

the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1894.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HERGER. 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 this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the motion to instruct on H.R. 3058.

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

There was no objection.

MOTION TO GO TO CONFERENCE ON H.R. 3058, TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE JUDICIARY, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1 of rule XXII and by direction of the Committee on Appropriations, I move to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3058) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OLVER

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Olver moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 3058, be instructed to recede to the Senate levels for the National Railroad Passenger Corporation and the revitalization of severely distressed public housing (HOPE VI) and recede to the Senate on Section 722 of the Senate amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER) and the gentleman from Michi-

gan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

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

Mr. Speaker, we are approaching the end of what has been a long and complicated process.

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As we all know, the Treasury, Transportation, HUD and other agencies, commonly known as the THUD bill, has many moving parts; and while there are many issues to be addressed in the conference, I want to highlight a few today to refresh our memory.

The motion to instruct is fairly straightforward and simple. It addresses three items that deserve the body's attention. The first is funding to ensure that the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, commonly known as Amtrak, maintains its current level of service. It is funded in both bills; however, the House bill provides \$1.18 billion and the Senate bill provides \$1.4 billion. As you can see, it is intent of both houses of this Congress to fund Amtrak, and my motion to instruct conferees insists on sufficient funding to ensure that Amtrak can continue to provide service, make capital improvements and pay its debt.

The second item deals with the micropurchase cap. The second Katrina supplemental budget included an administration proposal to increase the micropurchase threshold from \$15,000 to \$250,000. This means that authorized holders of government credit cards can now charge items that cost up to a quarter of a million dollars. This is far beyond the purpose of the government card program and invites the possibility for fraud and abuse. The Senate's version of H.R. 3058, the Senate's amendment to H.R. 3058, included a provision that repeals the increase to the micropurchase threshold. My motion to instruct insists on the Senate provision that repeals the unnecessary and excessive increase to the micropurchase threshold.

And the final issue, Mr. Speaker, deals with HOPE VI. The House bill funded the program at \$60 million as a result of an amendment passed on the floor. The Senate funded this important program at \$150 million. The fiscal year 2005 level for this program was \$142 million.

The HOPE VI program is vital to the rehabilitation of urban areas. And once again, Congress has shown its intent to support this important program, and my motion insists on its being funded at the higher level.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a simple motion that instructs the conferees to support the highest possible funding level to ensure Amtrak can maintain the current level of service; to recede to the Senate level for HOPE VI; and to recede to the Senate language in order to repeal the micropurchase cap increase that had been adopted in the

second Hurricane Katrina supplemental budget earlier this fall.

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

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for his commitment to the programs in this bill and for his partnership in what has been a most interesting journey to bring this bill to a conference.

This bill is a huge compilation of government operations, public service programs and critical national infrastructure. Like other appropriations bills, our allocation and commitment to fiscal responsibility makes funding these programs a challenge. Our task was to fund well-run, effective programs to the greatest extent that we could and encourage reform in others. Two of the motions, Amtrak and HOPE VI, fall into the latter category.

Starting first with Amtrak, this is a railroad in desperate need of reform. This year alone Amtrak will carry over \$120 million in funds that were provided to them by the Congress in fiscal year 2005 but not used. The DOT Inspector General, an official respected on both sides of the aisle, has informed us that \$1.275 billion is sufficient for Amtrak to continue operating its existing route structure without reductions in frequency, and to dedicate sufficient resources to continue the effort to bring Amtrak-owned infrastructure to a state of good repair. Also included in this figure is \$278 million to meet Amtrak's debt service obligations on its nearly \$4 billion in outstanding loans.

HOPE VI is a program that is just that for many people, hope that the grant to create new public housing will actually be spent in their neighborhoods. Currently, over \$2.8 billion in HOPE VI grants has not been spent. Only 37 of the 224 communities have actually seen the finished product.

For those 37 communities, HOPE VI is a terrific program, and I was a supporter of HOPE VI for that reason, because there are some good examples. However, HOPE VI is not working for the other 187.

Here is another program in desperate need of reform, and I am hopeful for that in the coming year, with whatever level of funding is provided for the program. The authorizing committees of jurisdiction will look for ways to make this program more effective.

Section 722 of the Senate bill deals with micropurchases. I believe the administration has already acted on this issue, and we are supportive of the Senate's provisions.

In the end, we recognize the challenges of reform and have not abandoned our commitment to fund good programs. We will do our best under this allocation that we have to meet to fund the priority programs, including HOPE VI and Amtrak. Again, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts and

all the members of the subcommittee for their hard work this year.

With that, I would merely announce that I would accept the motion to instruct.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Motion to Instruct Conference to H.R. 3058, the Fiscal Year 2006 Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, offered by the Gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER), Ranking Democratic Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee.

In part, this motion instructs conferees to recede to the Senate levels for the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, or Amtrak.

This past summer, the House approved by voice vote a bipartisan Amtrak funding amendment that the Gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE), the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, and I offered to H.R. 3058, the Fiscal Year 2006 Transportation-Treasury Appropriations bill.

