

duty soldiers that will keep them deployed for 15 months rather than 12.

Madam Speaker, our troops and their families deserve much better than this. Let's ask the President to listen to the generals and listen to the military families.

□ 1030

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1585, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 860 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 860

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived.

SEC. 2. The House being in possession of the official papers, the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on H.R. 3093 shall be, and they are hereby, discharged to the end that H.R. 3093 and its accompanying papers, be, and they are hereby, laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE). The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend and colleague from Washington on the Rules Committee, Mr. HASTINGS. All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. CASTOR. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 860 provides for consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1585, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, under the standard conference report rule.

Madam Speaker, today the Congress will promote a stronger and safer America by approving the National Defense Authorization conference report and this rule. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, which is chaired by the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), I am pleased to report that the

committee has worked in a bipartisan manner to ensure that our brave men and women in uniform have the tools they need to keep America safe and strong.

Our military personnel and their families have sacrificed so much in past years and continue to do so. In recognition of their service, this Congress is proud to make important improvements in military pay and benefits. We have raised the pay of our brave men and women in uniform beyond the levels set originally by the President. And when our brave men and women in combat are injured in the line of duty, they deserve top quality medical care. The Walter Reed scandal drew back the curtain on some of the challenges that the military community faces when it comes to serving our brave men and women when they return from the battlefield. Unfortunately, the military health care system was not providing consistent, excellent care for our wounded soldiers. So, Madam Speaker, one of the highlights of this bill are our efforts to improve assistance to wounded warriors. These provisions have been worked on throughout the year in a bipartisan way to improve the health care for our wounded servicemembers because they deserve nothing but the best.

We move beyond the "support our troops" rhetoric and enact substantive improvements that will restore confidence in the quality of care that our brave men and women in uniform deserve when they return from the battlefield. This includes assistance to their very supportive families, because supporting our troops does not simply mean that you salute and send them off to war and then ask them to serve and sacrifice for our great country, but supporting our troops means that we continue to support them when they return home.

This bill improves the screening for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. I am very proud to recognize the efforts of my hometown VA Medical Center, the James A. Haley Medical Center, which is home to one of the four polytrauma centers in the country where we have so many dedicated doctors, nurses and psychologists and folks in physical therapy. They are so dedicated to these brave men and women that come home with the worst injuries. But we have got to do more. And that is contained in this bill.

This bill also mandates that the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs establish a standard for rating servicemembers' disabilities that takes into consideration all of their medical conditions.

An important part of improving the health care and mental health care for our wounded warriors is tackling the bureaucracy that has blocked their access to health care. So we require expedited action, provide medical advocates, improve support services for

families, elevate the care for traumatic brain injuries and aid the polytrauma centers in VA hospitals across the country that are serving the most critically wounded troops.

This bill also blocks an increase that was proposed by the White House to health insurance premiums for military families and troops under the TRICARE system. It is inexplicable how the White House could propose health insurance premium increases at a time when we are asking so much of our brave American men and women in uniform. So, proudly, the Congress, in a bipartisan way, blocks these health insurance premium increases.

Madam Speaker, we know that because of the multiyear, sometimes seemingly unending war in Iraq, that the readiness, the military readiness of our country has suffered over the years. Well, this bill restores the readiness of our Armed Forces, including equipment repair, so that our soldiers go to battle with the most up-to-date equipment available. In terms of readiness, we have authorized moneys for a new Strategic Readiness Fund and to address equipment deficiencies. We have all heard stories of soldiers, especially the folks in our National Guard and Reserves, who are having problems with equipment shortages and even receiving the necessary training that they need before heading off to war. In some cases, the National Guard has been unable to help in the traditional disaster response roles in their local communities due to this problem. Well, this bill tackles that so we can improve the readiness of the National Guard and Reserves so they can do their jobs safely, efficiently and effectively.

Madam Speaker, this bill also calls for greater accountability over the waste and fraud in Iraq that has been all too prevalent under this administration. This includes the troubles we have had with various contractors. As we see from the fallout of the Blackwater contracting debacles, there has been so much waste and fraud in contracting in Iraq and under this White House that we are not going to put up with it any longer. This bill substantially improves oversight of the multibillion-dollar and sometimes sole-source contracts that have been approved during this war in Iraq.

The Armed Services Committee, under Chairman SKELTON's leadership, also requires additional accountability measures for Afghanistan, including a new Inspector General for Afghanistan reconstruction, as we cannot sanction the waste and fraud that has accompanied the administration's Iraq reconstruction.

Madam Speaker, many believe that because of the White House's preoccupation in Iraq that that preoccupation has shortchanged the focus in Afghanistan where the Taliban allowed al Qaeda to flourish some years ago. And, after all, the ungoverned and dangerous tribal areas of Pakistan are just south of the Afghan border. Indeed,

just yesterday, listening to the Defense Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Armed Services Committee, it became apparent that we are not able to do as much as we would like to do in Afghanistan because of the resources that have been overwhelmingly devoted to Iraq. Well, in this bill, we direct more attention to operations in Afghanistan in addition to an Inspector General that will oversee reconstruction efforts. This bill contains a long-term plan to improve stability in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, many of the unsung heroes of our Armed Forces whose missions you never hear about are the brave men and women in America's special forces. I am very proud that the headquarters of Special Operations Command is located in my hometown of Tampa, Florida, at MacDill Air Force Base. This defense bill under Democratic leadership not only fully funds our special forces but goes beyond the Bush administration's budget request for these brave men and women, including a number of needs that were not proposed to be funded by the White House at all. Our commitment to special forces recognizes that we cannot rely overwhelmingly any longer on conventional forces in defense of our country. We have got to be smarter. We have got to be more strategic. And this bill authorizes the increases in special forces and also a new emphasis on more strategic action.

Oftentimes, to win a struggle, it is more strategic and smarter not to go in with guns blazing but instead to work with folks on the ground to prevent any terrorist inclinations from ever developing. This bill does that. We will invest additional resources to improve education and analytical intelligence surveillance. We harness the science and technology innovation in this great country by investing in information technology and other technologies to make sure that our troops on the ground have the best technology available across the globe.

Madam Speaker, this Defense authorization bill and this rule charts a new direction for true readiness, accountability and more strategic investments to protect our national security. It improves the health care needs for our wounded warriors and does a better job of helping our families work through the unending maze of benefits and paperwork that come from caring for an injured soldier.

I urge full, bipartisan support.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, this rule allows for

the consideration of the conference report to accompany the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. This conference report is largely bipartisan, as it should be, and is an example of what Democrats and Republicans can accomplish when working together.

This conference report contains important authorizations for increases in force protection and retains provisions of the overdue Wounded Warrior Assistance Act. By passing these provisions, we will help provide the tools needed to protect our men and women currently deployed in the global war on terror. We will be setting up the improvements needed to ensure excellence in our military and veterans care system.

There are also provisions in this conference report that are important to those that I represent in central Washington.

This conference report authorizes \$29 million for the Yakima Training Center. This funding will be used to increase the size of the Army's training space, allow for urban operation training, and support the digital systems used by today's Stryker forces. This new range is expected to be completed in August of 2009 and will provide critical training for our active duty and Reserve Army soldiers.

In addition, I am pleased that this conference report extends the operation of the Ombudsman for the Energy Employees Occupation Illness Compensation Program Act. The Ombudsman's office plays an important role in assisting workers at Hanford and other sites seeking illness compensation that they are due. I might add, Madam Speaker, this issue goes way back to the Second World War when we were involved, obviously, in atomic power. Hanford, which is in my district and a county adjacent to my district, played an important part of that and those workers that worked at those sites in many cases gave the ultimate sacrifice as our men and women overseas did, but in a kind of different setting. This compensation program, I think, is very important for those that worked at the Hanford site and other sites during the Second World War.

Madam Speaker, again, I would like to stress that this conference report was achieved in a bipartisan manner, and I hope to see more bipartisan conference reports brought to the floor as Congress wraps up its business in this first session of the 110th Congress.

As the first session of the 110th Congress comes to a close, I am disappointed that Democrat leaders are still intent on micromanaging the war on terror by blocking the funding requested for all our troops on the battlefield. At a time when both Democrats and Republicans are seeing recent progress in the war on terror, this approach, frankly, Madam Speaker, strikes me as unnecessary, divisive and dangerous.

If a supplemental spending bill is not signed into law soon, some Army civil-

ian employees may get layoff notices before the Christmas holidays, and if this funding continues to be delayed, Department of Defense officials have reported that it could affect as many as 200,000 civilian employees and contractors.

Madam Speaker, I am also concerned that Democrat leaders continue to use delaying tactics to block a vote on a final bipartisan bill to fund veterans services.

□ 1045

This inaction is causing our veterans to lose critical funding each and every day. As I have done in the past, Madam Speaker, I will later be asking my colleagues to defeat the previous question in order to appoint conferees and quickly approve a veterans funding conference report that, again, has strong bipartisan support and which is long overdue.

With that, Madam Speaker, I reserve my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. SKELTON, and congratulate him on his outstanding leadership in shepherding this bipartisan bill through the Congress.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

Of course, I rise in support of the rule for this conference report, the National Defense Authorization Act. I will speak more at length on this issue later today after we have the privilege of passing the rule on this floor. But, I must say, Madam Speaker, that in my years of being here in the Congress, this is the most comprehensive, well thought-out and studied authorization bill that we have had. It's excellent for the troops, it's excellent for the families, and their health care. It makes great strides in the area of readiness.

I just feel like bragging on all the members of the House Armed Services Committee on both sides of the aisle. Of course, it couldn't be done without the crackerjack staff that we have, and we are just absolutely blessed with the dedicated staff that we have, Erin Conaton, who's the staff director. We owe all of the members of the staff our great appreciation.

This has been months of hard work. We have a proud tradition in the Armed Services Committee as being bipartisan. It helps with the problems of readiness, including equipment, training and people. It gives an across-the-board 3.5 percent pay raise, protects them from escalating fees for health care. It includes over 100 measures, large and small, for quality of life. We combined the best elements of the Wounded Warrior Act that was passed here in the House by 426-0, as well as a companion bill that passed the Senate.

We have many parts of this bill that are new, which will help us in the area of national security all the more. I

will, at length, discuss them when we take the bill up at a later moment today.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the rule on the conference report for H.R. 1585, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2008. I will speak at more length about this bill later today.

This legislation represents the outcome of months of hard work by the House Armed Services Committee and our colleagues in the other body. It is a good bill and it is a bipartisan bill in the proud tradition of the Armed Services Committee. It is good for our troops and their families. It will help improve the readiness of our Armed Forces, who face dire problems with all elements of readiness including equipment, training, and people. And it will bring significant new oversight to the Department of Defense in areas where oversight is sorely needed.

Let me just mention a few high points.

H.R. 1585 includes a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise for the troops, protects them from escalating fees for health care, and includes well over 100 other measures, both large and small, to improve their quality of life. Just as important, it upholds the debt of honor the nation owes to its injured and fallen veterans, by combining the best elements of the Wounded Warrior Act which passed the House 426-0, and a companion bill which passed the Senate.

To address the readiness crisis, it establishes a new, high level board of military officers, the Defense Materiel Readiness Board, to grapple with the growing, dramatic shortfalls confronting the Armed Forces. The committee also made a special effort to authorize the most money possible for readiness accounts.

Critically, this bill will bring much needed oversight to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It follows up on the bipartisan investigation of Iraqi Security Forces by the committee's reinstated Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee by increasing reporting relating to Iraqi Security Forces and requiring real accountability for weapons transferred to that nation. And it institutes, for the first time, regular progress reports to Congress on the war in Afghanistan, where our critical national interests remain deeply challenged by those who attacked us on September 11. The bill also creates a new Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

Finally, this bill takes significant strides to ensure that the Department of Defense is able to posture itself to address new threats. The bill includes \$17.6 billion for mine resistant ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles to protect our troops in Iraq and in future conflicts. It increases funding for shipbuilding by almost a billion dollars. The bill also adds 8 C-17s to help meet the demands for global power projection in today's world.

In closing, I ask my colleagues to support this rule and to support the conference report when we consider it later today.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. GINGREY, who's a member of the Armed Services Committee and former member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule and the conference report for Fiscal Year

2008 National Defense Authorization Act, and I would certainly like to commend Chairman SKELTON, Ranking Member HUNTER for standing strong throughout conference negotiations and representing us so well during these proceedings.

