

that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2349. An act to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 4755

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 4755.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend, the majority leader (Mr. BOEHNER), for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Next week, Mr. Speaker, the House will convene Tuesday at 12:30 for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to Members' offices by the end of the week, and any votes called on these measures will be rolled until 6:30 on Tuesday evening.

On Wednesday and the balance of the week, the House will consider the 527 reform bill, which was reported from the Committee on House Administration. The House will also consider the concurrent resolution on the budget. The Budget Committee completed its work last night.

We are scheduled to work through Friday next week. I can tell my colleague that if we were to get our work finished before that, the House would then adjourn for the district work period.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman indicates that we will be considering the 527 reform bill. My understanding is that is a free-standing bill. We expected it might be in the lobbying reform bill, but am I correct that the lobbying reform bill will come later and the 527 bill deals only with 527s?

Mr. BOEHNER. Only with 527s.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman. Can he tell me when he expects to move lobbying reform legislation.

Mr. BOEHNER. Next week the five committees that are involved in putting together the lobby and ethics reform bills, all of those committees will be marking up their relative portion of that bill. Once they have completed their work next week, there has been no decision made on how to proceed from there in terms of the consideration of those issues here on the floor.

Mr. HOYER. So, in any event, it would not occur until after the Easter break.

Mr. BOEHNER. I would expect that the first week or two back it is likely that we will see those issues on the floor in some manner.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the majority leader for that information. The concurrent resolution on the budget, you indicate Thursday and Friday. Is there a possibility we might start it on Wednesday and then complete it on Thursday, or do you expect to have it on the floor and hopefully completed on Thursday itself from the comments that you made?

Mr. BOEHNER. If the gentleman will yield, really, there are no decisions yet on just what the timing of these bills are next week. There just hasn't been a decision on what bill will come when. But I would hope that the 527 bill would be up Wednesday. Maybe we could start the budget debate on Wednesday. I think it is too early to tell.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, would I be correct in advising my colleagues that the probability is, and that the plan is, as it has been in years past, to allow such substitutes that are offered: the Black Caucus usually has a substitute, the Progressive Caucus has a substitute, Mr. SPRATT obviously we think will have a substitute. I don't know if there are others. In the past, of course, they have been made in order. Is it your expectation we would follow that same practice?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. It is.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that. That will facilitate a fuller consideration of the budget issues.

Mr. Leader, the tax reconciliation and pension conferences have been in meetings, I presume, or at least have been authorized for some period of time now. Can you bring us up to date on, if you know, the status of both the tax reconciliation conference and the pension conference. I know there was some concern on your side of the aisle and on ours, I think, to get the pension conference done prior to April 15. It appears that that might not happen at this point in time. Can you bring us up to date?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. Both of those bills are, in fact, in conference. There have been informal conversations and, for that matter, formal conference meetings on both of those bills. The pension conference, on which I sit, has made some progress, but there is an awful lot of work to do, and I think the members of the conference are concerned about making sure that this bill is right and there are no unintended consequences. And it seems unlikely to me at this point that that conference could conclude by the end of next week.

Closely related would be the tax conference. I don't sit on the conference, and I don't have as good a feel as what the timing might be.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Leader, not since you have been leader, but in times past, as you know, our side of the aisle has been very concerned about the way conferences have proceeded. Senator ENZI, who is one of the Chairs of the, I guess, the pension conference, has indicated he wanted to see a bipartisan conference, a full conference, a conference, frankly, as I historically remember them.

My understanding, frankly, is from both now, the two ranking Democrats of the relevant committees, particularly the ranking Democrat of the Ways and Means Committee, but also the ranking Democrat, I guess, of the Education and Labor Committee, there is a concern that the conference is now proceeding essentially in a partisan fashion, that is to say, Democrats are not being included in the discussions. In fact, we believe that Mr. THOMAS is negotiating the tax and pension provision with Republicans as if the two conferences were one.

I want to tell you, Mr. Leader, obviously, we have some substantial concerns about that, as we have had in the past in terms of our ability to participate in putting our views forth in the conferences themselves. I don't know whether you have any comment on that, but I would be certainly very interested to hear it so I could relate to my colleagues what they might expect.

I yield to my friend, the majority leader.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague for yielding. I have talked to Democrats here in the House. I have talked to Democrats in the Senate about the pension provisions in conference. And everyone should know that at this point there have been some conversations amongst the majority party in each Chamber in order to try to put some framework together. But no one should have any anticipation that we are rapidly moving without our Democrat colleagues in the room. Senator ENZI and I had a conversation about this particular issue, on the involvement of our friends across the aisle, just yesterday; and so I understand the gentleman's concerns.