The amendment increased funding for Amtrak to \$1.176 billion: \$1.176 billion more than the Administration proposed in its Fiscal Year 2006 budget request and \$626 million more than the House Appropriations Committee approved. It passed overwhelmingly.

The Senate followed the House's lead, but raised the bar, providing Amtrak with \$1.45 billion, a difference of about \$275 million.

During Floor consideration, the Senate also stripped the Senate bill of several controversial provisions regarding Amtrak, opting instead to pass a reasonable, sensible, bipartisan Amtrak reauthorization amendment, offered by Senators LOTT and LAUTENBERG, to the Budget Reconciliation bill by a vote of 93-6.

I urge that the conferees recede to the Senate level of \$1.45 billion.

The fact is that this Congress time and again promotes transportation, particularly rural access to transportation. We should do no less for Amtrak.

Amtrak's opponents, however, are quick to point fingers at Amtrak's management, and claim that Amtrak doesn't deserve our support: That private corporations could run a better passenger railroad.

The truth is that a succession of hard-working and dedicated management teams at Amtrak cannot do the impossible—that is, operate our Nation's passenger rail system without a substantial level of investment from the Federal Government.

From its creation in the 1970's, the Corporation has been on a starvation diet. Lack of adequate funding and the annual threat of elimination have conditioned Amtrak to focus on survival.

Yet despite chronic underfunding, Amtrak has had its successes. According to the Amtrak Reform Board, since 2002, Amtrak has: implemented new accounting and financial reporting systems; reduced personnel by almost 5,000; developed a detailed and prioritized five-year capital plan focused on restoring the Northeast Corridor to necessary levels of reliability and safety, and on restoration of an aging fleet of rolling stock used throughout the system; terminated the mail and express operation; eliminated or truncated three long-distance routes; increased ridership from 22.5 million in 2000 to 25.1 million in 2004; and contained Amtrak's cash-operating requirement at or below \$570 million.

Capital investment is up substantially: 256,000 concrete ties were installed; 104,000

wood ties were replaced; 266 miles of rail infrastructure restored; 50 undergrade bridges improved; 43 miles of signal and communications cable replaced; 116 miles of catenary hardware installed; and 19 stations and 37 substations improved.

Since 2002, Amtrak's mechanical department completed 180 remanufactures/heavy overhauls, 111 diesel locomotive overhauls, 14 electric locomotive overhauls, 31 equipment overhauls, 51 wreck repairs, and 32 baggage car modifications.

Excess equipment was sold, unprofitable services were eliminated, fares were lowered on long-distance routes to increase ridership, and a \$71 million maintenance facility was opened in a joint partnership between Amtrak and the State of California.

In short, Amtrak is making great progress, even on a limited budget. Let's invest \$1.45 billion in our rail passenger future and help Amtrak succeed.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Motion to Instruct Conference.

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. SIMMONS). 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 was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

Messrs. KNOLLENBERG, WOLF, ROGERS of Kentucky, TIAHRT, Mrs. NORTHUP, Messrs. ADERHOLT, SWEENEY, CULBERSON, REGULA, LEWIS of California, OLVER, HOYER, PASTOR, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Messrs. CLYBURN, ROTHMAN, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

MOTION TO GO TO CONFERENCE ON H.R. 3010, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1 of rule XXII and by direction of the Committee on Appropriations, I move to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 3010) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. OBEY

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct conferees.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. OBEY moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 3010, be instructed to insist that the conference agreement include:

(a) Not less than \$8.095 billion to adequately prepare the nation for a flu pandemic;

(b) \$5.1 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, an increase of \$3.1 billion over the House bill, to help the elderly and the poor cope with rising energy prices;

(c) An additional \$1.583 billion over the House bill to promote life through doing real things to reduce the pressure for abortions by making it economically easier for low-income and vulnerable women to choose to carry pregnancies to term, including increases above the House bill of \$175 million for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, \$98 million for Healthy Start, \$200 million for childcare, \$500 million for after-school centers, \$155 million for Head Start, \$330 million for the Community Services Block Grant, and \$125 million for Domestic Violence Prevention;

(d) An additional \$476 million over the House bill to help maintain the basic health care safety net, including providing the full increase requested by the President for Community Health Centers, and keeping funding at no less than last year's level for the Healthy Communities Access Program and key health professions programs;

(e) An additional \$5.5 billion over the House bill to provide meaningful educational opportunities for America's children, including a \$3 billion increase over the House bill for Title 1 grants to make progress on No Child Left Behind funding promises so that low-income children can learn, a \$1.6 billion increase over the House bill to meet our commitments to children with disabilities, a \$100 million increase over the House bill to alleviate the impact of military dependents on local schools; and an \$840 million increase over the House bill to boost the maximum Pell Grant by \$200 in order to partially offset a 34% increase in college costs since 2001;

(f) An additional \$439 million over the House bill to protect American workers, wages and jobs by investing in job training and worker protection programs at home and abroad, including restoring an 87% cut in funding for the International Labor Affairs Bureau at the Department of Labor; and

(g) Offsetting the cost of the above, and producing additional deficit reduction, through reductions in tax cuts for households with incomes above \$1,000,000.

Mr. OBEY (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to instruct be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I will not take more than 3. I simply would like