Madam Speaker, I think it proves, as my colleague from Washington just stated, Mr. HASTINGS, that we can, when we put our heads together and have that cooperative spirit, we can do things in a bipartisan manner, and I commend Chairman SKELTON and his excellent staff for making that happen. Certainly, I want to thank Subcommittee Chairman NEIL ABERCROMBIE, as well as Ranking Member JIM SAXTON, as well as all the conferees for the hard work in getting this legislation before the floor. The staff of the Armed Services Committee, as I say, deserves our thanks for their tireless efforts in support of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who are bravely defending us both at home and abroad.

Madam Speaker, as we move toward adjournment, it's essential that we pass this legislation, which covers an extensive range of issues that are so vitally important to our Armed Services. From a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise to an additional \$17.6 billion for MRAP vehicles, mine resistant ambush protected vehicles, this legislation addresses the most pressing needs of our troops during a most trying time for America. I am further pleased that the bill provides for an increase of 13,000 Army and 9,000 Marine personnel, active duty personnel, and at a time when our Guard and Reserve forces have been so heavily utilized, it appropriately includes Guard empowerment provisions.

Madam Speaker, although I do remain concerned about the overall underfunding of missile defense and the lack of full funding for our European missile defense site, I am thankful that the conferees significantly restored funds for certain critical missile defense programs. I am also proud, as my colleague from Washington State made note, that the Wounded Warrior legislation is included in this conference report, which will help our injured heroes as they face challenges encountered on their long road to recovery.

Additionally, the legislation authorizes \$189.4 billion in supplemental funding to support current operations in the global war on terror, and it fittingly recognizes the dangers posed by a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq. By providing increased funding for force protection and for the repair and replacement of battle-worn equipment, this legislation authorizes the necessary supplemental funding to give our deployed soldiers the resources they need to continue taking the fight to the terrorists.

I am further very pleased with the work the committee has done this year to authorize funding of 20 F-22 Raptors, in line with the current multiyear con-

tract. The F-22, Madam Speaker, is the world's most capable fighter, and these funds will go a long way towards providing stability for our forces and ensuring that America does maintain air dominance for the foreseeable future.

Madam Speaker, section 1257 of the conference report affirms the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, acronym WHINSEC, as an invaluable education and training facility which the Department of Defense should continue to utilize in order to promote security cooperation with Latin American countries. I proudly serve, along with my colleague on the House Armed Services Committee, Ms. SANCHEZ from California, we serve on the Board of Visitors for WHINSEC, and have for a number of years, Madam Speaker, and know how important that is, important for my colleagues to remember that WHINSEC may be the only medium we have to engage future military and political leaders of these Latin American countries. If we were not to engage with these nations in this way, the void created would be filled by countries with different values than our own regarding democracy and, yes, human rights, countries such as Venezuela and China, whose influence in the region is growing. Therefore, I am so proud that Congress stands behind WHINSEC.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to again recognize our fallen soldiers. A brave young man from my district who heroically gave his life for our country, Sergeant Paul Saylor from Bremen, Georgia, his remains were not able to be viewed for a final time upon being returned to his family 2 years ago.

Last year's authorization bill, H.R. 5122, included a provision which requires that all medical personnel be trained in remains preservation to ensure that these fallen heroes get the dignity and respect they deserve. This is the least that we can do for the families as they are grieving so much. I would like to thank my colleagues for following up on this measure by honoring my request for a report on this program in this year's bill, and I want to certainly take an opportunity to thank Paul's parents, Jamie and Patti Saylor, for their help in this regard.

Madam Speaker, there is much to be proud of in this bill. I again commend Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for their efforts to keep this bill focused on the needs of the warfighter. In this spirit, I urge all my colleagues in these days ahead, let's abandon any defeatist rhetoric and any partisan bickering which only serves to demoralize our troops and, yes, to embolden the enemy. We must stand united in providing our troops every needed resource and send a strong message to these terrorists and our allies that the resolve of our great Nation is stronger than it has ever been.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to vote in favor of the rule and the conference report.

