut by 87 percent under the funding level in this continuing resolution. Unemployment help for people who are looking for jobs would be cut by \$157 million under this continuing resolution level.

Now, it is one thing to say, all right, we will let that go for a week because it simply is a short-term convenience to the President. It is quite another thing to say that we are going to hold those programs to that level of funding through February 15. When you do that, you ruin some of those programs and you make miserable the lives of a lot of people who depend on those programs, which is why we objected on this side of the aisle.

Now that the majority party has returned to the original understanding that the CR will extend only for a week, time for us to get our work done; now that we are in a position where we are not going to be able to conveniently take a vacation until February 15 while these other programs suffer, I am perfectly happy to withdraw my objection.

So I congratulate the gentleman for talking to whoever he had to talk to in order to bring them to their senses.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 75, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STEM CELL THERAPEUTIC AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the pending business is the question of suspending the rules and concurring in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2520.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2520, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 413, nays 0, not voting 20, as follows: