

don't want them punished with an STD."

I agree that teens should be taught about values and morals. But I find it disturbing that any candidate for high office finds the notion of a grandchild to be punishment, a punishment on the same level as a sexually transmitted disease. Have we come this far? Has the opposing party embraced an ideology that is so opposed to life that a grandchild is seen as a punishment?

In the same speech he said, "This is an example where good people can disagree." Well, I see nothing good about believing a grandchild is a punishment. Not his most eloquent or uniting speech.

□ 1015

CONGRATULATING NICKELODEON AND THE WOLFF-DRAPER FAMILY

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, during Read Across America Week, I went to Lincoln Elementary School in Memphis, Tennessee, and we read our favorite book, "Green Eggs and Ham." I asked the young people if they ever watched C-SPAN, and they looked at me quizzically. Then I asked them if they ever watched Nickelodeon, and they all raised their hand and cheered. I said, "Which show do you watch the most?" They watch "The Naked Brothers Band."

The Naked Brothers Band is a show on Nickelodeon that has been an award winner starring Nat and Alex Wolff, produced by their mother, Polly Draper, and co-produced by their father, Michael Wolff. It is the "Ozzie and Harriet," the Nelson brothers of the 21st century, and it shows that there is good television that gives kids good values and teaches them about the environment and how to be good young people and grow up to be great Americans.

So my congratulations to the Nickelodeon Network and to the Wolff-Draper family and Nat and Alex.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4847, UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1071 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1071

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All

points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and Technology. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Science and Technology now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. During consideration in the House of H.R. 4847 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 gentlewoman from Ohio is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. SUTTON. 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. 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 Ohio?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 1071 provides for consideration of H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008 under a structured rule. The rule provides 1 hour of de-

bate, controlled by the Committee on Science and Technology, and makes in order all three amendments that were submitted for consideration. I am proud to rise today in support of this rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, twenty-seven years ago, in 1971, over 12,000 citizens and more than 250 firefighters tragically lost their lives due to fires. In response to those tragic occurrences, this body passed the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act into law, establishing the United States Fire Administration, also known as the USFA, and the National Fire Academy, known as the NFA. The USFA was created to reduce the incidence of death, injury and property loss from fire through public education, data collection, research and training.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great progress. Since the creation of the USFA in 1974, the number of fire deaths has been reduced by more than one-half. Besides providing training and educational programs for over 30,000 fire departments across this great Nation, the USFA promotes fire safety and prevention programs to the public.

Mr. Speaker, these educational and outreach programs undoubtedly have saved thousands of lives and thousands of dollars, and will continue to do so.

Reports published by the USFA provide essential information to help reduce the risk of fires. For example, the USFA releases a report in December to encourage fire safety during the holiday season. According to last year's report, "Fires occurring during the holiday season claimed the lives of over 400 people, injured more than 1,650, and caused \$990 million in damage." The report outlines precautionary tests to help American families avoid devastating but often preventable accidents.

The USFA also collects reliable data on civilian and firefighter deaths and injuries. In 2006, there were 3,245 civilian deaths from fires and 81 percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in residences, which represents 25 percent of all fires. Direct property loss due to fires was approximately \$11.3 billion, \$755 million of which was the result of 31,000 intentionally-set structure fires.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, 106 firefighters were killed in the line of duty in 2006. For nearly 30 years, the USFA has collected data on the number and causes of firefighter fatalities. The analysis of this invaluable research allows the USFA to find solutions to specific problems and reduce the number of fatalities with our firefighters.

While the number of firefighter deaths has been greatly reduced, approximately 100 brave firefighters make the ultimate sacrifice to protect our loved ones and our communities each year. We must continue to strive to prevent fires, to learn the lessons from unpreventable fires, and to properly train and equip our firefighters. It is vital that our Federal Government ensure that our brave firefighters have

the training and the support they need to keep our families and communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, this reauthorization bill will promote national consensus standards for safe fire fighting at all levels of Government. H.R. 4847 will also help to provide training for firefighters who are increasingly called on to handle modern-day challenges and catastrophes, including fire fighting in the wildland-urban interface and responding to hazardous material incidents.

Firefighters are the first on the scene and the last to leave. Captain Robert Livingston echoed these sentiments in his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation when he said, "The days of firefighters whose primary function was to 'put the wet stuff on the red stuff' are long gone. The men and women of the 21st century fire service have evolved into highly-trained, highly-skilled all-purpose emergency responders with broad responsibilities."