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to an outspoken advocate for our brave men and women in uniform, Mr. ALTMIRE from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida, and I thank the chairman for his leadership, as well as Ranking Member HUNTER.

I wanted to talk specifically for a couple of minutes about two provisions that this bill includes that I introduced. One of them involves a bill, H.R. 1944, dealing with traumatic brain injury, which is the signature injury of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

What this legislation that we are voting on today says is that the Department of Veterans Affairs will treat traumatic brain injury and do screenings and treatments in a way that is much more put together than has been done in the past. It is going to create a national registry, it is going to create a long-term system for traumatic brain injury screening and treatment, and it is going to create a co-ordinated network throughout the Nation that is going to help our brave men and women that are affected by TBI.

Secondly, I also introduced an amendment during consideration of this bill dealing with family and medical leave. What this legislation does is allow family members of our brave men and women serving in the Guard and Reserve to use Family and Medical Leave Act time to see off, to see the deployment, or to see the members return when they come back, and to use that, importantly, to deal with economic issues and get the household economics in order.

This bill is going to dramatically impact people's lives, and I am proud to have played a very small part in it. But I do want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership.

Madam Speaker, I also thank the gentlewoman from Florida for allowing me the time to speak today.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, understanding that the gentlewoman is prepared to close, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I must ask once again my colleagues to vote "no" on the previous question so that I can amend the rule to allow the House to immediately act to go to conference with the Senate on H.R. 2642, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill, and to appoint conferees.

Madam Speaker, I am disappointed that a final veterans funding bill is sitting waiting to be acted on and that the Democrat leaders have bent over backwards to prevent this Congress in this session from passing the final bill. Democrat leaders in the House have refused to name conferees, and instead have chosen to put partisanship and politics ahead of ensuring our veterans' needs are met. They have been stalling since September and have ignored the

fact that the new spending bill began October 1 of this year, nearly over 2 months ago.

Since the beginning of the new spending year, our Nation's 8 million veterans have been waiting for their \$37 billion in promised veterans benefits. Sadly, each day Democrat leaders choose not to act and move final funding forward, our Nation's veterans lose \$18.5 million. Since the fiscal year began 73 days ago, our Nation's veterans are out \$1.35 billion.

What is even more disappointing is that this bill has almost unanimous support, unanimous support, from Republicans and Democrats; yet we are not being allowed to pass it into law, and we are getting to the waning days of this session. Meanwhile, our Nation's veterans, who have sacrificed so much on behalf of our country, are left paying the price.

□ 1100

It is time, Madam Speaker, like in the underlying bill that this rule makes in order, to put partisanship and politics aside and work together to do what is in the best interest of our Nation's veterans. I see no better time than right now. By defeating the previous question, the House will send a strong message to our veterans that they have our commitment to provide them with the funding increase they need, deserve, and were promised.

Once Democrat leaders appoint conferees, the House can move forward and pass a stand-alone veterans funding bill, and it will pass with strong bipartisan support.

I ask unanimous consent to have the text of the amendment and extraneous material inserted into the RECORD prior to the vote on the previous question.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. With that, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the previous question, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, I urge approval of the National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 1585, and this rule. This bipartisan bill improves military readiness and demonstrates our commitment to our brave men and women in uniform, including a 3.5 percent pay raise for these brave folks, a commitment to the National Guard and our Reserves, and an expansion and great improvement in the health care provided to wounded warriors who return from the battlefield. The bill also increases oversight and restores accountability over the waste and fraud that has occurred in the war in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, this bill will make America safer and stronger. I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Washington is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 860 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF WASHINGTON

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. The House disagrees to the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 2642, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, and agrees to the conference requested by the Senate thereon. The Speaker shall appoint conferees immediately, but may declare a recess under clause 12(a) of rule I for the purpose of consulting the Minority Leader prior to such appointment. The motion to instruct conferees otherwise in order pending the appointment of conferees instead shall be in order only at a time designated by the Speaker in the legislative schedule within two additional legislative days after adoption of this resolution.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives, (VI, 308-311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the definition of the previous question used in the Floor Procedures Manual published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress, (page 56). Here's how the Rules Committee described the rule using information from Congressional Quarterly's "American Congressional Dictionary": "If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business."

Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule

[a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.” (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.”