I do believe that there are times when discussions have to occur amongst the principals before you bring the rest of the members into the conference, and I expect it will happen with these two bills as well.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate the sentiments of the majority leader. I know the majority leader has a history in dealing with his bills of pursuing them in that fashion, and we have appreciated it, as the gentleman knows. I have expressed that to him in the past. It has not always been our experience. Clearly, these bills are of extraordinary consequence to working men and women in this country, particularly as it relates to the pension bill as well as the tax reconciliation.

Without trying to catch you up on your words, but if I could just somewhat, perhaps humorously, I hope, but

you said that you are not moving ahead rapidly, but you will let us know, and you will not do so until the Democrats are in the room. Frankly, Mr. Leader, our concern is, and the concern of Democrats has been, that once the Democrats get back in the room it moves exceedingly rapidly, without really an opportunity for Democrats to make substantive contributions, whether they win or lose in the conference.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Now, as the gentleman is well aware, I believe that all of us were elected by our constituents, regardless of what side of the aisle we are on, and we all have a constitutional right and duty to participate in this legislative process; and the gentleman is well aware that there were a lot of conferences that I and members of my party never saw before they were completed. And as the gentleman is well aware, there are times when having the right people in the room is important. And every bill is different.

So on the pension bill particularly, as I said, I have talked to Members on your side of the aisle, I have talked to Democrats in the Senate as well, and I would hope that sometime soon you will see Members, more Members, brought into the room to try to help move this process along.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate the comments of the majority leader, and I have confidence that he will work towards that end, and we look forward to it. I thank the gentleman for both his information and for his concerns about doing it in that fashion.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2006, AND HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 2006

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2006 for morning hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet the week of April 3 to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of the concurrent resolution on the budget for the fiscal year 2007. The Committee on the Budget ordered the concurrent resolution reported late last night.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Rules Committee in Room H-312 of the Capitol by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2006. Members are advised that the text of the concurrent resolution should be made available on the Budget and the Rules Committees Web sites no later than March 31, Friday. As in past years, the Rules Committee intends to give priority to amendments offered as complete substitutes.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO CONGRESSIONAL AWARD BOARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Congressional Award Board:

Mr. CHOCOLA, Indiana

□ 1500

WELCOME HOME, RANDAL McCLOY

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Randal McCloy back to his home in Simpson, West Virginia. Randal was one of the 13 miners trapped in the Sago mine on January 2 and was the lone survivor. He suffered severe injuries to his heart, lungs, and kidneys and was in a coma for several weeks due to a lack of oxygen during the 40 hours he was trapped below the surface.

With all of the sadness West Virginians have experienced in the coal fields this year, today we can rejoice that Randal has recovered enough to leave the rehabilitative hospital and return home to his family and friends.

West Virginians have come together over the past 3 months to offer prayers and support for the families of those who have lost loved ones. The families of the Sago miners have made our

State proud, advocating for increased mine safety tools to help ensure other families do not experience the tragedy they have endured.

But today is the McCloys' day. We continue to support Randal McCloy; his wife, Anna; and their children as their family's road to recovery continues, and we will always remember the sacrifice made by his 12 co-workers.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

IRAQ AND A COMMONSENSE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, with this Congress blindly passing each and every one of the President's requests for more money for the war in Iraq, which is soon to exceed \$300 billion in total costs, the time is long overdue for a little common sense about how we spend the American people's money.

Earlier this month I introduced new legislation, the Common Sense Budget Act of 2006, legislation that puts some sanity back into the Nation's fiscal policy. This bill already has the support of more than 35 cosponsors.

It is beyond dispute that this administration, in tandem with the Republican Congress, has been, to put it mildly, less than fiscally responsible. And are they spending on the neediest Americans, those who need a hand up quite often just to make it from one day to the next? No, of course not. Instead, they fattened up the Pentagon and lavished wealthy special interests with subsidies and tax breaks.

Last fall's budget debate actually exposed the staggering hypocrisy of it all because the very same congressional majority that is responsible for the fiscal decadence of the last several years suddenly started lecturing about thrift and responsibility. They were shocked, shocked, that spending had been going on around here.

Federal money for Katrina reconstruction, they decided, had to be offset by budget cuts. Deficit spending is okay, apparently, when it comes to upper-bracket tax cuts, but not for poor people whose homes are under water.

Well, guess what they chose to cut. The social safety net: Medicaid, food stamps, public housing, students loans, and on and on. Just the kinds of programs that saved my life and my children's lives when I was a single mom on welfare 35 years ago. To help people on the gulf coast who lost everything, they took from the people who have virtually nothing. That is your Republican fiscal policy in a nutshell.