Firefighters in my district know this all too well. With the recent and reoccurring damaging floods in cities like Barberton, North Royalton, Elyria and Lorain, our firefighters have been called upon to provide emergency flood assistance. And we must never forget, Mr. Speaker, the heroics our Nation witnessed on September 11th as these brave men and women ran into the Twin Towers to save as many people as possible. Three hundred forty-one of New York City's finest firefighters, three fire safety directors, two paramedics and one volunteer firefighter died in the line of duty at the World Trade Center on that fatal day.

It is our responsibility to provide the resources necessary to train those who protect us, and today, with passage of this act, we will be providing the support to meet the needs of our firefighters for the 21st century. By reauthorizing and improving this act, we are ensuring that the USFA continues to provide training, education and the tools to the firefighters we entrust to protect our communities and our families.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio, Ms. SUTTON, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, this legislation, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act, passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent, and it passed the House that same year as a suspension bill by a voice vote. This year it was approved with bipartisan support and a voice vote out of the House Science Committee. The history of this bill has clearly been one of bipartisanship and broad agreement on

the merits for renewing the U.S. Fire Administration activities.

Mr. Speaker, it is a prime candidate for consideration as a suspension bill by this House, and in a Tuesday meeting of the Rules Committee, I suggested that if no amendments were filed with the committee, that the House should actually consider it as a suspension bill because of its broad support.

The Democrats on the Rules Committee said no to consideration as a suspension, as was done in 2003, which, I might add, was done with their consent in 2003. The Democrat Rules Committee insisted on a structured amendment process requiring Representatives to file their proposed amendments through the Rules Committee for the committee's review. Ultimately three amendments were filed with the committee. This rule would make only those three amendments in order, thereby prohibiting the 432 other Members of the House from coming to the House floor and offering an amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrat majority has set an historic record for the most closed rules in the history of the House. In doing so, they shut down debate on the House floor more than any other majority has.

Mr. Speaker, it is really a terrible record. As the new Democrat majority took control after the November 2006 elections, they promised the exact opposite. They pledged to run the most open House and to allow for bipartisan ship.

Mr. Speaker, they have broken that promise. Other than appropriation bills, which are historically considered under open rules, this Congress has had only one, just one open rule, and that was over a year ago, in February of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, this bill to renew the activities of the Fire Administration is noncontroversial. If it is not going to be considered under suspension of the rules, then it should be done under an open rule. If this noncontroversial bill is not a candidate for an open rule, then what bill will this Democrat majority be willing to bring to the floor and allow under an open rule?

The Democrat majority blocks debates on controversial bills and noncontroversial bills. No legislation appears safe from their drive to shut down and shut out debate in this House. They promised to run the House in an open manner, and they are not. They passed new rules to make conference committees more open. Then they just stopped using conference committees and retreated further behind closed doors to write final bills. Mr. Speaker, as just one example, take the Democrat refusal to conference with the Senate on FISA legislation.

The American people were promised that this House would be run differently, that it would be run better, but in fact it has not been. The Democrat majority has exceeded and sur-

passed the heavy-handed tactics that they condemned in the last Congress. Now they have gone so far as to take a noncontroversial bill that was passed by voice vote and turn it into another opportunity to tighten the vise and block debate on the House floor.

□ 1030

This House deserves to be allowed to work in an open and free manner, and it hasn't had that, Mr. Speaker.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to, if I could, just mention this bill. The bill has such wide support, not only within this Congress, but it has been endorsed by some extraordinarily important organizations out there. It has been endorsed by the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Arson Investigators, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the International Fire Service Training Association, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the North American Fire Training Directors. So this bill has wide support and on both sides of the aisle.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I would just make the observation: This bill, as I mentioned in my remarks and as the gentlelady from Ohio mentioned in her remarks, has obviously very, very broad bipartisan support. Why not consider it then under an open process? There are probably many Members that have an idea that they could perfect this legislation, but we are being denied, with the exception of three amendments, to try to perfect this bill.

I just think it is the wrong way to go in a body that prides itself being open to debate and being very deliberative. We are certainly not getting that opportunity under this noncontroversial bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, we have heard on this floor today why we must pass this rule and pass the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act.

As I have said, we must continue to support firefighters in communities like Sheffield Lake, Brunswick, and Akron, and all across this Nation, and ensure that they have the resources available to do their job to protect our loved ones and our communities.

