

that their votes are counted fairly and accurately.

Voters have lost this confidence.

Election after election, year after year, millions of voters cast votes not knowing if their votes will count because the machines produce no paper records.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 was supposed to resolve these problems. However, it failed to address several major issues that continue to plague the system and undermine the legitimacy of our elections.

This so-called response to the 2000 election debacle in Florida failed to implement accountability measures to ensure that every vote is cast and counted accurately.

The Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act would address this problem by providing funding for states and counties to implement safe, secure and auditable voting systems in time for the 2008 general election.

It would reimburse jurisdictions that choose to convert to paper-based voting systems. The reimbursements also cover emergency paper ballots used in the event of machine failure, and the cost of conducting hand-counted audits or hand counting the results of elections.

We must act to restore confidence in our election system. The Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act will help restore this confidence and help ensure that all votes are counted and recorded properly. I urge my colleagues to fulfill their responsibility to American voters by voting yes on this critical bill.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5036, the Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act of 2008.

I think everyone in the chamber today remembers the frustration and disbelief we all felt in November 2000 as hundreds of volunteers poured into Dade County Florida to oversee the recount of the Presidential election. As the future of our nation swayed in the balance, we all thought to ourselves, Can this actually be happening in America?

The answer, unfortunately, was yes. As devastating as that event was, I think we learned two very important lessons. The first is that every vote really does count. Every person who is eligible must get to the polls. The second lesson learned is that our system of elections is broken. Changes must be mandated, improvements must be made.

That is why I am proud to rise in support of H.R. 5036. This bill takes real steps to improve the transparency and accuracy of electoral process by minimizing the financial burden placed on local governments to ensure the accuracy of election results.

H.R. 5036 fully reimburses jurisdictions that choose to offer paper ballots on Election Day. In the 2006 election cycle, we learned that electronic voting machines are not always reliable, often malfunctioning and creating substantial complications on Election Day. H.R. 5036 also subsidizes manual recounts of elections results if basic minimum requirements are met. We must provide resources to the states to ensure that the elections they conduct are fair and accurate.

Both provisions provide absolutely necessary funding to alleviate the significant burden placed on local and county governments when holding elections. This relief is critical to ensure that local government entities can protect the legitimacy of election results without enduring financial hardship.

While, I recognize the fact that more must be done, I also believe that this bill is a very

good start and I want to commend my good friend and colleague, RUSH HOLT, for his leadership on this issue. Even a month ago, it appeared that passing this bill was impossible. However, thanks to Representative HOLT's tireless efforts to work with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, that impossibility becomes reality today. America will be a better for place for his efforts on this issue.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, elections are the bedrock of our republic. Our capacity to function as a tripartite government of co-equal branches rests in the public's assurance that those of us entrusted to administer and legislate assumed our offices through free, fair and open elections.

I laud Congressman RUSH HOLT and his efforts to ensure the integrity and accuracy of our voting system. However, today I must rise in opposition to H.R. 5036, the Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act of 2008.

H.R. 5036 acknowledges that problems exist in our system of voting, and that without action now these problems will grow. For this reason the legislation has merit. While H.R. 5036 includes a provision to reimburse jurisdictions that convert their paperless voting system to one that includes a paper trail, it may also include optical scan technology. I have serious concerns with optical scan technology and its susceptibility to hacks and security breaches. Recent tests and research have demonstrated the ease with which a person can manipulate the configuration files to change votes. What's more, most of the equipment necessary to accomplish this can be purchased off-the-shelf at most technology stores.

Indeed, our voting system needs improvement, but replacing one flawed technology with another will do little to garner public faith in the electoral process. Let us make comprehensive electoral system reform a priority, and let us enact a policy that ensures system integrity, system security, and that each and every vote is counted.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5036, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. EHLERS. 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 motion will be postponed.

HOUSE SALARIES

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5493) to provide that the usual day for paying salaries in or under the House of Representatives may be established by regulations of the Committee on House Administration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5493

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY OF COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION TO ESTABLISH DAY FOR PAYING SALARIES IN OR UNDER THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Section 116(a) of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2002 (2 U.S.C. 60d-1) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "Notwithstanding the previous sentence, the Committee on House Administration may by regulation provide for the payment of salaries with respect to a month on a date other than the date provided under the previous sentence as may be necessary to conform to generally accepted accounting practices."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5493 is a bill to address the frequency of staff pay periods in the House. It provides that the day for paying staff may be regulated by the Committee on House Administration. The House of Representatives currently pays the staff once a month. The executive branch, the Senate, and most private companies pay their employees twice a month or every two weeks.