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Democratic majority’s agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4351, AMT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 861 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 861

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4351) to amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide individuals temporary relief from the alternative minimum tax, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions of the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. During consideration of H.R. 4351 pursuant to this resolution, notwithstanding the operation of the previous question, the Chair may postpone further consideration of the bill to such time as may be designated by the Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legis-

lative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 861.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CARDOZA. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, House Resolution 861 provides for consideration of H.R. 4351, the Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2007, under a closed rule. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for clause 9 and clause 10 of rule XXI. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Madam Speaker, the Democratic philosophy is simple: We believe in pay-as-you-go. In other words, we believe that you should live within your financial means. Every family that makes these choices around the kitchen table every month in order to live within its budget understands that simple fact of life. The Federal Government used to understand this, too. In fact, the Clinton administration and the Democratic Congress worked with Republicans on a bipartisan basis and turned decades of exploding budget deficits into 4 straight years of budget surpluses through the use of pay-as-you-go or PAYGO rules in this House.

The use of PAYGO through the 1990s and early 2000s helped lead us to the first Federal budget surpluses in over 30 years at that time, and we saw record economic growth during that period which resulted in the addition of 22 million American jobs. And in that time, America actually began to pay down the national debt to foreign nations. Despite the proven success of PAYGO, President Bush and the Republican Congress abandoned the PAYGO rules in the year 2002, allowing it to expire with no interest in reinstating it.

According to the Bush administration’s own numbers, President Bush’s policies are on track to increase the Federal debt by over \$4 trillion by the year 2008.

It took, Madam Speaker, 41 Presidents combined to accumulate the total of \$4 trillion in debt. This means that the debt America incurred over the first 200 plus years of our Nation will be doubled in only 8 years under the Bush administration.

Worse, Madam Speaker, about 80 cents of every dollar of new debt since the year 2001 has been financed by foreign investors, including foreign governments, especially China. This has resulted in 50 percent of our Nation’s debt now being owned by the following countries: China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

At the start of the 110th Congress, Democrats provided real choices and a

new direction for America. We made good on our commitment to PAYGO and did what 6 years of Republican Congresses before us refused to do: We restored PAYGO rules to make sure that we do not spend more money than we have.

Once again, the Democratic leadership brings to the floor H.R. 4351, the Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2007, that provides millions of middle-class families with tax cuts to help grow our economy without increasing our national debt. H.R. 4351 prevents 23 million families from being hit by the AMT, and it helps 12 million children by expanding their child tax credit.

The Republicans will surely say that this bill raises taxes, but that is far from the truth. Let me set the record straight right from the beginning. This bill closes tax loopholes that allows a privileged few on Wall Street to pay a lower tax rate on their income than other hardworking Americans, such as school teachers, police officers, firefighters, and our Nation’s veterans. This bill stops hedge fund managers from making hundreds of millions of dollars by using offshore tax havens to avoid paying income tax while other middle-class families play by the rules and pay their fair share.

It also prevents multinational companies from shifting their income to offshore entities and from creating sham corporations in tax-friendly jurisdictions to avoid Federal taxation. We would all love not to have to pay our taxes. Why should we allow these big corporations to go offshore to avoid paying their fair share?

It seems only fair that if hard-working American middle-class families play by the rules and pay their fair share that the wealthy and huge multinational corporations that are gaming the system should pay their fair share as well.

Madam Speaker, this Congress has made great strides to get our fiscal house in order. If we want to continue down the path towards fiscal sanity, we must make sure that every piece of legislation that we consider, including this bill, fixing the AMT, complies with the PAYGO rules. The Blue Dogs and the House Democratic leadership are standing strong behind our commitment to fiscal responsibility through PAYGO. I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI, Leader HOYER and Chairman RANGEL for their unwavering commitment to sticking with the PAYGO rules. I would also like to reiterate to the other body that our leadership is committed to abiding by the PAYGO rules and not considering any AMT bill on the House floor that is not fully paid for.

Madam Speaker, the \$9.1 trillion debt that our country has irresponsibly racked up, nearly half of which has happened in the last 6 years, must be paid back, and it will be paid back by our children and our grandchildren if not by us. We need to adhere to the old adage that we should provide a better