This bill authorizes appropriations for the fiscal year 2009-2012 for the USFA in the responsible manner the American people expect of Congress. According to the Congressional Budget Office, enacting this legislation will not affect direct spending or revenues, and will impose no costs on State, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 4847 expands the list of training activities the National Fire Academy is authorized to engage in, which will

help our firefighters manage the demands of the 21st century. These programs include response activities to all types of national catastrophes; exposure of hazardous materials; and increased emergency medical services. This bill also authorizes the USFA to assist the Nation's fire services by improving equipment and sharing best practices to address fire suppression and prevention.

This bill was passed by a voice vote by the Science and Technology Committee with bipartisan support, and has been endorsed by the International Association of Firefighters.

I urge a "yes" vote on the previous question and on the rule.

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

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. 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 bill, H.R. 4847, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1071 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4847.

□ 1041

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4847) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes, with Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 4847, the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization

Act of 2008, a bill I introduced with the original cosponsor, my good friend from Georgia, Dr. GINGREY.

Firefighters are often the first to arrive at an emergency scene and the last to leave. Whether it is putting out a house fire or a wild fire, or responding to a terrorist attack or car accident, we depend on firefighters every day. But firefighters also depend on us; they depend on the public and their elected officials to make sure that they have the resources, the equipment, and the training they need to do their job. Without those tools, we put them and all of us at risk.

The U.S. Fire Administration is an invaluable resource for our Nation's firefighters and the communities they protect. Through training, data collection, fire education for the public, and support for fire-related research and development, the USFA provides critical tools and leadership to the Fire Service.

Fire is one of nature's most destructive forces. In 1973, when USFA was created, over 6,000 Americans died each year in fires and another 100,000 were injured. Through the leadership of USFA and others, the number of people killed by fires each year is now between 3,000 and 3,500, with approximately 16,000 people who were injured. We can all be proud of the significant reduction. However, 3,000 Americans a year is still too many, especially when so many of these deaths and injuries are from our most vulnerable populations, children and the elderly.

In addition, the Nation still suffers over \$11 billion per year in direct losses due to fire, and the trend for this number is going up, not down. With statistics like these, it is clear that fire continues to be a major problem for the U.S. H.R. 4847 reauthorizes this important agency for 4 years at funding levels that will enable USFA to carry out fully its mission.

□ 1045

At a hearing with the Technology and Innovation Subcommittee held last fall, we heard the priorities of the Nation's fire service communities for USFA. This bill directly reflects their priorities.

This bill authorizes the USFA to focus on the pressing challenges of fighting fires in the wildland-urban interface, and fires involving hazardous materials, as well as advanced topics of emergency medical services.

Back home in Arizona, one of the toughest challenges our firefighters face is wildfires in the wildland-urban interface. This is an important year for wildfires. We have had a pretty wet winter which means a great deal of shrubs and bushes have grown at lower elevations. When the summer months heat up and the vegetation dries out, those shrubs and bushes will turn into tinder that can start a fast-moving wildfire in urban areas. Those fires threaten homes and lives. Fighting wildfires in urban areas requires spe-

cial training, and I am proud that this legislation enhances fire administration training for wildland-urban interface fires.

Firefighters today are called upon to respond to an ever-broader range of emergencies. This authorization bill gives USFA the authority to make sure its training program keeps pace with the increasing challenges to the fire service.

The bill also addresses an important priority of the fire service in USFA, and that is to update the National Fire Incident Reporting System, or NFIRS. This system provides important data on fire events to policymakers at all levels of government. The current system is slow to report the data to the National Fire Data Center, and does not capture data on every fire, thus limiting its value to users. H.R. 4847 would direct USFA to update NFIRS to a real-time reporting, web-based system.

The bill also directs the U.S. Fire Administrator to continue USFA's leadership in firefighter health and safety. Every year over 100 firefighters die in the line of duty. H.R. 4847 directs USFA to educate local fire departments about national voluntary consensus standards for firefighter health and safety, and to encourage local departments to adopt these standards. This provision will help reduce the tragic loss of life the fire service suffers each year in line-of-duty deaths by promoting good practices in a variety of fire emergencies.

I also understand there have been some concerns that this provision would affect the jurisdiction of NIOSH, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. I would like to reassure my colleagues that it is not my intent for this bill to have any effect on NIOSH or any other agency of the Department of Health and Human Services.

H.R. 4847 is the product of bipartisan collaboration, and is supported by major fire service organizations, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, National Fire Protection Association, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

The resources and leadership of the USFA are an essential part of the ability of the fire service to protect our cities, towns and communities. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4847, the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008 reauthorizes USFA's activities in training, fire education and awareness, data collection, research and standards development and promotion. This legislation also authorizes \$291 million in Federal funds for fiscal years 2009