We are considering a change because once-a-month pay can be difficult for staffers budgeting on a tight paycheck. In addition, the committee's oversight experience with payroll software suggested adopting a more common approach will save money, reduce errors and increase efficiency. Unfortunately, the committee can't change the pay schedule for House staff until we change the law.

This bill will give the committee the authority to change the date that staffers are paid. It won't change the pay schedule right away. Once this bill is enacted, the committee will adopt regulations that change the pay cycle.

I would like to thank my friend and colleague, Mr. EHLERS, for cosponsoring this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5493, which would establish that the pay date in the House be determined by Committee on House Administration

regulations. However, I want to make clear that, while I support the committee establishing its authority to determine the House's pay date, I do not necessarily support alteration of the current House pay schedule at this time.

Along with the obvious administrative challenges that would impact the CAO, there are a number of cultural implications within the House population that must be addressed prior to making such a change.

Many employees pay their mortgages, utility bills, and other financial obligations in concert with a monthly pay schedule. To change a system that has been in place for such an extended period of time will have a pervasive impact and must be considered and communicated thoroughly before it is instituted.

This bill is the first step on a very long road, and it should be followed by hearings and surveys to allow House employees to express their opinions.

However, I fully support the efforts of Chairman BRADY to ensure that the committee take a decisive role in determining whether or not changes to the House pay schedule are made.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5493.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUSE EXERCISE FACILITY

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1068) permitting active duty members of the Armed Forces who are assigned to a Congressional liaison office of the Department of Defense at the House of Representatives to obtain membership in the exercise facility established for employees of the House of Representatives, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1068

Resolved, That any active duty member of the Armed Forces who is assigned to a Congressional liaison office of the Armed Forces at the House of Representatives may obtain membership in the exercise facility established for employees of the House of Representatives (as described in section 103(a) of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2005) in the same manner as an employee of the House of Representatives, in accordance with such regulations as the Committee on House Administration may promulgate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 1068 responds to a specific request from the liaisons who serve in each branch of the military and assist us daily in the House of Representatives. They have just a simple favor to ask that they be allowed to use the House staff gym since they work here far away from the ordinary military fitness facilities.

In order to ensure that the military liaisons can maintain the physical fitness and readiness while they serve in the House, this resolution will allow them to use the House staff gym. The committee will adopt regulations for the use of this facility.

We anticipate that the Armed Forces personnel who use the facility would do so consistently with military policy and, to the extent possible, during off-peak hours.

Again, I would like to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), for co-sponsoring this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1068, which would permit military liaisons who are assigned to official duty within the House of Representatives to join the House Staff Fitness Center. The center has been a welcome benefit to many House employees since it opened in December of 2005. Located in the southwest corner of the Rayburn building, the fitness center covers 11,000 square feet in which gym members can take advantage of health screenings and fitness assessments, take part in health wellness workshops and seminars, and receive individualized exercise programs, in addition to using the state-of-the-art exercise equipment.

While membership in the House Staff Fitness Center will prove a convenient and useful operation to those military personnel who work in the House campus, I think it's also important to recognize that these gentlemen and women are part of the military. They must remain in shape because they may be called into active duty at any time.

And so I believe this is a good bill, and I thank Chairman BRADY for his work on the bill.

I yield back my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1068, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "A resolution permitting active duty members of the Armed Forces who are assigned to a Congressional liaison office of the Armed Forces at the House of Representatives to obtain membership in the exercise facility established for employees of the House of Representatives."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO MICHAEL ELLIS DEBAKEY, M.D.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to discharge the Committee on House Administration from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 71 and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate concurrent resolution.

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I will not object, but I would like to make a few comments.

I am proud to support S. Con. Res. 71, which authorizes the use of the Rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Michael Ellis DeBakey.

A pioneer in the field of cardiovascular surgery, Dr. DeBakey became chairman of the Department of Surgery at Baylor University College of Medicine in 1948. Over the last half century, he has created a number of medical devices, techniques, and procedures that have saved countless lives. He is perhaps best known for his pioneering efforts in cardiovascular surgery, as he was one of the first physicians to ever perform coronary bypass surgery.

Additionally, Michael DeBakey is credited with developing the concept for the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, or M.A.S.H., units which were used in the Vietnam and Korean War to treat injured soldiers, saving even more lives.

An adviser to nearly every President for the past 50 years, Dr. DeBakey has served the public through his vast knowledge on a variety of medical issues. He has published more than